YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR
Surviving the fashion faux pas
WHY CLOTHES?

London Unveiled
A WORD WITH LADY GAGA
Comfort, style & you
A SABBATICAL FROM SERIOUSNESS

We can take things pretty seriously here at Notre Dame Magazine, and we take our role on behalf of the University very seriously. We grasp the importance of representing the institution as an intellectually vibrant, spiritually robust enterprise dedicated to the Catholic faith and invigorated by pioneering research and scholarship. Notre Dame’s mission and vision, its traditions and aspirations, are manifest on our pages.

As an extension of the University’s effort to bring its voice to the international conversation on serious issues, the magazine routinely engages such troublesome topics as war and peace, death and dying, cultural and societal trends, inequality and injustice, and some of the most divisive issues among Catholics today. And we try to do so with reason and heart, with sensitivity and balance, and with a sense that the Notre Dame family is all in this together.

Then one day this past fall, having wearied — at least temporarily — of the very earnest and well-intentioned seriousness, we thought: Enough already. Let’s loosen up and have some fun.

We decided to do “Notre Dame Magazine’s First Annual Fashion Issue,” knowing full well that technically you cannot do a “first annual” issue on anything. And knowing full well that none of us (except probably Liam Farrell ’04) exhibits much of a fashion sense, we threw caution to the wind and ventured undeterred into this bold world of fashion and style and, well, clothing (one thing we all have in common, we figure, however we might disagree on other stuff).

One word of caution, however: Even though we set out simply to have fun, we discovered en route that the subject is indeed fraught with meaning and does offer serious insights into contemporary American life. So beware of such, and know we tried to keep that weight to a minimum. And if you don’t like what we’ve done here, please forgive our playfulness and be patient. We will be serious again soon enough.

One other thing you should know about this issue: It is the last for associate editor John Monczunski, who retired at the end of March. John came to work at Notre Dame about the time the magazine was started and joined the magazine staff full time in 1974, two years after the initial issue. So he has been a mainstay almost from the beginning — essential to planning and execution, helping to shape the editorial philosophy, guiding those of us who came after, bringing in first-rate writers and recently applying his talents and experience to our website.

First and foremost, John is a writer who has penned countless articles for the magazine on an impressive array of subjects, most notably some of the finest science writing found on our pages. And, perhaps more important, John is one of the truly good people I’ve known in my life, a person grounded in a strong sense of the spiritual. His daughters Julia ’02 and Laura ’07 are Notre Dame graduates, and John’s departure leaves a tear in the fabric of the magazine’s family.

— Kerry Temple ’74
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FOLLOW NOTRE DAME MAGAZINE ON FACEBOOK

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FOLLOW NOTRE DAME MAGAZINE
ON FACEBOOK
New Rochelle, NY; Eugene C. Staples II ‘12, South Bend, IN; Amelia Bernier ‘12, Strafford, PA; Julia Cancro ‘12, Rye, NY; Connor Paladino ‘12, Skillman, NJ

FRONT ROW, l-r: Lauren Ambrose ‘12, Adirondack, NY; Juan Mejía Munné ‘12, Cincinnati, OH; Bobby Sullivan ‘12, Glenview, IL
Time to Move On

BY DAN REAGAN ’76

I had thought this would be a healthy, almost cathartic experience but now I find myself either too emotional or too scattered to find the right words. I had been asked to write about my leaving Notre Dame after 32 years — four as an undergraduate and 28 as a development officer.

One thing for sure, after all this time, I still love the place . . . in a deeper more subtle way perhaps, yet with more objectivity.

Because I’ve been privileged to have gotten a very close view of Notre Dame, I am sometimes asked to characterize the place. My favorite explanation is to paraphrase a travel guide about Ireland which describes the country as a “beautiful, maddening place that once you visit, you fall in love with it.” That’s my version of Notre Dame — a beautiful, maddening place, and one I deeply care about.

The place is a little maddening for some obvious reasons. It’s too bureaucratic at times, with occasional incomprehensible rules. We hand out tough decisions (think admissions), and fond traditions get eliminated. We can be too overt in our pursuit of the dollar. We are tentative sometimes when we could be more direct and a little too direct when we could be more sensitive.

I know that I, too, have added to some of these maddening moments, and I am sure none of us is fully Notre Dame until we have experienced the “maddening” side.

However, the University’s beauty far outpaces its frustration. And I think that is always its challenge: to be cognizant of the maddening side so it does not overtake the beauty.

At its most basic, the beauty can be found in the place’s people and their experiences — the joy of your acceptance letter, the pride of graduation, a basilica wedding, the response of Notre Dame friends when you are most in need. We have all experienced these types of moments and

Call it marriage

When I was married in the District of Columbia on June 18, 2011, my friend and classmate Lorie Masters was kind enough to write about this joyous occasion in the classnotes section of the winter issue. You, however, saw fit to change the word “marriage” to “united in a ceremony.” Not only is your editorial policy intellectually and logically flawed, it is also downright insulting both to my husband and to me. We are married and have exactly the same legal status as any heterosexual couple married in the District of Columbia.

The attitude evidenced by your editorial policy is, in my view, most decidedly hypocritical and anti-Christian. Please answer me this question: Had I married a Jewish or Muslim woman outside the Catholic Church, would you have edited the column in the same manner? I think not.

Shame on this great institution. Our marriage occurred seven months ago. Our “union” began more than 30 years ago. Had I known that Notre Dame considered “union” the celebratory marker of our relationship, I would have asked Lorie to include that in her column in 1981.

ALLYN J. AMATO ’81 J.D.
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

His mother, too

I very much enjoyed reading about David Matthews and his development efforts in South Bend. That story, however, had a glaring omission when citing Pete Buttigieg as the city’s mayor. His father’s faculty status was noted but not the mayor’s mother — J. Anne Montgomery, who earned a master’s in fine arts from Notre Dame in ’91 and taught at the University for 29 years.

ELLYN STECKER
SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

Common grounds

The article on Leo Burke’s work to introduce business school students to the concept of a shared commons (“A World that Works for Everyone”) was very heartening. Having given a lecture for the Notre Dame Energy Center in 2005 on energy sector decarbonization — in which I placed the imperative of action on climate disruption squarely within Judeo-Christian and American thought traditions dealing with the commons — I was happy to hear that at least someone outside of the philosophy and theology faculties is bringing forward the importance of this issue. There is nothing more central to Biblical teaching than our shared responsibility for the commons, and the fact that it comes as a surprise to anyone attending Notre Dame is deeply disturbing.

MICHAEL HOGAN ’80
MONTPELIER, VERMONT

Rich and poor

In her velvet-glove plea for the government to equalize income for all regardless of acuity, ability or achievement (“My Fair Share”), Lori Barrett makes a case only Karl Marx, Fidel Castro, Hugo Chavez and Barack Obama might love. She leans heavily on Columbia University economics professor Joseph Stiglitz, the liberal writer and perhaps only one of his kind ever fired from the World Bank.

In rebuttal, I offer the following precepts — not original to me and of unknown origin: (1) You cannot legislate the poor into prosperity by legislating wealth out of prosperity. (2) What one person receives without working for, another must work without receiving. (3) The government cannot give to anybody anything that it did not first take from someone else. (4) You cannot multiply wealth by dividing it. (5) When half the people get the idea that they do not have to work because the other half is going to take care of them, and when the second half gets the idea it does no good to work because what they earned is halved, that is the beginning of the end of any benevolent society.

THOMAS C. MURPHY ’53
GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

Lori Barrett thoroughly documents the problems associated with the growing wealth gap. But, as with all others, the root cause eludes her. Rising unemployment, poverty and declining incomes are all a natural consequence of an ever-worsening over-supply of labor. The inverse relationship between population density and per capita consumption has been slowly, steadily eroding per capita consumption as our population soars. And since per capita consumption and per capita employment are inextricably linked, rising unemployment and poverty are inescapable as long as economists mistakenly lean on population growth to stoke macroeconomic growth.

Simply put, there are too many workers
competing for too little work, and the problem grows worse as the world’s labor force grows by another 100,000 workers every day. There are no solutions to ever-worsening global unemployment that don’t begin with stabilizing the population.

PETE MURPHY ’71
CLARKSTON, MICHIGAN

Lori Barrett closes her article by telling us that “greed does no one any good.” Except that it does. If there is no benefit to being greedy, the behavior would not exist, and some Americans have grown wealthy beyond the dreams of Croesus because of greed. But beyond this obvious oversight, there is a much deeper aspect to greed. Simply put, a technologically advanced society cannot exist without some of its members being greedy. The greedy accumulate a surplus which can be deployed to allow some members of society to specialize in an activity other than gathering food.

So, if properly managed, greed can be harnessed for the good of society. Entrepreneurial greed (good greed, if you will) creates economic activity where none existed before and fosters job creation as a side effect. Financial greed (bad greed) enriches some while passing the costs on to others. It is essentially a form of redistribution where wealth is transferred from the many to the few.

The key to a balanced and functional society is to formulate tax policy so that good greed is encouraged and bad greed is penalized. This is quite the opposite to what the United States has now.

GUY WROBLE ’77
DENVER, COLORADO

Worth fighting for
Barbara Turpin’s “How Could They?” essay was a masterpiece for someone like me. Born a Northerner but a Southerner by choice, I’ve lived in the South for 49 of my 74 years. In a short time I learned what Ms. Turpin learned in her pilgrimage to Gettysburg. Although the figures about slave ownership vary, it was clear that the soldiers in the field weren’t fighting so somebody could own slaves. Camaraderie, states’ rights and an oppressive federal government drove the men in gray, not slavery.

DANIEL RAPP ’59
TAYLORSVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

While in Charleston, South Carolina, recently, I visited the city’s Confederate Museum, which proudly displays countless uniforms, swords, photographs, bullets, medals and other artifacts from the War Between the States, as some Southerners refer to it. A day earlier I’d visited a plantation where generations of slaves were forced to pick cotton and manufacture bricks. I enjoy history, so this was all very interesting to me. But an important fact crept back into my consciousness. For whatever other reason Southerners supported secession, they knew a Confederate victory would protect the institution of slavery. In an era of heightened reverence for the military, let’s remember there is nothing heroic or noble or intelligent in killing unquestioningly for an unjust cause — no matter how nostalgically later generations may remember it.

ED COHEN
SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

I applaud Barbara Turpin’s understanding of the Civil War, but for some reason she feels compelled to compare the bravery and sacrifice of those soldiers with her stereotypical assumptions about Vietnamese service — that Americans who fought and died in Vietnam did so out of coercion, mindless discipline and unquestioningly obeying orders on behalf of people who did not want us there against an enemy whom we admired for their tenacity in their commitment to a cause. Had she spent as much time studying the Vietnam War as she has the Civil War, rather than merely accepting her 1960s perspective, she would know the answer to the question, “How could they?”

As a Marine platoon leader in Vietnam, I saw too many friends and young Marines pay the price for others to not understand the cause we fought and died for. Any reasonable study of American post-World War II history would put that war appropriately within the context of this country’s decades-long commitment to challenge and contain the spread of communism. That era was known collectively as the Cold War, and we won it with the final collapse of communism in 1989.

So yes, there was a cause — the defense of freedom and our way of life. Like our forefathers, we fought for a cause, for patriotism and a commitment to our fellow countrymen, whether they appreciate it or not. The sacrifices made in that long ago Cold War protected the rights of a whole generation of self-righteous dissenters to develop and express their cynical opinions — opinions they are entitled to as long as they are not misconstrued as fact.

PATRICK J. MCDONNELL ’65
LAKE FOREST, ILLINOIS

plenty of other beautiful events that define Notre Dame. Many of these are connected to another or lead to another, and we are never quite sure when the next meaningful moment will occur. But somehow it always does.

Notre Dame’s beauty is also grounded in its ability to renew. I doubt I will ever again work where I experience such a sense of renewal more rapidly than here. I will miss Notre Dame’s uncanny ability to pick us back up after a bad day. . . . a conversation with a student, a performance, Mass or event, or the campus itself — the grotto, the basilica — or a good talk at Leahy’s or Legends with colleagues and friends.

It took great soul searching to decide to leave here now. But the timing seemed just about right. The University offered a rare opportunity to retire early for those of us who have been here awhile. In the end, it motivated me to step away, to try something completely different. I am grateful for that. It has prompted me to think back, to remember how it starts, this “relationship” with an institution, with a place.

Each of us associated with Notre Dame has had someone in their life who introduced us to the University — a parent, a friend, a teacher, a sibling. For me, it was my dad Jim, class of 1948. Dad passed away a number of years ago but his voice is still strong in my heart and my head. When he and mom dropped me off on campus for my freshman year in 1972, he took me aside and said, “You’ll never be alone now.”

I didn’t get what he was saying then. I do now. Dad was right. I never have been since, and I don’t believe I ever will be alone again. Notre Dame has taken care of that. Wherever I go, whatever situation I find myself in, I will remain permanently connected to this maddening, beautiful place.

So perhaps I am not leaving at all. □
It’s easy to lose sight of the fact — especially at universities where theory is a favorite pastime and ideas often remain in the abstract — that design is everywhere. Your cherished heirloom bedstead likely began as a pencil sketch on a sawdusted workbench. The toilet down the hall took shape on computer screens. The car you drive to work represents the conceptual and practical talents of dozens, maybe hundreds, of automotive designers.

Design defines the things we wear, sure, but it’s infused into the ways we eat, sit, sleep, keep clean and keep time, too. Work and play, prayer and ritual, safety, security, shelter. All of it’s shaped for better or worse by the way our stuff’s designed.

Fortunately, we have among us a few people who know what they’re doing. We call them designers, inventors, craftspeople, creatives — men and women who have learned to conceive powerful ideas and express them less in words than in the work of their hands. They are hardworking, mystical fusions of artist, engineer and tinkering humanist whose labors give form, meaning and comfort to products — and to the lives of those who use them.

Designers see. “The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way,” Ruskin wrote as if wandering the cosmos. “Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophesy and religion — all in one.”

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Ana Zavala ’12. Serv.it. Passing heavy serving plates around a table can exclude children and the elderly from the ritual of dining, while serving spoons can stain tablecloths with food residue and find their ways into kids’ mouths. Spotting this problem, industrial design Professor Paul Down says, Zavala identified “a brand new market” with Servit, a lightweight utensil that can easily scoop and deliver a serving of food — and rest on the table without soiling it.

Daniel Yanez ’08. Maple armchair. Blue paint, gold-en upholstery, slats forming gothic arches: “Looks like a Notre Dame chair, doesn’t it?” architecture Professor Robert Brandt asks. It was complex to build, he notes, and the outward roll of its arms and back makes it surprisingly comfortable.

Ana Franky ’11. Mahogany side chair. Working in a distinctive style such as Mission challenges students to balance the definitive aspects of a movement with their own originality. Franky sifted through “a ton” of precedents before incorporating her classical training into elements such as the shape of the chair’s back legs and its overall proportions.

Jennifer Heller ’08. Mahogany writing desk and side chair. The set “was done at a high level from concept, design, execution and then finish,” Brandt says, noting that Heller used a faux French polish — a lengthy process in which multiple coats of shellac and wiping varnish produce a high-gloss surface that here captured the wood’s rich yellows and browns. Several students have designed and built desk-and-chair sets or vanities, completing one piece per semester. Brandt insists that each piece stand on its own. Heller’s turned out so well together that they took “Best in Show” from the Washington (D.C.) Woodworkers Guild in 2008.

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SOMETHING TO SHOW FOR IT

NOTRE DAME AVENUE

DESIGN@ND
Back on Earth, in a Riley Hall basement office near the studio where student workbenches teem with things like ball valves, dissected kitchen appliances and the plastic prototypes of their latest visions, Professor Paul Down of Notre Dame’s industrial design program equates design with organization. “It’s just about ordering things for a particular purpose or service,” he says. “Whether you’re getting on board a jet plane or just unlocking the door to your house, it’s all about solutions that weren’t naturally growing on the trees when man arrived on the planet.”

Each year a group of Down’s industrial design students — juniors mostly — enroll in the Product Design Research Project course he teaches with the help of such colleagues as Ann-Marie Conrado and Michael Elwell and shop technician George Tisten. They learn the
Recognizing the language of materials and mass-production manufacturing processes, product designers identify household problems that may be most acutely experienced by children, the elderly and the disabled, and then benchmark, brainstorm, think, draw, build, test and re-test their way toward product designs that offer innovative solutions.

While their peers meet educational epiphanies in London, Rome or Uganda, product designers’ eureka moments come on field trips to places like the JMS Plastics Inc. factory, about a mile from campus, where they get their first serious exposure to processes from injection molding to profile extrusion.

Across campus, in the similarly subterranean Bond Hall workshop of Professor Robert Brandt, furniture designers have received the same sort of illumination — sometimes even personal guidance.

Clayton Rokicki '06; Walnut side chair. Christopher Eiland '06; Mahogany side chair. As fifth-year students, friends and classmates Rokicki and Eiland fashioned possibly the two most complex chairs Brandt’s workshop has produced. Rokicki cut the tenons 5 degrees off perpendicular by hand for the joints of his Federal chair (far right), practicing joinery at a level of difficulty rarely seen outside a majors program or furniture school. Eiland studied broken pieces of American Empire chairs Professor Thomas Gordon Smith brought in so he could learn how 19th century craftsmen drew and then shaped and torqued the wood to get it to twist inward and flow outward.

Lacey Cochran, junior. Core Time. Existing apple corers require a lot of downward pressure, have exposed blades that can injure fingers and often don’t slice through to the bottom. Most won’t cut anything but apples. These problems are especially discouraging to children who want to help prepare healthy snacks. Cochran placed a deeper housing around a pair (i.e., fewer than normal) of wedge-shaped blades that slice and then release apples and other fruits and vegetables more easily. The concave cutting base holds the food in place and is notched to help users guide the blade housing to make second, crosswise cuts.

Jacqueline Hull, junior. Key2lock. Unlocking and turning conventional doorknobs can present a problem for anyone, but particularly for individuals with a neuromuscular disease. One solution, door handles that stick off to one side, can snag straps and belt loops. Key2lock assembles over standard knobs and resolves these problems with a generous key guide for shaky hands, a vertical orientation and a compression grip that allows the user to push the handle with either hand in either direction. Down says Hull even came up with “a very distinguished way” in which injection-molded pieces like these could fit together and lock in place. “Actually, she’s thought through everything,” he adds. “Even the interface material [around the keyhole] is slippery, so when you turn the key, it turns easily.”
on a project — from the staff of Cole Hardwood in Logansport or
Johnson’s Workbench, a South Bend lumberyard and woodworking
supply store.

For Brandt, design may lie somewhat closer to Ruskin’s arti-
sanal predilections for hand tools and the earthier glories of wood.
Students taking his four-semester Furniture Design concentration
in the School of Architecture start with a “simple” table. It may be
their first step from the two-dimensional drawings of their studies
in classical architecture toward the work of genuine understand-
ing that is the act of building in three-dimensions. They explore
precedents — the Shaker style or the neoclassical American Empire
and Biedermeier styles of the early-to-mid 19th century; distinctive
later movements like the Arts & Crafts, Art Nouveau and Mission;
or even standout contemporary designers — but Brandt reminds his
students not to bind themselves up in tradition. “We don’t make an-
tiques in here, so it’s got to be an original design.”

Each student presents Brandt with three to five ideas, and soon
they’re machining their wood and reaching for the rasps, files, saws
and sanders. “Craft to me is just expressing your idea with clarity,”
he says. “If you look at something that is poorly crafted, you can’t get
past that. You think, well, this isn’t much. But if something is crafted
well, then you’re drawn into it. You start to understand the idea, the
intent, clearly.”

Process and product make for quiet drama in the days and
nights of the student designer, each year germinating some cam-
pus’ most heartfelt accomplishments. Down thinks of the grin on a
Breanna Stachowski, senior. WINTURN.

Snow-shovel makers have long sought
to relieve the strain that shoveling puts
on users’ backs. Stachowski, a native of
Buffalo, New York, who knows a thing
or two about snow, designed an elbow-
shaped, revolving handle attachment that
minimizes bending, lifting and rotating
like other ergonomic products. But WIN-
TURN has real advantages for manufac-
turer, retailer and consumer. Unlike mod-
els on the market, it ships flat, shelves flat
and hangs flat in a shed or garage. The
best part, Down says, is the elbow cou-
pling that can flexibly link two shovels
together, meaning lighter snow on
flat surfaces like driveways can be
cleared twice as fast. Stachowski
demonstrated the push technique
on sawdust in the workshop. “It’s
really clever,” Down says, and
the International House-
wares Association jurors
agreed, giving WIN-
TURN honorable men-
tion in the IHA’s 2012
student design contest.

Kaitlin O’Brien ’09. Walnut
and cherry wall mirror. O’Brien
was one of those students espe-
cially interested in carving and
having her hands on the wood.
Here, the machined walnut frame
sets up the flowing, hand-carved
vines inspired by O’Brien’s inter-
est in Art Nouveau.

Karl Hernandez. Maple table.
Hernandez, who took Brandt’s class
as the spouse of a Notre Dame
graduate student, had worked as
a designer in her father’s factory
in Mexico. This table was the first
piece she’d built on her own. Her
idea was to create a line of furni-
ture that would help clean the air
inside the home — here, Kentucky
bluegrass you could mow with a pair
of scissors grows from a container
recessed into the tabletop. The Dan-
ish modern-influenced design shows
how the table was built, another
idea important to Hernandez.

Stephanie Jazmines ’11. Maple and walnut stool.

Jazmines, a former student who “thinks like an
artist,” wanted to work in zoomorphic forms and
brought the design for this piece to Brandt on
the second day of class. “I always teased her and
said that this should be at Graceland in Elvis’
Jungle Room,” he says. Jazmines left the maple
of the tusks rough so it would go dark when
oiled and filed the trunk to give its folds an aged
texture. She sculpted the seat, too, so “it’s pretty
comfortable.”

James Levy ’09. Maple chair.
Levy chose a light-
er wood not typical of the Eastlake style, which
Brandt describes as a kind of “stark, toned-
down” late Victorian movement known for its
clean lines. “He just hit it,” Brandt says, praising
the chair for its solid design and straightforward
construction.

WINTURN.
former student’s face after a breakthrough led to a design for a baby stroller that could both climb a curb and support the weight of an elderly or disabled pusher. Brandt recalls one student for whom building just “didn’t come easy.” At 3 o’clock on the morning of the review, she stepped back from her first project with tears of joy streaming down her cheeks.

Dow’s students emerge with process books that anchor their portfolio and, not infrequently, earn honors from the International Housewares Association’s annual Student Design Competition. Brandt’s students, most of whom pursue careers in architecture with a sharper eye for the relationship between buildings and furniture, keep their finished tables, chairs, desks, mirrors, cabinets or clocks. For architecture student Cristina Gallo ’12, the sense of satisfaction is incomparable. “It’s great to have something you can show people and say, ‘I can do this.'”

— John Nagy ’00M.A.

Elizabeth Slaski ’12. Walnut window bench. Benches of this sort for reading or talking under natural light aren’t as common as they once were. Slaski’s achieved a classic symmetry and a harmony of line in which the arms flow both into the legs and toward each other.

Abigail Courtney ’12. Mahogany side table. In another superficially simple first-semester project — and one evocative of the heavier “pillar and scroll” designs of the early 19th century — Courtney forced herself to focus on balancing the legs’ front and back lines. “These two lines have to work in unison,” Brandt points out. “If they don’t work together that piece is lost.” Courtney nailed it.

Dominic Corsaro, junior. Set Escape. More than 2,500 people died in house or apartment fires in the United States in 2010 and many more were injured while jumping to safety. Corsaro found that while market solutions like rope ladders exist, many homes are without them. His idea: An attractive piece of folding furniture that could hook onto a window and become an emergency escape.

Airi Kobayashi, fourth-year senior. STORIE. Expired meats and produce pose a threat of foodborne illness, a problem often traceable to disorganization in the refrigerator. STORIE is a portable storage unit that reduces clutter, records ambient temperatures and tracks expiration dates. A special insulation system allows it to serve as a cooler as well.

Yacintha Fanardy ’08. Walnut-frame stool. As if lifted from Bilbo Baggins’ study, Fanardy’s stool evokes the cycle of the four seasons with a whimsical naturalism and rounded arches. The panels here show winter and spring in multiple hues of wood. Charming, yes, says Brandt, “but also you understand the sophistication behind it as well. It works on so many different levels and has such a broad appeal.”
More at the web

“What these students show is a fraction of what they have done to come to terms with this,” Professor Paul Down says, speaking of the 20- to 40-page process books his students create for their Product Design Research Project. Over the years, Down says, these books have persuaded competition juries, earned their authors graduate school placements and scholarships, or simply opened the door to satisfying careers in the field. They demonstrate the capacity to identify real problems in daily life and show a student understands “the logical sequence that usually leads toward groundbreaking innovation.”

While we can’t share a whole book, we can show the composite sketches that represent several students’ best effort to explain their design in a single page. Check them out at our website, magazine.nd.edu, and in our digital edition, accessible from our home page.

Patrick Grannan ’07. Mahogany table.

At first glance, Grannan’s table is one of those “simple” first projects — meaning light on the ornamentation — that allows students to learn their way safely around the tools and materials. But Grannan didn’t make it easy on himself. An experienced woodworker would be justly proud of the skirting and the rounded corner blocks, not to mention the lathe work on those long, delicate, tapered legs. “Do it once, big deal,” Brandt says. “Do it four times.”

Eras Roy Noel III ’12. The Pop Out Ironing Board.

Space efficiency is important in most laundry settings. Noel designed a pneumatic lift ironing board that fastens into the storage drawer located beneath the drum on many contemporary clothes dryers, providing an adjustable-height surface for folding and ironing.

All of these design projects and more can be found on the students’ website, magazine.nd.edu.

Yacintha Fanardy ’08. Maple side chair.

Brandt, a sculptor by training, considers the “sculptural, expressive” qualities of Fanardy’s design a successful break from the symmetry that is so fundamental to the architecture school’s classical principles. While preserving the visual balance of the piece, Fanardy’s use of curves and lines makes for “an interesting and complex composition.”

Rebecca Sigman ’08. Walnut side chair.  

Take the back off this chair and you’ve seen something like it in a fine art gallery — they’re not meant for long-session sitting. Inspired by old Roman campaign chairs, which were used both by military officers and early Christians because of their easy portability, Sigman incorporated compatible Chinese influences into her design. Her attention to detail makes this one of Brandt’s favorites; she even carved the arms and feet to echo patterns in the upholstery.

Cy Bennett, junior. Spigot Saver.  

When people leave their garden hoses attached to outdoor spigots through the winter, water trapped inside the system can freeze, expand and crack the pipe, even when the valve inside the house is turned off. Countless homeowners discover this problem the following spring — after they’ve flooded the basement. Once the water is turned off indoors, Spigot Saver solves this problem by draining the spigot and a wall-mounted hose with a flip of the red lever that turns a ball valve and siphons dangerous water out of the system.


The messy tangle created by the age-old power strip is hard to access when it’s out of sight and can be both ugly and dangerous out in the open. HangOver preserves all the traditional benefits of power strips, but it securely lifts wires off the floor while taking up little surface space. Socket covers pull back to create loops that keep cords organized more efficiently and elegantly. Simply put, Down says, “It’s a great idea.”
ClipIt
an accident-free nail clipper
designed by Waylon Chen

STORIE
Healthy Food Storage Solution

STORIE is a food storage container that keeps your food fresh and organized. It is designed to avoid refrigerator clutter, and remind you of the expiration date of your food.

Major Features

Food Quality Tracker
The food quality tracker is programmed to detect temperature, and track the remaining time left until the expiration date.

Ice Pack Storage
Ice pack can be inserted into inner container to keep food cold even longer, especially when used outdoors.

Four-Layered Insulation
Air trapped between the four walls of the PET containers, insulated against heat and keeps food cooler longer.
Traditional power strips are hard to reach and are in a dangerous location on the floor for children and animals. Cords attached to these strips create a mess. HangOver solves these problems by securely hanging off your table and organizing cords while also covering outlet holes when not in use.
Core Time

Problem
Childhood obesity is growing. Cheap fatty foods, easy to prepare packaged goods, less exercise, and lack of parental guidance all influence children. Eating healthier early on will prevent health issues such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

Approach
How can cooking be fun and enjoyable for kids and engage parents? What is a safe and easy way for kids to want to eat a healthy snack?

Research
Two blades requires less force.

Stabilization is a priority.

Easy storage shape

Access to cut food is easy. No contact with blade.
Urban gardening is increasingly important as the world becomes more urbanized. A rapidly growing number of environmentally-conscious urban dwellers seek to devote a space to nature in their own home.

The Herban Garden’s shell protects plants from harmful weather while still allowing in sunlight.

Wooden knobs provide support for tall and fragile herbs.

The removable plant beds assist in maintenance and use of herbs.
**key2lock**  
[transforms door knobs to provide more leverage & directional guider for flawless key insertion]

aged 50+ living in active communities  
limited hand mobility: Parkinson’s, Arthritis, M.S.

designed to fit sphere & flattened sphere knob  
accommodates all standard sized key shapes

1. hit near door  
2. guide to lock  
3. turn ridge 90°  
4. push lever to open door

Jacqueline Hull | NDID 2012
The Pop Out Ironing Board

Concept Sketches:

Ironing:

Folding Table:

Ready to Iron in 3 Easy Steps:
1. Pull Out
2. Fold Out
3. Expand

Handicap Access:

Coming to a store near you!!!

by Eras Roy Noel III

NDID '12
SERV.IT
THE FOOD SHARING AID

Sharing food around the table is a ritual that promotes community, however it is problematic for children and the elderly who lack the strength necessary to pass heavy serving dishes and plates.

SERV.IT provides a solution to this problem by allowing people to easily scoop and pass small food portions around the table in a way that is easy and lightweight.

Set Escape

3,120 people died from fires in their homes in 2010. There needs to be a way for people to have a means to escape from a fire without having to waste time to locate a ladder.

Preliminary Sketches

Hook Profile

Hinge Techniques

Potential Designs

Simple, organic, sustainable roots

Folding Process

Finished

Dicomio Canzani NDID 2011
Spigot Saver

- Malb. homeowner. landlord (rents out 3 homes).
- Hand scraped against wall when attaching hose.
- Has had 4 incidences of frozen spigots and subsequent damage over 13 years of renting.

The Spigot Saver gives homeowners an affordable alternative to anti-freeze spigots to protect internal plumbing from freezing and bursting. Flipping the lever forces water from the system giving homeowners peace of mind.

Cy Bennett

Spilled hot liquids are responsible for scald burns and property damage.

TRIV/IT

Minimizes risk of scald burns
Protects property
Engages users

Aina Rantananen
WINTURN

REVOLVE
Rotate handle to dump, shovel rotates so back doesn’t

LIFT
Less stress on back as snow is lifted, reducing injury

SCOOP
Ergonomic shape reduces distance needed to bend

CONNECT
Connect two shovels together, clears twice the area in half the time

Bre Stachowski '12
Father Sorin’s Velocipede

The curious, compact, fiery, frightening, newfangled, solid-iron steed that briefly bedazzled our beloved founder

BY DAVID V. HERLIHY

The departure of Schuyler Colfax to Washington, D.C., to assume the vice presidency under Ulysses S. Grant was not the only big news story in South Bend in early 1869. On January 14 of that year, Colfax’s newspaper, The St. Joseph Valley Register, described the dramatic arrival of a promising new invention:

“A velocipede, all the way from France, passed through our streets — in an express wagon — on Monday last. Its destination was Notre Dame, where it will, no doubt, become quite a favorite with the exercise-loving students.”

This bicycle, as we would call it today, was an 80-pound affair composed of a solid iron frame, a suspended leather saddle, handlebars and two wooden carriage wheels, the front one boasting the all-important pedals.

Crude as it was, it had already sparked velocipédomanie in its homeland. Proponents touted the compact conveyance as the solution to the age-old quest for a practical, human-powered vehicle — a clever mechanical horse destined to serve as the “people’s nag.”

The man who engineered this curious acquisition was none other than Rev. Edward Sorin, CSC, Notre Dame’s founding father. In the autumn of 1868, after presiding over the bucolic oasis for nearly a quarter century — during which time the student population had ballooned to almost 500 — he had returned to his homeland for a prolonged visit.

Although he had relinquished the University’s presidency to assume higher duties with his religious order, Sorin was still involved with its affairs. He sought out Bordeaux wine and cigars for resident priests and faculty as well as “premiums” for the students (knickknacks to be awarded at graduation for academic achievements). He was also determined to set up an exchange program with Notre Dame de Ste. Croix in Neuilly-sur-Seine, outside Paris, and a similar program for the young women of Saint Mary’s College.

Shortly after his arrival, while strolling the streets of Paris, he heard a frightening rumble. Wheeling around, he saw a man flash by, straddling a curious contraption. “What is that?” he asked his companion. “A velocipede? I must have one for Notre Dame.”

Sorin’s reaction was similar to that of the Paris correspondent to The New York Times, who had observed the first of these creatures during the 1867 Universal Exposition. Under the heading, “A Revolution in Locomotion,” the reporter marveled how the “scarcely visible” velocipede could eclipse 12 miles an hour, giving the rider “the comical appearance of flying through the air.”

Among its advantages were “great economy of time as well as money,” “immense development of muscle and lung” and the fostering of “independence of character.” For women, it would “force adoption of the bloomer or some other more convenient costume.” For urbanites, it would provide much-needed mobility. “Is it not a disgrace to the inventive age we live in,” the reporter concluded, “to see a man obliged to employ, in order to get through the street, a great vehicle, as large almost as a house? So let us have the velocipedes.”

An unnamed student clings warily to Sorin’s treacherous contraption in this 1869 photo.
They were not, however, fast in coming to the United States. Before Sorin’s purchase, American carriage-makers had imported a few French models for study, but most hesitated to undertake production. As a trade journal explained, the proposition was costly, with no guarantee that the maker “could get at it profitably” before the fad faded. Thanks to Sorin’s vision, Notre Dame would become the first American institution blessed with the newfangled bicycle.

A swift-footed creature
On December 10, 1868, Sorin wrote to his students to signal that a prized specimen was on its way to them. “I wish I could have sent a dozen, but my income did not allow of more than this one. That it will be a source of new and great enjoyments, I have no doubt.”

Writing to Rev. William Corby, CSC, then Notre Dame’s president, Sorin elaborated: “Such is the turor of the people about this new invention that I came very near to be obliged to wait 2 months. The price is 250 francs, unpaid, for a good reason, that my treasury is out.”

Corby might well have deemed Sorin’s purchase rash. That sum amounted to about $50, fully a third of the room, board and tuition Notre Dame charged for an entire semester. But Sorin was a man of swift, decisive and unpredictable action. He had, after all, pursued his plan to found a college in the New World before he had cleared the idea with his superiors. On January 11, 1869, Corby demurely replied: “They [the students] are delighted with the idea of having a velocipede. But it has not arrived yet. When last seen it was at Cleveland, Ohio.”

In fact, it would arrive on campus that day. Three priests spent the afternoon trying to ride the bicycle outdoors, to no avail. As one witness noted, “The roads here leave much to be desired.” The students fared little better, trying to tame the “fiery steed” in the gymnasium. Recalled one: “[We] took turns, each one riding until he fell off, and such a fall generally involved a skinned shin. The cautious Father Granger nervously cried out: ‘Watch out! You break zumpsing!’

A student committee, replying to Sorin, tactfully acknowledged their struggles: “Many thanks for the beautiful velocipede which you have so kindly sent. That it will be the source of immense amusement we have no doubt, but as yet it has not been found.”

A faculty committee also wrote to Sorin: “We rather think that the velocipede is the emblem of the rapid race Notre Dame is to run in the attainment of all that is true, beautiful and good.” Expressing its hope that Sorin would return to the University in time for the silver jubilee that spring, it added, “The only danger is that the reckless swift-footed creature may carry us all to destruction before your return.”

Despite his caprice, Sorin knew the velocipede would give students a much-appreciated outlet. They had demanding schedules, rising at 5 in the morning and studying until 6 each evening, six days a week. As one historian observed, “It was a regimen typical of the French educational practice, designed to keep a student so active he had neither time nor energy to get into mischief.”

Besides, Sorin recognized that the velocipede artfully addressed two topical objectives. First, exercise. As the United States transitioned from an agricultural to an industrial society, its citizens were thought to be increasingly sedentary and deprived of fresh air. Notre Dame had long encouraged its students to partake in sports, notably baseball, but the greater the variety the better.

The other pressing concern was speed, that is, to be fast and efficient. Senior Thomas Ewing no doubt had the University’s velocipede in mind when he delivered an address to his classmates in April 1869 on the progress of locomotion. Observed the witty Ewing: “We live in a fast age; we talk fast, read fast, break fast.”

Barely a month after the arrival of Notre Dame’s velocipede, the mania had spread to every major city to teach the new art. Naturally the craze reached South Bend, a bustling town of 10,000 with several carriage-makers, including Studebaker of future automotive fame. Locally made bicycles were displayed in the windows of hardware stores, and Hood’s Opera House regularly hosted races and exhibitions. The Register reported that local boys challenged the Notre Dame students to a velocipede race in hopes that they would be “slowed out of a few greenbacks.” But the newspaper failed to record the outcome.

The true test of the bicycle, however, would play out that spring, when South Bend’s velocipedists took to the road (or the smooth sidewalks). There was little doubt that they could exceed the legal limit of 6 miles an hour, but whether they could comfortably maintain such a clip over long distances remained to be seen.

The Register noted with a hint of optimism, “Those who have tried the velocipede say it doesn’t require any more strength and exertion to run it than it does to saw hard wood with a dull saw.” The Notre Dame faculty, however, found their model neither fast nor bearable. In May 1869, the student magazine Scholastic reported that several members had pedaled “some distance from the College,” but that “nearly every one of them returned limping, wincing, and rubbing parts affected.”

Sorin returned to campus in late May to a tumultuous reception. He must have been pleased to learn how much his velocipede had been ridden, indoors and outdoors. But as the Register observed, interest in the vehicle was fading rapidly:

“The velocipede mania has about exhausted itself here. Only occasionally a solitary bicyclist may be seen wobbling along our pavements, and with the approach of summer, these solitary ones will also disappear.”

What became of Notre Dame’s velocipede is a mystery, but it likely fell to pieces and was cast aside before the arrival of fall.

Sorin, who died in 1893, did not quite make it to the University’s golden jubilee. But he did live to see two generations of bicycles on campus. The first, prominent in the 1880s, was the fleet but precarious “high wheeler” comprised of an enormous front wheel and a tiny trailer. The second was the so-called “safety” bicycle, the prototype of the modern bicycle with its chain-and-sprocket drive and inflatable tires. It at last delivered on the bicycle’s promise to furnish safe, efficient and enjoyable transportation.
A ST. PATRICK’S DAY TO REMEMBER was in the works as the magazine went to press in March. Enda Kenny, the Taoiseach — prime minister — of Ireland had announced plans to stop on campus to pay his respects to Father Ted Hesburgh, CSC, and confer Irish citizenship upon the University’s 94-year-old president emeritus. Kenny’s itinerary on the Irish-American high feast had him en route from Chicago to New York as part of his annual St. Patrick’s Day trip to the United States. . . .

THE NOTRE DAME BIKE REPAIR SHOP, a valued modern component of a venerable campus cycling tradition that dates back nearly 150 years (see “Father Sorin's Velocipede,” p. 12), closed this winter when it lost its garage in the Old Security Building to a renovation and expansion project that will provide workshop and studio space for architecture, art and design students. The student-run service of the Notre Dame Security Police provided free repairs to students, faculty and staff, culling its stock of replacement parts from the fleet of abandoned bicycles that security officers collect at the end of each year. Junior Jon Schommer, a student mechanic, said the shop fixed 331 bikes in 2010-11 and required only a heated garage on campus for bike and tool storage.

When it comes to tweeting, the tapping out of one’s fascinations to adoring followers in 140 characters or less, not even Brian Boll can keep up with Skylar Diggins (@SkyDigg4) the junior point-guard phenom and social-media über-magnet. Tweetscenter, a website that tracks and evaluates athletes’ social media performance, listed Diggins — who had nearly 150,000 followers as of the end of February — sixth on its Power Rankings, not quite as high as celebrity athletes Chad Ochocinco or LeBron James but out ahead of Tim Tebow in the purported quality and frequency of her posts. But the soundbyte stardom hasn’t robbed Diggins of her wits or perspective. “Do you think we don’t know that we don’t make a lot in the league?” she retorted when asked by New York Times Magazine writer Andrew Goldman about female professional athletes’ salaries and her career hopes. “We can’t sit on the edge of the bench waving a towel and get paid $400,000, so we have to make sure we come up with a strong Plan B. Right now I’m in business-management entrepreneurship in one of the country’s top undergrad business programs.” . . .

John I. Jenkins, CSC, asking students, faculty and staff to “report promptly and fully any questionable conduct.” Although he cautioned, “We must be careful not to judge prematurely,” Jenkins said events at Penn State University had prompted Notre Dame “to consider what we can do to prevent similar transgressions here.” Noting connections between “what is alleged to have occurred at Penn State with the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church,” he said “universities and religious institutions may be particularly vulnerable to such failures” because of the “predisposition of people to make other good people . . . reluctant to report behavior that was so dramatically at odds with their ideals, or to report people whom they respect and for whom they care.” The letter affirmed that Notre Dame does not tolerate the abuse or exploitation of individuals and called for the reporting of “problematic” conduct, broadly understood to include “ethical lapses, failures to adhere to University policies by faculty or staff, student honor code violations, safety concerns, criminal conduct or any other situation that needs attention.” . . .

COMING IN AROUND #65 on Twitter’s Irish-language Hot 500 is Brian Boll (@bhriain), who graduated in January. But the Detroit-area native didn’t just start racking up the tweets on his first day of introductory Irish. Boll changed his major several times before settling on a self-designed program in Irish Cultural and Language Studies, where he has similarly distinguished himself in demonstrating how social media can support the learning of a foreign language. Last year he tweeted in Irish twice a day on average, mostly “about current events . . . things I’m interested in, including plenty about the Irish language itself and the community surrounding all that,” he says. The activity notched his place on Indigenous Tweets, a website created by a St. Louis University computer science professor to help speakers of minority languages build online communities through Twitter. Now Boll hopes to work in the Gaeltacht, Ireland’s Irish-speaking, nonvirtual community in the island’s rural west, where he spent the summer after his freshman year in a language immersion program. . . .
College of Business, a position she had held since 1997, to serve as president and CEO of the Baltimore-based Catholic Relief Services. “For me, I move forward to follow the mission and mandate of Notre Dame: to trust in God, to share our blessings and surrender ourselves for bringing about the kingdom of God here and now,” Woo said upon receiving the distinction in December. At press time, the University had not made any announcements about the search to find Woo’s successor as dean. . . .

THE PRINCE OF WALES couldn’t lift the award that Michael Lykoudis, the Francis and Kathleen Rooney Dean of Notre Dame’s School of Architecture, presented to him January 27 at Saint James’s Palace in London. Even with Lykoudis and philanthropist Richard H. Driehaus there to help, Prince Charles decided against moving H. Driehaus there to help, Prince Charles decided against moving the model of Athens’ Tower of the Winds from its safe perch on the dais. A longtime supporter of traditional architecture and sustainable urban planning — the basis of the Notre Dame architecture curriculum — His Royal Highness has championed development, reconstruction and preservation efforts around the world. He has also been a forceful critic of modern architecture, endeavors him to classicists and their supporters such as Driehaus, who each year at Notre Dame presents a major award in his name to a practicing classical architect. To recognize Prince Charles, the School and Driehaus established a one-time honor — The Richard H. Driehaus Prize at the University of Notre Dame Patronage Award — which included a $150,000 donation to the Prince’s Foundation for Building Community. “Perhaps like a piggy bank, it’s inside there,” Prince Charles said of the cash prize, gesturing toward the heavy model during his address to the foundation’s annual conference. The foundation will use the gift to establish an intensive, one-year undergraduate diploma course in sustainability and the building arts, a longstanding ambition that the award made possible. “If I may say so,” the Prince added, “it’s come like Father Christmas.” . . .

THE UNIVERSITY’S ACCOMPLISHMENTS in overseas development programs, especially in East Africa and Haiti, and its consolidating interdisciplinary strengths in research that targets pressing global problems in energy, the environment, technology, economic development and public health, were showcased late last year in a day-long Forum on Global Development in Washington, D.C. The event, a Notre Dame-led collaboration through the Office of Research, brought together members of Congress and federal foreign aid officials with ND faculty and active partners from foundations, businesses and humanitarian organizations to talk about development investment, infrastructure and human dignity amid a budgetary atmosphere increasingly keen on innovation and measurable results. “The work that Notre Dame is doing globally not only alleviates human suffering but also defines America to the world,” U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois told participants. “Time and again Notre Dame has risen to the challenge, and today we need you more than ever.” Watch videos about the forum and Notre Dame’s global development programs at globalforum.nd.edu. . . .

THE WINTER OF 1959 was hard on American pop music, and the bad news on the doorstep nearly reached the Golden Dome. On The Day the Music Died, a gathering February snowstorm notoriously claimed the lives of Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, J.P. “The Big Bopper” Richardson and their young pilot when their plane crashed after takeoff from Clear Lake, Iowa. Six weeks later, mindful of that disaster, the members of The Kingston Trio found themselves in a grimly similar situation, their plane descending and the pilot fighting engine trouble, en route to a gig at Notre Dame. “We knew we were dead,” singer and guitarist Bob Shane recently told The Fretboard Journal. This time, however, the night ended happily. While the band drained a liquor bottle, their pilot, who’d flown B-17s during World War II, managed a safe landing in a field just a few miles from campus. They even made it to the old Fieldhouse on time. There, however, events took another unexpected turn when a priest greeted them with a warning: Keep your on-stage language clean lest you find yourselves unplugged. Recalled Shane, “We finished the first opening act and nobody is cheering; [bandmate] David [Guard] said, ‘Father such and such said that if we did any blue material here they would turn off the lights and the sound.”’ Then there is this silence. And then a sole voice from the top of a bleacher called out ‘Horsesh—!’ And the whole place went crazy. The crowd was pounding their feet on the bleachers and making this weird rumbling sound. That was some day.”

DRAHEMA JOHNSON
An Irish home with English accents
Conway Hall opens in London

By Robert Schmuhl ’70

Sometimes looks can be deceiving.

For Londoners and tourists zipping past the red brick and brown terracotta building along Waterloo Road, the imposing letters stretching across much of the fifth floor identify the place as “The Royal Waterloo Hospital for Children and Women.” Smaller signs on descending floors inform passersby that the hospital is “Supported by Voluntary Contributions” with “Patrons” such as His Majesty King Edward VII, Her Majesty Queen Alexandra and the Prince and Princess of Wales. On the ground floor, over a door, there’s even direction to the “Out Patients Department.”

But spend some time examining the building, which appeared as “The Royal Veterans Hospital” in the 2009 movie Sherlock Holmes, and you see a modest plaque mounted next to the entrance with the phrase “Conway Hall” on one line and “University of Notre Dame (USA) in England” right below.

For the first time, Notre Dame has a student residence beyond campus it can call its own. Restoration of the art-nouveau façade — the 1823 building previously was rebuilt in the early 1900s — went hand-in-hand with a complete renovation of the interior.

The result, made possible with a gift from Notre Dame trustee Robert M. Conway ’66 and his wife, Ricki, can accommodate 268 students in 50,000 square feet of living space. The building now houses a chapel, an activities center, common rooms, study areas and flats that house four to eight students apiece. Completed at a cost of $62.1 million, Conway Hall opened last August, more than four months ahead of schedule.

At the dedication Mass on January 20, Rev. John I. Jenkins, CSC, ’76, president of Notre Dame, pointed out in his homily that the date marked the anniversary of the death in 1873 of Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Moreau, a French priest, had dispatched another French priest from his order, Edward Sorin (along with six Holy Cross brothers), to the United States to found a school.

The Notre Dame that Sorin established in 1842, according to Jenkins, now sends more than half its undergraduates to study abroad. Moreau’s international vision — he also sent religious to Algeria, Canada and what’s known today as Bangladesh — animates Notre Dame in a similar way.

In 1964, the University launched its first study-abroad program in Innsbruck, Austria. Today, less than a half-century later, more than 40 different programs in 20 countries exist for Notre Dame students and faculty. London’s 400 undergraduate and Law School students each year make it the largest.

Structurally and symbolically, Conway Hall represents the University’s efforts to become more international in its work and more global in its influence.

In his homily Jenkins called London “a center of culture, commerce and communication” as well as “the world’s most international city.” Having both Conway Hall and the University’s London Centre, a 15-minute stroll over the Thames River and through Trafalgar Square, allows Notre Dame to enhance both teaching and research.

What are called “Conway Conversations,” established by English literature Professor Greg Kucich, director of the London Undergraduate Program, bring academics, business figures and artists together for seminars, readings, concerts, debates and informal discussions. In addition, the London Centre, which organized a full day’s discussion about internationalization and London to mark the Conway Hall dedication, co-hosts a steady lineup of lectures and international conferences with partners that have included Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre and Cambridge University.

Jenkins calls Conway Hall “the largest international residence building for the flagship program of an ambitious international agenda.” That agenda involves two distinct yet related objectives — students and faculty from Notre Dame going abroad at the same time students and scholars from abroad are coming to Notre Dame. Indeed, a few days after the Conway Hall festivities, University admissions officers met with prospective British students at the London Centre.

At a dinner following the dedication ceremony, Robert Conway, senior director of Goldman Sachs in London and a former chair of the academic affairs committee of the Board of Trustees, recalled his own student days at Notre Dame in the 1960s, but he concentrated on the present and future, especially the capacity of overseas study to provide “a transformational experience” in a young person’s knowledge of the world, maturity, confidence and sense of independence.

“They are why we are here,” Conway said of the students. “They are why we do what we do.”
DEATHS IN THE FAMILY

There may be no higher compliment paid a teacher by a former student than the one Princeton University biologist and Nobel laureate Eric Wieschaus ’69 gave his old Notre Dame professor a few years ago when he told Vanderbilt Medical Center’sLens magazine how “Harvey Bender showed me it was possible to have a good life as a scientist.” Bender, a genetics expert whoseDrosophila laboratory at Notre Dame was an early proving ground for Wieschaus’ prizewinning work in the embryology of the infamous fruit fly, died last October at age 78.

Bender came to Notre Dame in 1960 as a young developmental biologist with enviable research credentials. But what Dr. James Gajewski ’78 remembers was the “absolute dedication to teaching” his professor displayed to the thousands of students who took Bender’s courses over the next 50 years. Known as a phenomenal lecturer, Bender liked to joke, provoke and ask questions and became known for essay-driven exams in which students had to think through genetics problems based on confounding data sets. Gajewski, who uses the same techniques with his medical students, called the exercise an “extraordinary gift” to generations of doctors and research scientists. Many of those students also became dinner guests in the home where Harvey and Eileen Bender ’77Ph.D. raised three children and shared their Jewish faith with visitors through a short prayer service before each meal. Such acts of hospitality continued, Gajewski notes, even after a lost tenure battle at Notre Dame, a successful discrimination lawsuit and settlement forced Eileen Bender to pursue her academic career elsewhere. Harvey, who followed his spouse in death by one year, loved his Notre Dame students and what he considered their atypical zeal for deeper values. Now, the Bender children and several of those students are working together to create a lifetime teaching award for science faculty in his name.

WhenGuillermo O’Donnell died in November, the moment evoked tributes for his seminal writings on authoritarianism and democracy from colleagues around the globe. At Notre Dame the professor emeritus of political science will be remembered foremost as one of the scholars whose labors put the University’s rising international studies programs on the map.

O’Donnell was “already an academic superstar” in 1982 when then-president Father Ted Hesburgh, CSC, and Father Ernest Bartell, CSC, ’53 recruited him to serve as the first academic director of the nascent Kellogg Institute for International Studies, says Scott Mainwaring, the institute’s current director. A native of Buenos Aires who observed firsthand in Argentina many of the political processes he would scrutinize in his research, O’Donnell would not receive his doctoral degree from Yale University until 1987, the year after the publication ofTransitions from Authoritarian Rule, a classic volume he co-edited with scholars at the Woodrow Wilson Center. His capacity for asking big-picture questions about the origins, weaknesses and strengths of emerging democracies and his evident concern for the dignity of the poor shaped influential concepts in works that were translated into several languages. In 2006, the International Political Science Association presented him its inaugural lifetime achievement award. For Mainwaring, “He stands as one of the most important thinkers about democracy and dictatorships in the history of political science.”

For 15 years at ND, O’Donnell applied his gifts to the tasks of shaping Kellogg’s research agenda, attracting prominent scholars to campus and sending energized graduate students into the social sciences. His encouragement of the work of promising younger academics mirrored the collegiality so esteemed by his peers. “His analysis and insights are as important today as they have ever been,” one wrote in a tribute published on Kellogg’s website. “Guillermo O’Donnell will be missed."

Nai-Chien Huang, who died in January at age 80, produced one book in an academic career that spanned five decades: a collaboratively written textbook on solid propellant rockets published in 1969, the year of the first manned lunar landing and his first on the aerospace and mechanical engineering faculty at Notre Dame. But the list of nearly 100 published technical papers in his curriculum vitae is littered more illuminatively with words like “fracture mechanics,” “creep buckling,” “fatigue crack speed,” “snap-through,” and “collapse” — just the sorts of things that undoubtedly lure thousands of imaginative former children into serious engineering studies every year.

Colleagues remember the Chinese-born and educated Huang in part for his good humor, so it’s not difficult to imagine the delighted boy inside the serious researcher who wrote “Dynamic Instability in Ice-Lifting from a Flat Road Surface through Penetration with a Sharp Blade.” Until his retirement in 2001, Huang was ND’s authority in structural design, fatigue and fracture whose expertise was sought by the likes of Amoco, U.S. Steel and the U.S. Air Force. His research explored the causes and consequences of failure in a wide array of materials and applications, from industrial yarns to oil well casings to aircraft fuselages. Emeritus Professor Victor Nee says his friend and former colleague brought the same uncompromising eye to the students in his undergraduate and graduate courses in such subjects as Mechanics, Dynamics, Elasticity and Thermal Stresses, and it won Huang tremendous respect.

“He was a great teacher, always impeccable in his presentation,” wrote Professor Joseph Powers. “He loved Notre Dame, its students and faculty, and he was a great role model… including for me.” Huang is survived by his wife of 49 years, Geraldine, and their two children.

Charles “Lefty” Smith, the father of Notre Dame hockey, passed away in January, three days after his retirement and two days before his 82nd birthday.

Smith, a legendary Minnesota high school coach, came to the University in 1968. He not only coached Notre Dame’s first varsity hockey team but also managed the ice rink in the newly completed Athletic and Convocation Center (eventually named the Joyce Center), ran skating classes, started a youth hockey league and taught the Zamboni drivers how to lay the ice. When Irish hockey moved into the new Compton Family Ice Arena this past October, Smith dropped the puck for the opening game — on the ice at Lefty Smith Rink.

Smith coached for 19 seasons, won 307 games, earned some Coach of the Year honors and produced six All-Americans. All 126 players who skated for Smith completed their college eligibility and earned degrees. But Smith’s legacy went far beyond such achievements. “Lefty created an extended family through his time as our coach,” said All-America forward Greg Meredith ’80, one of more than 80 players who participated in the “Lefty Fest,” attended by 37 family members and 250 members of the Irish hockey community.

“Beyond being a hockey coach,” said Matt Boler ’88 at the February event, “I’ve never seen a man who was so compassionate, so full of life and so engaged. He truly loved his players, he loved his friends and family. He’s a seminal character of Notre Dame.”

When Smith left coaching in 1987, he supervised 22,000 volunteers when the University hosted the International Special Olympics, whose 6,000 athletes from 72 nations competed in the 12-day event, and became facilities manager at the University’s Loftus Sports Center. There until this past winter, his office walls were blanketed with photos of friends and former players and their children — the people who made hockey a family sport with Smith at the helm.
Sister Jean Lenz, OSF: Leading with her heart

BY Marianne Murphy Zarzana ’78

My first meeting with Sister Jean: January 1975, O’Shaughnessy Hall, freshman year, sitting spellbound in her class, The Gospels 1975, O’Shaughnessy Hall, freshman year, My first meeting with Sister Jean: January 2011, Dujarie House nursing center, before

My last meeting with her: October 8, 2011, Dujarie House nursing center, before

The years in between: becoming friends, with Sister Jean always ready to listen and ride the roller-coaster events of life with me — the miracle of falling in love, marriage (she gave the homily at our Sacred Heart wedding, and I can still hear her words about love’s mystery), births, deaths, miscarriages, counseling sessions, pink slips, cross-country moves, new jobs and promotions. When I won a trip for two to Hawaii at my 25th ND class reunion, Sister Jean was thrilled that it coincided with my 20th wedding anniversary. But you didn’t need to be a winner to catch her ear. She knew in her bones that loss is one way God gets our attention, breaks our hearts open to something more, and that God’s love does the shattering.

Sister Jean’s last lecture: Once Sister Jean shared a dream about teaching class in the ND Stadium. She didn’t provide any specifics, but all who knew and loved her can imagine their own version of Sister Jean’s last lecture to a packed house.

Over 80,000 strong, decked out in blue and gold, we stream into the stadium, grads telling Sister Jean stories as we settle into bleachers, eyes straining to see the welcoming, daring woman standing at the coin-toss spot on the 50, then the crackle of the mic, a hush falling over the crowd, waiting to hear her voice, her laugh, one last time to be held by her wide-open heart.

LESSON ONE: Be prepared to believe anything . . . as long as it’s incredible

She starts with our favorite, the Parable of Spring Streakers. Early in her career as rector of Farley, a pioneer of ND’s venture into co-education after 130 years as an all-male bastion, near midnight, deep into grading theology papers, suddenly the husky-throated chant, “Farley! Farley! Farley!” Swinging the door open toward a crowd of some hundred young men wearing only their masculinity, ready to charge the hall but stopped cold by Jean’s shout: “You’re not coming in here dressed like that!” “Oh, no, it’s Sister Jean!”

Scrambling behind bushes, frozen in shock, stooped backs facing a nun standing tall, then a cry of brotherhood: “Let’s get Lyons!” Jean dashing to the phone, warning the Lyons rector to bolt her doors against the marauders of springtime. Catching her breath, Jean asks Farley’s security guard, Hazel, “Am I dreaming or did this really just happen?” Behind her, the clapping of Farley women.

LESSON TWO: Grow up and grow deep

“Looking back on my life, there’s been more peace and chaos, laughter and tears, more life and death and grace than I ever dared to imagine,” she says. “So much gift!” The lion’s share of refereeing shouting matches between roommates, listening to parental problems, romance woes, counseling that “some people get you ready for other people,” all those evening talks and walks around the lake, her life a front-row seat at a long-running Broadway drama.

Her darkest days, facing the passing of Farley women — Cindy, Terry, Kathy, Mary, Michelle and Rita — so much grief giving way to wisdom, resurrection, in the re-telling of their stories, keeping them alive.

Always the torrent of students’ questions about the life of the Spirit, yet in the silence of watching others kneel down and pray, in chapels, at the Grotto, on retreat, words fell away, and as Eliot wrote, “At the still point of the turning world . . . there the dance is.”

LESSON THREE: When you’re asked to run through sprinklers at midnight, say yes

Sometimes when there’s a knock on your door, Jean says, it’s a request, a summons to take you beyond your comfort zone, to grace, to joy. “Will you run through the sprinklers with me?” asked the Farley resident. “I heard them swish on outside but don’t want to go alone.”

“Farley women — Cindy, Terry, Kathy, Mary, Michelle and Rita — so much grief giving way to wisdom, resurrection, in the re-telling of their stories, keeping them alive.

Now names, faces come out of nowhere — students she taught or knew, all the Farley women, her 10 Franciscan sisters with her in rector ranks, Holy Cross colleagues, ND staff, workers at the Pay Caf, friends, family. “In the midst of late-night musings, especially when the heat hangs heavy, I think I hear a knock at the door, and I’m so ready for another sprinkler run in midnight moonlight, but deep down I know that only happens once in a lifetime.”

In the packed ND Stadium, silence. Then Jean’s classic farewell, “Bye-bye for now.”

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Babies Listen Up

Babies are fantastic listeners. They may not know what you’re saying, but they pay rapt attention to language, and they are constantly looking for patterns to help them make sense of it all, even tracking rudimentary grammar concepts.

“Infants have a problem to solve whenever they hear a word,” explains Jill Lany. “A word could mean anything, so it’s crucial to narrow it down. Babies are always looking for clues from context and sound.”

The Notre Dame assistant professor of psychology, who studies how infants acquire language, says babies appear to learn the rudiments by plucking out bits of information from the ongoing sound stream that they then use to help identify words, track what they’re hearing or predict what they might hear.

For instance, in English nouns tend to occur after such words as “a” and “the.” “So, if a baby hears ‘It’s a,’ there’s a pretty good chance the next thing she hears will be an object label, a noun,” Lany points out. “Babies notice words with similar sounds and notice that these word sound patterns occur in a similar context.”

The psychologist has found that 12-month-old babies are able to distinguish and track “adjacent relationships” in which a cue sound, such as “it’s a” comes immediately next to the noun, as in “it’s a ducky.” By 15 months, children are able to track more complicated non-adjacent relationships in which the cue may be further removed, as in “it’s a yellow ducky.”

Lany has found that 12-month-olds who are repeatedly exposed to “adjacent relationship” word-sound situations are learning something that helps them master tracking the more complicated nonadjacent relationships.

“There seems to be a scaffolding or bootstrapping process going on which sets the stage for learning more complicated language patterns,” Lany says.

Miserly Catholics?

Notre Dame sociologist Christian Smith is leading a massive, multifaceted, multiyear study aimed at learning why some folks are more generous than others. Although the work, which involves scholars from ND and other institutions, is far from complete, Smith has found one preliminary result that Catholics may find unflattering and troubling: As a group, we’re tight.

Relative to other denominations, Catholics are not as generous with their tithing. Smith, who first reported the result in his 2008 book Passing the Plate, has yet to explain definitively why this is so, but the William R. Kenan Jr. professor of sociology has some guesses.

He suggests one reason for the lower level of Catholic financial generosity may be that as far back as the Roman emperor Constantine, Catholicism has had a history of being “the state church,” the church that society as a whole, rather than individuals, helps support.

“While the Catholic Church was never the state church in America, that notion is still part of the DNA of the tradition,” Smith argues.

A second explanation may be that Catholic churches — the buildings — are technically owned by the local bishop, unlike Protestant churches which are owned directly by the congregation. Therefore, he believes, the need to give may be felt less intensely. “Catholics ‘belong’ to a church, but they don’t feel they financially ‘own’ it as Protestants do,” Smith says.

Another factor limiting generosity may be the upward mobility of U.S. Catholics as they work to acquire wealth. “In the 20th century American Catholics went from being urban, ethnic, working class, persecuted, relatively poor to being suburban, middle class, moving upward economically, educationally in assimilation and acculturation,” Smith points out.

Finally, Smith believes the long tradition of a low-cost church workforce composed of nuns, brothers and priests has lulled Catholics into thinking the church has less financial need, even though much of that cheap labor pool is now gone because of the massive decline in vocations after Vatican II.

Adapted from: Smith, Christian J. "Waiting for the Bus: Generosity and the Catholic Church in America." In: Sociology of Religion. 2009. Click here to read the full article.
“THE FINEST CLOTHING MADE is a person’s skin,” Mark Twain once said. “But, of course, society demands something more than this.”

Yes indeed. And what an extravagant human phenomenon that “something more” has become. The adornment of the body is a global, multibillion-dollar industry. Fashion as cultural artifact has become the subject of scholars, society watchers, students of design. It’s the art of looking good, and who doesn’t respond to beauty?

Who doesn’t think clothes are important when going through life day to day? That clothes make the man, that women should dress for success?

Or do you sometimes wonder if your fashion statement is “none of the above”? Are you bummed when you have to suit up for an important meeting on a casual Friday? Do you typically sputter for an answer when your spouse asks, “You’re not going dressed like that, are you?”

What does it mean when you wear what you do? What do your clothes say about you? What do you want them to say? Do your clothes ever make you feel good about yourself? Do you listen to those who advise you to look nice at all times, dress like a grown-up, be tasteful, tailored, trend-setting, well-groomed or at least in fashion — if not fashion-forward?

Do you appreciate those who go in style? Those who do it in style? Those who have style?

Do you sometimes find yourself all dressed up with no place to go? Would you give the shirt off your back, walk a mile in their shoes, judge a book by its cover?

If you answered “yes,” “maybe” or “don’t know” to any of the questions above, then this issue of Notre Dame Magazine is for you. So read on and enjoy our spring collection of stories. And if you think the subject frivolous, remember Isaac Bashevis Singer’s warning: “What a strange power there is in clothing.” Indeed.
My Life in Clothes

Anecdotal evidence reveals clothing serves multiple purposes.
I should confess straightaway that I don’t know much about fashion, but I know a whole lot about clothes. I have been wearing them almost daily for as long as I can remember.

BY KERRY TEMPLE ’74

At the beginning, of course, my mother dressed me. I was dressed like most boys are, and I came to appreciate the practical functionality of clothing — how it keeps your body warm in winter and that long pants (even in summer) protect the skin against stickers and bug bites and sliding into second. I learned, too, that certain body parts are to remain covered at all times — at least when walking around in public — and about the difference between play times — at least when walking around in public — and about the difference between play clothes and school clothes and Sunday clothes and that clothing without holes is essential in certain social situations.

Clothes are important, I ascertained, and we dress in different outfits for the roles we play, the places we go, the company we keep. As a boy growing up in Louisiana with a bias for bare feet, I was taught you can keep. As a boy growing up in Louisiana with a bias for bare feet, I was taught you can judge the character of a man by the shoes he wears.

I learned other things as well from my mother, who believed in the importance of good grooming and physical appearances and making the proper impression on people who would judge my character by the clothes I wore. Some teachings I shed like last year’s color palette and yet other lessons echo in my brain to this day — for example, when to put away the white pants, sweater vest and a seersucker suit for summer, giving me modish shirts, an argyle sweater vest and a seersucker suit for summers in the South. The stuff just wasn’t me, and what we wear usually fits best when it’s a reflection of who we are.

The good woman even dragged me along with my aunt and older sister when they pilgrimaged to Dallas for a day of shopping at Neiman Marcus, ignoring my pouty disdain for the marketplace of elegance and show. We would lunch at The Zodiac, the iconic store’s haute tea room, gorgeous, sinewy models going table to table showing off their chic drapings and adornments — a miserably withering scenario for a budding boy immersed in poised femininity.

The mortification was only amplified by the fact I would be wearing the on-loan, periwinkle-blue blazer assigned any male who had failed the dress code by daring to dine without a sports jacket. Each trip I belligerently refused to dress up for this exhibition of good taste, and each trip I sulily put on the scarlet-letter cape that announced “chump.” I suspect the discomfort I feel today at dinner tables requiring a coat and tie can be traced to these stifling luncheons of dainty food and high fashion. Thank God the nation has adopted a more casual stance toward restaurant wear.

The weird thing is this: Whenever I strap on a jacket and tie, I feel like that same little boy dragged before the grown-ups, dressed up for church or a wedding, totally and awkwardly out of my comfort zone. Still. Today. Old enough to know better. Flushed out of my element by the clothes I put on. All twitchy, bound and constricted. What’s with that?

An invitation imposes itself on me and the immediate thought is whether or not it’s a coat-and-tie affair. It can be a real dilemma. You want to be comfortable, but if you’re not dressed properly, you feel even more uncomfortable — like an outcast at a private club, a galoot at the ball. But if you dress up and everyone else dresses less formally, you feel out of it, like a clueless, tweedy stuffed-shirt lost in time. Totally unhip.

One of the profound humiliations of my life was attending a New Year’s Eve party as a high school freshman at the cute girl’s house with all the popular kids, me wearing a wool three-piece suit because my mother — wrongly, very wrongly — insisted everyone would be dressed up, after all, everyone dresses up for a New Year’s Eve party. I never recovered from this embarrassment.

I don’t typically spend much time anymore...
Weighing wardrobe options. My big decision each day is which shirt to wear with my khakis. I suppose my discomfort would be different if my day job required a coat and tie. I did that in high school. Through four years at an all-male, Catholic high school, I wore the standard-issue vestments: gray slacks, blue blazer, regimental-striped tie and an Oxford-cloth shirt in white or blue.

So I’ve done my time in a coat and tie, and felt very grown up doing so. Mature at 16. Superior to my public-school friends shuffling to school in denim, flannel and leather, their shirttails hanging out. Maybe I got that out of my system. Or maybe I OD’d at an impressionable stage. Maybe, given the Woodstockian era in which I came of age, the coat and tie came to symbolize the costume conformity of corporate sameness. The Man and Bab-titt’s America. The necktie as sameness, The Man and Bab-titt’s America. The necktie as cos-

Adventuring off to college, I set out to create my own distinct look by dressing like most everyone else around me — blue jeans, plaid flannel shirts, desert boots and a blue jean jacket I wore throughout the South Bend winters, eschewing any sense of the practical functionality of clothing I had learned as a toddler. I shivered — ruggedly, stoically — from building to building, but am confident I looked pretty cool once inside — perhaps could be mistaken for a Creedence Clearwater Revival roadie or (on a blue workshirt day) a slouchy, soulful, enigmatic philosopher-poet.

That was the persona I sought to present to the world back then. And we all — even those who brush aside couture or rebel against conventional fashion — dress for a part, choose a style, a look, a get-up that makes a statement about us. Even when we dress to blend in, our clothing speaks of our identity, expresses the inner self. Dapper, grungy, preppy, countercultural? ‘Stylin’. J. Crew, goth or walking billboard for a brand? Aeropostale. North Face. Gap. Old Navy. If we dress to make a personal statement public, to show who we are, what does it say about us when we put a corporate logo across our chest?

I am standing by the window, talking to a student from Alaska. She is artsy: spiky, hennaed hair, facial piercings, tattoos and lots of black — banded in thick leather, accented with silver studs. Out the window I spy a team of corporate interviewers exiting the University’s career center. They are dressed — both male and female — in assorted shades of gray. Uniformly monochromatic. Sharply tailored, snappily pressed, white shirts and ties. Seniors — similarly attired, hoping to make a favorable professional impression — accompany them. Some wear trenchcoats, still crisp with newness and belted smartly at the waist.

I see what we all see when a politician removes his jacket, rolls up his sleeves and loosens his tie when he courts voters in a and common sense . . . or why else would one wear 6-inch heels, pantyhose, a denim jacket in winter or blue jeans with holes in them?

I am a college freshman home for Christmas. I have a favorite old pair of jeans riddled with holes. So I have gathered scraps from other jeans, a favorite shirt, a peace sign snared from a head shop like a merit badge or military patch. I am sewing these onto the jeans, proud of my dexterity with needle and thread, my anti-materialistic frugality and my intimacy with the character of fondly worn things. But my mother (probably still miffed that I seemed only politely lukewarm toward the pine-green corduroy slacks she gave me for Christmas) wants to know what I’m doing. I explain what must certainly be obvious: I’m patching the holes in my jeans.

“See, I love these old jeans. Besides, everybody I know has old jeans they’ve patched. But my appeal to her Tribal Wear sensibilities, to dress like my friends up north, is holding no traction with her. The eruption is now full force.

She and my father sweated and sacrificed for a lifetime so their children wouldn’t have to wear clothes with holes in them. Why even in the Depression, when they didn’t know where their next meal was coming from, they didn’t go out in public looking like some ragamuffin, wearing clothes with holes in them. No child of mine, she went on, is going to walk around town with patches on their clothes like some old hobo or bum. What would your father say, having worked all his life to provide you and your sister good, nice clothes so you’d fit in with the right kind of people? And now you sewing patches on your clothes. . . .

Her tirade only got worse when she learned the jeans I was patching (I regretfully revealed this for its sentimental value, thinking — mistakenly — that establishing a bond with family friends would help bail me out of this verbal shelling) were actually hand-me-downs from Jimmy Walker — “MY GOD, Margaret Walker’s son!” — getting worse yet again, when I said, yes, Jimmy didn’t want them anymore because of the holes. “Margaret WALKER!”

We clearly stood on opposite sides of the
chasm. She only cared about what other people thought, and I grasped the principle at stake here, a self-defining generational statement about mass consumption and materialism and conformity and a cultural ethos being transformed by my generation — a cohort to which I demonstrated allegiance by wearing my authentically patched jeans to validate my tribal standing.

As I say, she and I had many such disagreements until she mellowed, outgrowing her intolerant attitude toward wardrobe and lifestyle. It was she, after all, who gave me the blue-jean jacket I wore like a monk’s robe till it grew tattered and threadbare over time. It hurt to let it go.

That is something else important about clothing. A jacket, a shirt or sweater, a pair of jeans or boots acquires character over time, or is meaningful because of its history. I believe in the souls of inanimate objects, in spirits coming to inhabit the things we love. So it has been hard at times to part with an article of clothing, a pair of hiking boots, a sweater that’s been worn into shabbiness. It was she, after all, who gave me my closet help me feel like me, keep me true to myself, make me feel right. That’s worth something in the world today.

My father wore a white shirt to work every day. A fedora and a tie and one of several sports jackets. He had a closet full of suits.

As time went on and the years went by, he loosened up some (sports jacket, no tie), dressing more casually day to day — into his 70s then deep into his 80s, into frail and bedridden times and back out again, then eventually into the early stages of Alzheimer’s. And yet, when he was 89 and my mother was eventually into the early stages of Alzheimer’s. And yet, when he was 89 and my mother was 70s then deep into his 80s, into frail and bedridden times and back out again, then eventually into the early stages of Alzheimer’s. And yet, when he was 89 and my mother was in the hospital for an extended stay, with me taking my sister’s place caring for him at home for a couple of weeks and taking him to the hospital to sit with his wife, he returned to old habits. He was stepping out again, going to see dressing for our hospital visits, I steered him toward more casual attire. He was now a man who looked like he knows what he’s doing and who passed the test of sociobiology and the writings of anthropologist Desmond Morris. It’s fun — and fascinating — to interpret the social behaviors of the human species through such a lens, watching how we dress as predator and prey, mimicking the ritual displays of plumage and prowess.

It was a woman who first told me that women dress mainly as a statement to other women but also to exert power over men. Though startled by the candor, I knew immediately what she meant . . . because I’m well aware of the mysterious power of female beauty and the surprising allure in the cut of a skirt, the fit of a dress, the flagrant yet basic charm of a T-shirt with jeans. If women dress to accentuate the lure of visual cues, men dress mainly as a statement to other men, or make it more interesting, more fun, perhaps to signal a sense of being in control. A man who looks like he knows what he’s doing has a nice head start when auditioning as a good catch to those seeking a mate. At least that’s what I surmise from the glaring models in men’s fashion magazines.

My life in clothes, though, is proof that I am much less aware of what looks good on a man than a woman. At this point in life I have given up wanting to be noticed; my fashion sense these days says just try to look nice. But I am grateful to all who help beautify the world, or make it more interesting, more fun, more tasteful or zesty — by the way they have come dressed for the party.
LONDON UNVEILED
Model-actress
London Vale ’08 chases the dream.

BY KRISTEN DOLD ’09

London Vale ’08 asks if I’d like to hear a joke.

Fifteen seconds later she’s delivered a squeaky-clean quip about a priest and a million bucks, and I’m giggling politely. Vale laughs at her G-rated attempt, a priest and a million bucks, and I’m giggling as well.

“Every once in a while I’d get lucky and meet someone on set who was willing to introduce me to their agent or tell a casting director about me,” she says. “Like any other industry, it was all about building contacts.”

The networking paid off. Vale landed some modeling gigs, slipping into everything from bikinis to wedding dresses for local magazine spreads, designer websites and even the runway. Nice work, for sure, but it is, well, work. “It’s never as glamorous as it looks,” admits Vale. “But I’m usually so happy to be there — pulling ideas and inspiration from the stylists and makeup artists — that I don’t have time to think, ‘My feet hurt!’ or ‘I’m cold!’”

All of the success was sweet retribution for the young woman who was told she had to make some changes if she wanted to be a model. “I remember when I was 21 a photographer told me I needed Botox. Someone else once told me I’d never make it if I didn’t have the tiny mole above my lip removed. I’ve learned to take it all with a grain of salt.”

For that healthy attitude, she thanks Notre Dame. “I’m so grateful I have that foundation. I’ve learned to take it all with a grain of salt.”

Vale’s refreshing attitude will come in handy now that she’s inching closer to her real passion: to become a dramatic film actress. She has a recurring role in The F List, a webseries about making it in Hollywood, and just finished filming the independently produced TV pilot The Gunrunner Billy Kane. Her work in the sci-fi thriller required more than just acting chops. Vale spent part of the movie being chased by a CIA agent across the rooftop of a building and scurrying down a three-story fire escape — all while wearing high-heeled boots.

Scary? Sure. But the up-for-anything actress hopes her next role will be equally as edgy and fun. “You put in tons and tons of work, and once in a while something really cool happens,” she says. One such moment: Vale recently got a call from her sister, who spotted her modeling a designer gown in an issue of US Weekly. It’s a long way from orchard tours and paper plate commercials, but in a way, she’s just getting started.
AN EMBARRASSMENT OF CLOTHES
Mother decries silly wardrobe choices, asks: ‘What are we thinking?’

By Paige Wiser ’92

One of my favorite childhood photos is a fashion shot of me at about age 3. I’m standing on our pea-green carpeting, next to a jug of fake flowers, wearing an orange-and-yellow knock-off Pucci tunic vest. I’m hesitant to make eye contact with the camera, with a wary expression on my face that says, “I look like Bea Arthur. I will never forgive you for this.”

Sure, you could blame the ’70s. But when are parents going to step up and take some responsibility? Why don’t they just admit it? “When we dress our kids, we don’t always have their best interests at heart.”

I wasn’t the only fashion victim. Look closely at a photo of any small child dressed up in a sailor suit or reindeer antlers, and you’ll see an unmistakable message in their eyes: “Help me.”

If you doubt it, visit awkwardfamilyphotos.com. You’ll get an eyeful. The category devoted to the ’80s is particularly enlightening.

Why the embarrassing clothes? Is this our way of punishing our kids for all the future misery they’re bound to bring us?

In the course of my anecdotal research, I’ve found that there are four distinct stages of dressing kids.

STAGE ONE: WE DRESS KIDS FOR A GOOD LAUGH.
New parents are giddy with power. We have all the control—but deep down, we know this period is cruelly brief. So we assert our dominance while we can, before our babies can learn to crawl away from bad fashion choices.

In this first stage, we dress kids as peapods and gnomes for Halloween. We photograph them in flowerpots. We snicker as we put them in onesies that say “Does this diaper make my butt look big?” and “I only cry when ugly people hold me.”

There is a photo of future President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a toddler, wearing a white frilly dress...
QUEENS, while the boys — well, the boys look exactly like they will in 20 years, when they are still living in our basements: underbathed, in layers of sweats.

STAGE THREE: WE DRESS THEM BETTER THAN OURSELVES.

When my son was born, among the usual gifts (receiving blankets, Peepee Teepees) was a set of heavenly blue Burberry pajamas. For the baby!

I'm not ready to publicly confess that I was jealous. I will, though, share my first thought upon opening the box: “But he hasn't earned them!”

Sadly, seven years later, I'm still waiting for my first item of Burberry clothing. And my son still hasn't earned his.

Yes, of course we want our kids to have it better than we did. We want to give them the world. Designers have been taking advantage of this for years, making a bundle off teeny Oscar de la Renta frocks, Gucci hoodies, Dolce & Gabbana sneakers and Ed Hardy skull T-shirts that say “Love Kills Slowly” (just $24.95!).

I'll say it. In my day, we wore mix-and-match Garanimals — and we liked it.

Time will tell if baby Ugg boots will warp these kids’ values. But if you want my opinion, when you get Burberry at birth, I can pretty much guarantee you that life is downhill from there.

STAGE FOUR: KIDS STRIKE BACK.

I don’t remember caring about what I wore until junior high, when I begged my mom for a pair of dark-wash, high-waisted Jordache jeans. (Timeless!) But my second grader already rejects whatever I pull out of the closet, saying, “I don’t want to look cute! That’s not my style.”

Her style, near as I can tell, is “materialistic hippie”: glittery, mass-marketed peace-sign T-shirts that are appropriate for all occasions.

Last year, a well-publicized study from Ohio’s Kenyon College concluded that almost a third of young girls’ clothing is sexualized. Well, sure, if you consider lace miniskirts to be oversexualized. They do go nicely, though, with the lower-back temporary tattoos (“tramp stamps”) girls can buy at Toys “R” Us.

We should probably be more worried about boys’ sartorial choices. Trend-setter Justin Bieber has been open about his preference for women’s slim-fit jeans, with the waist hitting just under the butt. I’m not sure if that’s categorized as oversexualized, but it is efficient: When it comes to de-pantsing, why not cut out the middle man?

And this is where we have to learn to let go. Just when it’s most painful to watch, we have to lovingly set our kids free. Like any good fashion fad, it all comes back full circle.

We may start out dressing them in embarrassing, clownlike clothes, but we make the most of the few years we can influence their wardrobes. We show them how to have fun with what they wear. We nurture their identities and build up their confidence.

And it’s all for this:

So our kids can choose embarrassing, clownlike clothes on their own. □
THIS MAN’S STYLE GUIDE
The tastemakers work in offices above one of the busiest parts of America, so close to Times Square that cold January winds litter the balconies with confetti from the New Year’s celebration.

At more than 40 stories in the middle of Manhattan, the Condé Nast Building is not only an integral part of the New York City skyline, it’s where trends in fashion, culture and thought take shape.

The monolith itself provides one of the best games in media, where one takes an elevator and guesses which magazine each person will depart for: The New Yorker, Vanity Fair, Glamour. While waiting in a lobby near the office of Teen Vogue, my own people-watching predictions become boringly accurate, particularly with the women who are 10 years younger, 5 inches taller and 50 pounds lighter than I am.

My appointment lies at the other end of the hall, in the office with the giant abbreviation logo that is used as a noun, verb and adjective. Gentlemen’s Quarterly, better known as GQ, has been a pillar of the male style zeitgeist for decades and is stewarded by two Notre Dame graduates: editor-in-chief Jim Nelson ’85 and deputy editor Michael Hainey ’86.

Notice the previous use of the word “style,” and not “fashion” — at GQ, it is an important distinction. Outside Nelson’s office is a piece of artwork that says, “Fashion fades, Style remains.”

“To me, that conjures other qualities we hold dear and want to celebrate,” Nelson says. “We are a men’s magazine that is trying to reach all facets of the stylish life for men . . . and kind of open doors for guys.”

The goal is summarized in a four-word slogan on each issue: Look Sharp, Live Smart.

“It is sort of those two missions. I think a person who considers and cares about style then cares about his place in the world, cares about taste, and that branches out into taste in good food, wine and travel,” Nelson says.

Down the hall from Nelson’s office, the mission of GQ stays the same for Hainey.

“Anyone can have ‘fashion.’ Money buys you fashion. . . . The clothes are one part of [style], it’s sort of the man’s character, who he is,” Hainey says. “It’s where you choose to travel, where you choose to eat, the books you read, and the ideas that you want to speak about and know about. Style is a way of being.”

At a remove from this conversation, the Condé Nast Building, or New York City, these statements can come off as breezily esoteric. But when put in the context of the actual magazine and these two men behind it — and when put into actual practice — it starts to make more sense.

Nelson and Hainey, after all, are personifications of their own magazine’s values: friendly, witty, genial and urbane, noticeably at ease with living in their own skin; Nelson sitting at a clear tabletop set upon sawhorses, rows and rows of books behind him; Hainey in an office defining modern minimalism, with bare white walls and few accoutrements; Nelson wearing dark jeans, a navy sweater with a large red stripe, and black shoes with a white accent running along the edge of the soles; Hainey in a dark pinstripe suit.
and wingtips, the button-down collar above his tie purposely unbuttoned; both with slim builds and hair trimmed close on the sides and left longer on top.

They started the path to their current jobs in worlds decidedly more journalistic than runway. Nelson, an American studies graduate from Maryland, came to Notre Dame primarily for the study abroad program in Angers, France, and was an editor at Harper’s before working on features at GQ. Hainey, a Chicago native, studied literature in South Bend and began his career at the widely admired Spy magazine.

Hainey notes that in the past decade GQ has won more National Magazine Awards than any other Condé Nast publication and is second only to The New Yorker in prizes for its journalism.

Nelson and Hainey, their relationship with the magazine initially sprang from their interest in writing. By 2005, I had traded in the Midwest for a cramped studio near Lincoln Center to study journalism at Columbia University. Picking up GQ was a utilitarian decision; I chose an academic concentration in magazine writing and, frankly, just needed to read more magazines.

Plenty that I read regularly or semi-regularly at the time, such as Harper’s, The Atlantic and Vanity Fair, have all but disappeared from my monthly media diet, with the occasional online article being an exception. GQ, however, has been a mainstay with me for the better part of a decade. It’s a guidebook, influencing what I wear, watch and read. It’s why I thought to buy chunky brown wingtips, to rent the first season of Mad Men, to listen to Fleet Foxes and to read a new wave of fiction about hard times in rural America.

Not too long ago, the magazine would not have had the same appeal. For much of its more than 50-year history, GQ functioned as an insider publication for the fashion industry. It only branched into more general interest territory in the 1980s and 1990s under the late Art Cooper, Nelson’s famed predecessor.

‘I WOULD NEVER DO SOMETHING THAT I THOUGHT WAS PURELY OUTRAGEOUS OR CONTROVERSIAL, BUT IT’S OKAY TO PROVOKE, AND IT’S OKAY TO PUSH BOUNDARIES SOMETIMES.’ — JIM NELSON

“Style is one part of what I do here,” he says. “It’s one part of what GQ is.”

“That’s my love: great ambitious writing, literary journalism, and writing that affects people and sticks with them,” Nelson says. “I had to learn a lot very fast [after becoming editor-in-chief] because I didn’t know that much about the fashion. I didn’t know about the fashion world, I didn’t understand how the fashion pages were made here. . . . I took it as an intellectual task.”

THE TIES THAT BIND

Not too long ago, the thought of being a member — nay, wanting to be a member — of a “Tie of the Month” club would have struck me as ludicrous.

That inclination started to change when I began regularly reading GQ.

Since graduating from Notre Dame almost eight years ago, I have gone from someone whose clothing decisions were based around which band to promote on his back to someone who attempts to make sure his collar, lapels and tie are as proportional as possible (and, in the current style, slim — but not too slim). In my college years, my clothes were mostly a personal statement on the merits of the Clash, R.E.M., Leonard Cohen and Notre Dame’s football team. Now, they are more of a preppy dissertation on corduroy and chambray, boat shoes and chukka boots, knit ties and tie bars.

And thanks to a birthday gift from my indulgent wife, I recently was part of the Tie Bar’s “Tie of the Month” club, personally choosing 12 ties on not only color and pattern but also on the fabric of said ties — silk, wool and cotton — and correlating it with the season. The only reason I was interested in this, and the only reason I knew the company even existed, was GQ.

Like Nelson and Hainey, my relationship with the magazine initially sprang from my interest in writing. By 2005, I had traded in the Midwest for a cramped studio near Lincoln Center to study journalism at Columbia University. Picking up GQ was a utilitarian decision; I chose an academic concentration in magazine writing and, frankly, just needed to read more magazines.
LEADING MAN

Following Thom Browne’s January fashion show in Paris, The Washington Post mused that it had divined his inspirations: “preppy style, S&M, and possibly, the TV show The Munsters.

And Browne ’88, one of the pre-eminent names in men’s clothing, certainly did put the “show” into fashion show this year. Models paraded down the runway with exaggerated shoulders or spiked masks, donning pastel pink and green suits, and clothes dotted with ducks, dogs and safety pins.

Whereas some people might see his recent show only as the early costuming for “Nightmare on Martha’s Vineyard,” GQ saw “wearable looks beneath the grandeur: neat scarves and ties, a tipped navy blazer, nautical sweaters, and dependably smart shoes, in particular, proved that no matter the shape, it’s all about fit.”

Browne is most associated with a gray-suiting style reminiscent of the 1950s and ’60s, with shrunken jackets and trademark trousers that flash plenty of ankle.

“The core of my collection begins with the basic gray suit that I have become known for, but my intention is to create collections that provoke people’s minds and to make people think,” Browne said recently via email. “But every season I try to do something different.”

Browne won the 2010 Most Influential Designer in Menswear Award at the WGSN Global Fashion Awards. He has a high-profile collaboration with the iconic Brooks Brothers label, and Michael Hainey ’86, deputy editor of GQ, believes Browne was a key part of America’s recent resurgence on the style scene.

“It was so new to the eye: ‘Yeah, that’s what a man should look like right now,’” Hainey said. “For a long time, American style, American fashion, was following the Europeans.”

Despite the volume and rapidity injected into the clothing world by the Internet, Browne maintains a distance from magazines, blogs and the work of other designers.

“I just concentrate on my own collections,” he said. “I don’t follow trends. My intention is to make people realize that one does not have to feel confined to trends.”

Browne has said before that in our current dressed-down culture, suits are anti-Establishment. Not surprisingly, then, his own definition of style is “someone who has confidence.”

“But I do believe that one is what one wears. It should reflect that person’s individuality,” he said. “They need to figure out what works for them, and have the confidence to stick to it.”

— Liam Farrell ’04

That was when GQ expanded from its niche role into long-form journalism and pop-culture content. Featured authors included David Halberstam, Andrew Corsello, James Ellroy and Gore Vidal.

“He wanted to make it wider, bigger, smarter,” says Nelson, who took over for Cooper in March 2003. “He made it a real mainstream American magazine.”

When Nelson first helmed the magazine after six years as its senior editor, he found his biggest task was to better integrate GQ’s clothing mission with the rest of its content.

“I thought men were becoming more aware of fashion and style and more willing to embrace it. So I didn’t need to apologize for that or hide it,” he says. “It felt a little bit like it had been ghettoized, and I needed to figure out a way to integrate it all.”

Hainey, who has been at GQ for 13 years, said over the last decade there has been a dramatic change in how much men are interested in style. He attributes some of it to a generation of men comfortable with their sexuality, some of it to the Internet explosion and its attendant expansion of the ability to view fashion trends and buy clothing from trending labels. The style search is also less intimidating as it continues to move beyond magazine pages, he says, and into places like NBA player press conferences.

“There has been an enormous revolution. . . . It’s this edited view of the world, this curated view of the world,” he says. “The flood of imagery and fashion bloggers and style bloggers and guys who are obsessed about the perfect shoes; if you really want to learn it, it’s like anything now; you can get really deep into it.”

A single New York City subway ride shows how much inspiration is available outside the runways: bright red boat shoe boots; overcoats with crisp military accents like epaulettes; blue and green corduroys; and a woman who can only be described as...
a living audition for a walk-on role in Breakfast at Tiffany’s. Even at a distant remove in places like South Bend, a Twitter feed can be turned into a running photo gallery of style gurus mingling outside the latest Florence fashion show.

“My eye is always on. It’s not on in a critical way; it’s on in looking for ‘new,’” Hainey says. “The conversation is happening both ways. The street is influencing the runway as much as the runway is influencing the street.”

If anything, GQ’s role can be enhanced, not replaced, through this information flood by playing, to use Hainey’s term, a curative role amidst the digital flotsam.

“The magazine can sort of be like a big brother,” Nelson says.

**AT YOUR SERVICE**

In the front of each issue, a GQ reader will find a section, originated by Nelson, called “Manual.” With short, punchy text accompanying glossy pictures, it is a core part of what Nelson and Hainey term their “service” pieces.

“The magazine is aspirational and it’s instructional, and it’s also important to me that it’s never exclusionary,” Hainey says.

In December’s issue, Manual noted the utility of wearing fingerless wool gloves to stay stylish when temperatures drop low but texting stays high; how to take sartorial inspiration from action film costumes like Kurt Russell’s bomber jacket in The Thing; and three ways to “elevate your grilled cheese sandwich” with new ingredients. In January’s issue, the Manual endorsed a specific pair of boots for winter and discussed the merits of getaways to all-inclusive resorts.

“Men’s minds work that way. They want to scan, digest and act upon things,” Nelson says. “I wanted the magazine to be more clearly helpful and to do clever, modern service on a variety of fronts. I just think that men crave advice and guidance, and they look to magazines to give it to them.”

A linchpin of this approach is a running feature called “Project Upgrade,” which shows a man in his own clothes and makes just enough changes — a better fit in the suit, a shoe with a rounded rather than squared toe — to transform his appearance.

“What you really want is, ‘How do I do that?’” Hainey says. “We tweak it just a little bit, and often not for a lot of money. . . . It’s not night and day. It’s night and a better night.”

Over time, I have found the Manual to be indispensable. Given my chosen profession, learning to be discerning without bringing on bankruptcy is important, and the rules of good style apply no matter a price tag.

Example: more than anything, it’s necessary to know how clothes should fit. Over years as a political journalist, I received a daily visual dose of bad suits, bad pants, bad shoes, etc. We don’t all have to be waifs, but not all clothes have to fit like pajamas, either. There’s a good compromise, and I have found that a well-cut, $100 synthetic fiber suit from H&M that lies closer to the body both looks and feels superior to a baggy, $400 wool suit from Macy’s.

In the spirit of Nelson’s own fashion immersion, the style world also appeals to my journalistic and observational instincts. It is all about the details, whether it’s bright socks or a piped pocket square. Sometimes GQ’s suggested products will carry prices in the thousands, but you don’t have to buy that precise shirt or suit; instead, study the color or cut and search for a more affordable alternative. I confess to have smirked a little in a Paul Smith store in Soho when I saw a blazer listed for $950 in the “new season” section that was virtually identical to one I purchased from Land’s End Canvas last summer for about $50.

And as an ongoing student of American life and history, I find the recent trend away from European to American heritage styling particularly fascinating. New York City in January looked like it was full of people expecting to chop wood or tap a tree for syrup on the way to the Met. One morning the lobby of my hotel featured a man chattering on a cell phone in Italian while wearing an enormous buffalo plaid flat hat.

“It’s funny,” Hainey says, “the democratization of a trend.”

**REGRETS, THEY’VE HAD A FEW**

I acknowledge that the more I have become interested in style, the more I have pondered the question of authenticity. Does simply buying a piece of clothing make it yours? Or is it nothing but a costume you choose to wear any day but Halloween?

Granted, these questions eventually devolve into an existential crisis over the meaningfulness of much, much more than whether a lapel should be 3 inches or 2-1/2 inches wide. It would also seem an illegitimate standard for style to have to be inherited, like a great wardrobe of family heirlooms, for acceptability. No less a man than George Washington spent a lifetime wrapped up in sartorial fastidiousness, special ordering his clothes from England, picking the uniforms for his personal guard, and, in the words of historian Ron Chernow, “regarding a person’s apparel as the outward sign of order.”

But as someone whose senior thesis was titled “Elvis Presley and the American Dream” and whose favorite book is The Great Gatsby, I do spend time considering the difficulties of fashioning the American male and defining one’s own identity. The trick seems to lie in making sure you don’t end up — metaphorically, of course — dead in your own pool.

We all have to be as discerning as possible and be willing to let go of clothes that don’t work. I jettisoned an ill-considered hat phase and have been relatively happy with the result. I am fully signed up for cardigans and loafers but dozens of photo spreads of double-breasted suits and turtlenecks still have me unconvinced.

Thankfully, GQ does have the guts to admit when it was wrong. There is an archive on the magazine’s website called “GQ Regrets,” and the collection of images is accompanied by a thanks to readers “for still looking to us for guidance, even after we told you it was cool to leave the house dressed like a sex-dungeon proprietor, or a Renaissance Faire pimp, or the distinguished ambassador from the Sovereign Nation of Polyestra.”

“No one is perfect. We all have pictures of ourselves, like, ‘Really? I was wearing that?”’ Hainey says. “That’s why guys trust GQ.”

It’s a challenge that runs through the whole magazine, as it does any publication trying to negotiate its mission as a guide to style and culture while not becoming a slave to the moment. Making the magazine relevant to younger generations is important to Nelson, whose first cover had Johnny Knoxville of MTV’s Jackass fame. Nelson believed when he took over that the magazine needed to upgrade its icons and cultural references from the Rat Pack days of Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra.

“I was trying to do something different, and I knew some people would not like it,” he says. “That is something we talk about all the time, even so far as debating what is ‘nostalgia.’”

It’s a balancing act that can court controversy on occasion. GQ found itself in the crosshairs in late 2010 when it had a racy pictorial of some cast members of the hit show Glee, even though the actor and actresses pictured were well into their 20s. Nelson says he still finds the reaction maddening, considering the age of the people involved and the wry sexual content of the Fox
show itself. The photo spread is still available on GQ’s website.

“That kind of controversy can be good for a magazine,” he says. “I would never do something that I thought was purely outrageous or controversial, but it’s okay to provoke, and it’s okay to push boundaries sometimes.”

Hanging over it all, perhaps, is a question of permanence. “Fashion” and “style,” no matter the preferred term, can be used pejoratively, and the clothes within a magazine can be as fleeting as the movie promoted by the celebrity cover subject.

Hainey, however, is untroubled by the hourglass.

“The guy who professes more than anything that he doesn’t care about clothes, he cares about clothes. You are making a choice,” he says. “How come all you wear are track suits and white shoes? You decided that’s your style.”

“That style is at the root of it all — stylish writing, stylish thinking.”

That reaction makes sense at GQ. The magazine’s very mission is tied to the idea that what you wear is as much a part of who you are as the music you listen to, the books you read and the food you eat. It’s not a transitory lifestyle, it’s a lifestyle dedicated to the search for what is appealing. As journalists, it’s not surprising Nelson and Hainey— or, if I may be excused a moment of ego, myself — are willing to try and live their lives as a sweeping flashlight.

“Journalists love to observe . . . and grab that thing and start to describe it and what it means,” Hainey says. “You are signing up for the idea of being a carnivore. You are automatically saying you are going to keep expanding your mind.”

LIVING THE LIFE

I mulled these thoughts in the waning afternoon as I wandered around Soho and

Tribe. By taking along GQ’s own travel guide to New York City, I hoped to get a better sense of the magazine’s aspirations, and I idly wandered through stores that looked like a basement from a Maine summer home, with $28 socks sitting next to carved trinkets and books about bird watching. I also spent some time in Uniqlo, a store by an up-and-coming label that felt like a dystopian fever dream, complete with enough pastel clothing to coordinate an entire wardrobe with sherbet flavors.

At first it was a dislocating experience, akin to a confirmation of the authenticity problem. I wasn’t living a lifestyle, I was passing through it. And it didn’t feel that enjoyable, amid the ransacking of Uniqlo’s discount racks or the “I don’t think he’s buying anything” stares of downtown clerk cognoscenti.

I felt a click around nightfall, though, when I settled into Spitzer’s Corner, a gastro-pub recommended by the magazine and located at Rivington and Ludlow streets on the Lower East Side. If there was ever a bar designed for a cold January day, this was it, with a warm, wood interior and a plate-glass window revealing people going home or out to shop.

While eating dinner, I started to understand what Nelson, Hainey and GQ want for their readers. Not just my dark leather boots, charcoal herringbone pants, light gray jacket, red Fair Isle sweater, white spread-collar shirt and navy tie; not just a braised pork belly sandwich and a Maine microbrew on draft; not just a perfect view of a winter sunset over the tenements that is accompanied by the sounds of George Harrison’s “My Sweet Lord.”

They want readers to have it all. And in that moment, I definitely didn’t feel “fashionable.” I felt stylish.
Snipped
The author, his reputation hanging by a thread, is saved from a potential Red Carpet embarrassment.

By Jamie Reidy ’92

Who are you wearing?”
I blinked at my female friend. She’s hammered, I thought. She didn’t mean “who,” she meant “what.” Panicked that I’d committed a fashion faux pas, I glanced down at the clothes I’d worn to the party in early October 2010. But nothing was amiss, which is to say I looked like I always did: as though a tornado had struck the men’s sections of only two stores in the mall and then deposited their contents into my closet.

I sported Gap 1969 jeans, Gap T-shirt, Gap belt, Banana Republic socks and a Banana Republic V-neck sweater.

She read my confusion, which had ferrous my brow like a Sharpei’s. “To the movie premiere! Who are you wearing?” Her face lit up like mine does when talking about Rocket’s kickoff return against Miami in 1990.

Ahhh. Love and Other Drugs, the movie based on my first book, Hard Sell: The Evolution of a Viagra Salesman, was scheduled to open the American Film Institute’s annual festival on November 4. In addition to co-stars Jake Gyllenhaal — playing “Jamie,” words that are really, really fun to type — and Anne Hathaway, numerous celebrities would be in attendance. Ditto, the paparazzi. As the author, I’d get to walk down the red carpet, where I’d be photographed and celebrities would be in attendance. Ditto, the paparazzi. As the author, I’d get to walk down the red carpet, where I’d be photographed and interviewed. You know, ho-hum everyday stuff.

Later, when I related the details of my party conversation to Jenn, my then-girlfriend, her face expressed some disappointment at considering both those things.

The premiere’s dress code was cocktail attire: dark suit without a tie. Convenient, since I already owned a black suit. “Snazzy,” my father would describe it; three-buttons with an athletic cut. I happily shared that fact with Jenn, who did not share my enthusiasm.

“You’re not buying a new one?”
I scoffed. She did not. “Jamie, it’s your movie premiere!” Her tone softened to that of a kindergarten teacher. “You need a new suit for this.”

My face flushed with embarrassment. I felt an awful lot like Dad, which is never a good thing when discussing fashion. He would still be sporting plaid pants if Mom hadn’t wiped them from his closet and donated them to Goodwill in 1985.

Why would I ever have thought my old suit would cut it?
“Besides,” Jenn added helpfully, “Three-button suits are out; two-buttons are in.” Of course they are. Having once owned a clothing label, she wielded a wealth of fashion-trend wisdom, knowledge that would have proved invaluable to a novice like me in a situation like this. Naturally, I did not invite her on my shopping excursion.

In December 2009, she had wanted to buy me clothes for Christmas. At Neiman Marcus she expertly yanked many “hip and stylish” shirts off the rack, each of which I passed back with a grimace, like a 5-year-old given broccoli. The tres-chic salesman rubbed her back empathetically. When we finally settled on some less daring tops, I couldn’t help coughing at their price tags. Not a lot of fa-la-la in the car on the way home.

Setting out solo to buy the most important suit of my life was the sartorial equivalent of a couch potato attempting Mount Everest sans Sherpa. I went to Macy’s. You don’t read about many celebrities doing their clothes shopping there.

Instantly, I spotted a black, two-button suit with faint pin stripes. On sale for $250! No need for an overly detailed girlfriend or fawning salesman; a 40-year-old Notre Dame grad and former Army officer can dress himself, thank you very much! (Note: Without authorization, Jenn stopped into a Beverly Hills men’s boutique at which she identified a London-designed, Italian-made, midnight blue shirt for me. As instructed, I drove 45 minutes to the store where I forked over the — cough — $200.)

The movie premiered at the famed Grauman’s Chinese Theatre. I had booked a hotel room across the street at The Roosevelt — no retail in Hollywood! — the swank spot hosting the after-party. Jenn got her hair and makeup professionally done, and looked stunning in a silky black dress. In my new suit and — gotta grudgingly admit — spectacular new shirt, I strode toward the red carpet like I actually belonged there.

Then I felt the tightness in the lower back of my suit jacket. I tried to pool it, like a concert pianist prior to sitting down on his bench. But my jacket did not budge. This would have been fine if it had no vents. But it did. Standing on Hollywood Boulevard, merely two first downs from the media lights and red carpet, Jenn confirmed that two strings crisscrossed the bottom of the jacket flaps: an X marking the spot of my fashion fiasco.

She didn’t need to say the words: That wouldn’t have happened at Neiman Marcus.

Sweat spewed from every pore in my body, just like when I got my first speeding ticket at age 17 in my father’s Buick. Limousines pulled up, dispensing Tinsel Town stars. Camera flashes created temporary daylight.

I desperately pointed to Jenn’s fashionable, tiny clutch. “Do you have scissors?”

“Who brings scissors to a movie premiere?!”

Questioning how she could ever be a decent mother if she wasn’t prepared at all times, I searched frantically for a couture crisis cure. A guy squeezed past me so he could enter The Coffee Bean behind us. Jenn remained on the sidewalk, undoubtedly questioning my ability to be a father if I couldn’t even successfully complete a suit purchase.

The bustling coffee shop froze after I exploded through the door. I cut to the front of the line without objection, an amazing occurrence. Jamie Reidy is an author and screenwriter in Manhattan Beach, California, where he neither hangs ten nor gets tan.

"PHOTO © ALYX J. BERLINER/ABIMAGES"
THE STREETS OF HOLLYWOOD TEEM WITH THE MENTALLY ILL. APPARENTLY THESE CUSTOMERS SIMPLY THOUGHT ME TRULY DERANGED.

THE TEENAGED BARISTA STARED AT ME, FEARFUL. I BESIECHED HIM. “Dude . . . do you have scissors I can borrow?” I half turned, half bent over to awkwardly show him my tethered vents.

WITHOUT A WORD HE WHIPPED OUT THE REQUESTED TOOL, SPINNING IT LIKE A GUNFIGHTER BEFORE HANDING IT TO ME. SNIP. AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER OF weight sank from my shoulders.

TWO MINUTES LATER, JENN AND I STOOD ON — NO — FLOATED ABOVE THE RED CARPET, BEAMING FOR A PHALANX OF PHOTOGRAPHERS SCREAMING MY NAME. “JAMIE! JAMIE!” IT WAS THE HIGH POINT OF MY LIFE.

LATER WE WOULD LEARN THAT JAMIE LEE CURTIS’ LIMO HAD PULLED UP IMMEDIATELY AFTER WE STEPPED ON THE CARPET; THE PAPARAZZI WERE YELLING FOR HER.

FOR MY NEXT MOVIE PREMIERE — FINGERS CROSSED, WOOD KNOCKED — I DON’T KNOW WHO I’LL BE WEARING. BUT I’LL BE BRINGING A FEMALE SHOPPER TO HELP ME DECIDE. AND I’LL BE GOING TO NEIMAN MARCUS. THAT’S A TAX WRITE-OFF, RIGHT?

McElwee as mother, designer and maker of clothes.

Making It on Her Own ... and You Can, Too

Meg McElwee ’03 knows that the best things in life are often the most simple, like buzzing two pieces of fabric through a sewing machine, sketching out plans for a new dress or running her fingers over the fabric that will soon become a fort for her boys.

“Like any creative art, the pleasure and balm is found in the process and the product,” says McElwee, who learned to sew as a young girl.

While working as a teacher in Chihuahua, Mexico, McElwee was inspired by the rural landscape’s bold colors and the

simple lifestyle of those around her. Instead of being able to run to a store when she wanted a new shirt, McElwee would sew it up herself. She designed and created her own clothing, countless objects for her home and tools for her classroom, including aprons for her students’ cooking and painting activities. “The process,” says McElwee, “is, at once meditative and challenging. The product is a thing of functional beauty.”

With the encouragement of her husband, Patrick, McElwee began selling her patterns online. At first, this was a simple way to fund her “fabric habit.” By the time the couple moved to Durham, North Carolina, her hobby was a growing business, Sew Liberated. She soon gave birth to Finn, now 2½, and Lachlan, 1, and running her own business fulfilled the dream of working from home while raising the children.

McElwee believes the benefits extend far beyond the income and personal satisfaction that Sew Liberated generates. “My design work,” she says, “helps fill me with a relaxed enthusiasm that I can then transfer to mothering my boys, and being an inspired parent has a far-reaching ripple effect on society.”

She enjoys creating spaces for her young boys to play, read and explore, as well as clothing that is well-suited for their active lifestyle. “I’m making Lachlan a pair of insulated, waterproof pants,” says McElwee, “so that he can comfortably sit and scoot while we explore the natural world during our frequent nature walks.”

The 30-year-old loves the fact that design and sewing give her the ability to customize clothing and home to suit her style — practical, simple, comfortable — while living within her means. She also enjoys “the freedom that comes with being able to sew clothing that fits your body, not the unrealistic measurements of the fashion industry.”

This freedom and adaptability is part of what make her sewing patterns, and the projects found in her books, Sew Liberated (2010) and Growing Up Sew Liberated (2011), appealing to so many — her company has sold more than 55,000 patterns. The clothing’s simple and elegant construction can be adjusted to any body type or fit. Sewists use the basic project as a blank slate, allowing their fabric choices, unique embellishments and personal touches to shine.

Through Sew Liberated, McElwee shares her love of this process and encourages others to showcase their unique style. “Sewing, design and crafting spaces are creative activities that replenish my energy reserve. Mothers must make it a priority to fill their own cups,” says McElwee, “and one way to do that is to delve into sewing and design.”

Grace Myers is a freelance writer who blogs at BetterWritinginBusiness.com. During her free time, she enjoys crafting and has made three versions of Sew Liberated's Schoolhouse Tunic.

BY GRACE MYERS
BEFORE & AFTER

It may help to change clothes and alter appearances. But still, it’s what’s inside that counts.

BY ARIENNE THOMPSON ’04

“Tell me the rules and I will follow them,” says Clinton Kelly, snaps back. “We want people to see you and be like, ‘Wow, she’s hot!’ not, ‘Wow, she thinks she’s 12,’” London quips.

“Her name was Lucy — she goes to work in a turkey costume,” London explains. “She’s just like a turkey — she goes to work in a turkey costume.”

“Your mother is going to get on you for being a turkey,” Kelly says. “I’m not going to get on you for being a turkey.”

The transformation of Lucy is very compelling. “She’s just like a turkey — she goes to work in a turkey costume,” London says. “But she wants to look like a woman.”

“Alice,” London says, “you are a woman. I want to see you as a woman.”

“First impressions are very important,” Kelly says.”

“Lucy, we’re going to make you feel like a lady.”

“Thank you so much for taking the power of your image seriously,” London says. “It holds up the possibility that by doing over oneself, one will achieve beauty and, therefore, happiness.”

“The way you present yourself truly tells the story,” says New York psychologist Vivian Diller, who co-wrote Face It: What Women Really Feel as Their Looks Change, adds that messages about impossible ideals regarding appearance influence our appetite for makeovers, no matter how extreme.

“We’re living in such a youth- and beauty-obsessed culture that there’s an obsession about that possibility. . . . I think the draw to better oneself with some magical makeover is very compelling.”

“Our cultural love affair with transformation is clear, but it all begs a more compelling question: What’s going through the minds of those actually being made over, either voluntarily or by coercion?”

“Why do they do it? How do they feel during the change? What is different about their post-makeover lives? When does the quest for perfection end?”

On What Not to Wear, the friends and families of fashion victims undertake a covert mission to secretly document and then submit footage of their fashion-victim loved ones, all in the hope that they’ll be chosen to receive a $5,000 shopping spree and spend a week in New York with co-hosts London and Kelly.

“We’re both very driven,” London says. “We’re both very driven.”

“It holds up the possibility that by doing over oneself, one will achieve beauty and, therefore, happiness.”

“Our cultural love affair with transformation is clear, but it all begs a more compelling question: What’s going through the minds of those actually being made over, either voluntarily or by coercion?”

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“In real life, however, the incentive for being made over, whether by choice or by force, may be less glamorous.”

“I am asked — most often by a CEO, a human resources professional or an athlete’s coach — to step in and help an individual transform something that the person or team is being strongly urged to change,” explains Patrick Parks ’01, CEO and founder of the executive coaching firm MVP Group. “Executive presence is a large component of leadership, particularly in the corporate context.”

Such a clear directive for specific change can bring opposition. “The resistance can range from someone trying to intentionally undermine my efforts to help them, to someone who wants to change but is subconsciously resisting change because they are being asked to do something different,” Parks says.

When people enter into a makeover pact voluntarily, often a major life event has triggered a desire for further change. In an effort to get to their best selves, they may seek professional help to reach the optimal “after.”

“Most of my clients are in some type of transition, such as recent college graduate, new mother, regional move, job promotion or ready to date,” says Robin Fisher, CEO of the Washington, D.C., image-consultation company Polished Image and Style. “At the end of the day, I admire all of my clients for taking the power of their image seriously. The way you present yourself truly tells people a story.”

Other times, it’s as simple as wanting some new clothes.

After undergoing weight-loss surgery a few years ago, Rose Ann Robertson, an American University journalism professor and associate dean, sought out an image consultant to help transform the packaging for her new body.

“I was excited to start building a new wardrobe,” she says. “My goal was to be able to go into a normal store and find what I consider ‘normal’ clothes. I just thought it would be wonderful to be able to walk into a store and say, ‘Oh, I need something for this party’ and to be able to easily buy it.”

Before working with a stylist, Robertson says, shopping had been a chore because she was dissatisfied with the limited selection of clothing she could buy in her former size.

Arienne Thompson is a Washington, D.C.-based fashion and celebrity reporter at USA Today.
What she learned

Marguerite Cremin, an Irishwoman living and working in Jamaica as an executive at the global spirits corporation Diageo, was in need of an image do-over. “Marguerite was in a place of complacency and needed to reconnect with herself,” says her executive coach Patrick Parks ’01, CEO and founder of MVP Group.

Cremin traveled to Miami in January, where Arienne Thompson ’04 made her over from head-to-toe as part of a transformation exercise sponsored by MVP Group. Cremin explains her full-body makeover, which included training with former Notre Dame linebacker Rocky Boiman ’02.

AT: Congrats on the changes! What’s been the biggest takeaway from your makeover?

MC: I had the realization that this isn’t rocket science. I should’ve been doing this all along, taking care of my presentation and my whole image, I suppose. In terms of the clothes shopping, it was very interesting for me to see that I can move away from very staid colors to give a pop color. It makes you look more energized and feel more energized. It’s given me a determination and a desire to really just do it. It’s not difficult. You’ve shown me that it’s relatively easy. It’s just knowing the few little formulas to make things work. More than anything else though, I’ve made a sea-change in terms of: I will not undersell myself from an image perspective.

AT: Why weren’t you as invested in your appearance before the makeover?

MC: There’s a certain part of me that thinks it’s vanity or self-indulgent or unnecessary spending or I don’t have the time to shop or whatever else. But essentially what I’m realizing now is that was a misconception because it really is part of your job and part of your role to be the best you can be as a leader. I think that perception has been removed once and for all.

AT: What was at the root of clearing the hurdle to improve your image?

MC: I kind of hid my light under a bushel somewhat, and I don’t know why because there’s absolutely no need to in terms of being who you can be. Stop pissing around! That’s how I’m feeling at the moment. I feel great; I feel energized; I feel resolute. And also trying on the clothes just made me realize, “You have to lose this weight!” It has to go, but I’m less concerned about that because I’m on that road. That decision was made. That’s just going to take time.

AT: What do you have to look forward to in your post-makeover life?

MC: Although it may sound shallow, image does matter. Also, as a woman, everyone likes to feel great and that they’re in style and that they’re appropriately dressed and feel cute. The makeover was, more than anything else, a landmark decision that no longer will I be totally and only focused on the work. I’m not saying that I didn’t look okay, but you have taught me that there are many, many opportunities to enhance how I look and still feel like me. It’s been great, and I’m excited!
Robertson says that even after her weight loss and sessions with a stylist, issues from her childhood complicated her relationship with clothing and shopping.
THE SOUTH BEND SOLES PROJECT

LOCAL RESOURCES
- LOCAL INDUSTRIES, RESOURCES, AND EMPLOYMENT

Sobesoles (SO-bee-soles) began with the goal of removing materials from the waste stream and upcycling them into functional, purposeful, and sustainable footwear with the intention of distributing them to those in need. The resulting benefit of this cycle would be twofold: less waste would end up in landfills and new shoes would end up on the feet of the homeless.

EARTH FRIENDLY PRODUCTS
- MINIMAL HARM TO THE EARTH, NO VIRGIN MATERIALS USED

The project has since evolved into the beginning stages of a social enterprise in which a certain percentage of profits and a substantial number of shoes will be donated to partners such as the Center for the Homeless in South Bend. The strength of this model is underscored by the fact that it exclusively uses discarded materials from local companies and then offers employment opportunities to the homeless, recently laid-off workers, and veterans in its manufacturing process.

GIVING BACK
- SHARE PERCENTAGE OF PROFITS WITH LOCAL PARTNERS
- SHOE DONATIONS TO LOCAL HOPELESS SHELTERS
- CENTER FOR THE HOMELESS & THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

South Bend Soles is a symbolic statement about the possibilities of what could be done to alleviate issues of rampant waste in manufacturing. It extends beyond South Bend and has the potential to be a globalized beacon of opportunity that serves the underserved. By striving to become a company that puts utmost priority in the well-being and satisfaction of its employees, stakeholders, community, and consumers, Sobesoles hopes to use the powers of business and design to solve social and environmental problems and help put South Bend back on the map.

Kevin J. Melchiorri • Industrial Design Graduate '14 • kmelchi1@nd.edu
Writing a column on faculty fashion is no small task. Indeed, the first thought that comes to mind is, “Faculty fashion? Isn’t that an oxymoron?”

It’s no secret that faculty members are famous for dressing poorly, outlandishly or, even at their best, in styles that lost popularity a decade or two or even more ago (the length of that time-lag is dependent primarily on the year the professor in question entered graduate school). What is it about academia that seemingly produces an inability to pay attention to dress and hair styles — styles that are a ubiquitous presence in the media and our daily encounters with normal people? Does graduate school somehow produce the superpower of resisting the conformity pressures of society? Or, as we like to say in the social sciences, perhaps this really is the result of a selection effect: Academia doesn’t produce the fashion faux pas tendency; rather, people with a stunted sense of style are somehow inordinately drawn to the profession of teaching and research.

My favorite explanation: Perhaps we just aren’t paying these people enough and so they have to continue wearing the subsistence sweatshirts from their grad school days. Really, I don’t think it’s any of these — and particularly not because they can’t afford a trip to Hermès, Gucci or at least T.J. Maxx or the outlet mall. These people, contrary to what a casual observer might infer, are making conscious choices about what they wear, and those choices are intended to convey something. Now they might be mistaken about what message the viewer of their outfits receives, but we are all, professors included, constantly and purposely sending messages to others through the way we present ourselves.

What message might academics be trying to send when they flout the dictates of fashion and good taste, and ignore the color-clash pain they inflict on others? Well, it flows from the same reason we drive beat-up cars (rust-buckets that are still only automobiles in the academic sense) and refuse to edge our lawns. These choices are rarely we wish to demonstrate that we just don’t care about these kinds of mundane trappings because we are so engrossed in the ethereal, all-consuming life of the mind.
driven by financial necessity, but rather because we take some kind of perverse pleasure in conspicuously displaying our disinterest in the material world. We wish to demonstrate that we just don’t care about these kinds of mundane trappings because we are so engrossed in the ethereal, all-consuming life of the mind.

Ah, it’s a lovely image, isn’t it? So taken with our own deep thoughts, we don’t even notice that our pants haven’t fit for 10 years, our belts don’t match our shoes, our collars aren’t buttoned down and maybe even that our shirts are inside-out. As long as we don’t get arrested for indecent exposure, well, then, that’s just good enough. The slobs, in fact, sometimes look down their noses at those who do dress more fashionably, as if to say that anyone who actually coordinates their shirt, pants and socks couldn’t possibly be very serious about their scholarly work.

Now that I’m spending more time doing administrative activities, I’ve encountered a different set of messages sent by clothing choices: Efficiency and formality conveyed by the suit — an industrious and hardworking demeanor reinforced when we take off the blazer and roll up our shirt sleeves, and, my favorite, the loosened-tie look that says, “I had to dress up for something important today, but it wasn’t you!”

The question, though, is whether the messages sent are in fact the ones received. I’m afraid in the case of university faculty (who, it has been proven, can be pretty clueless about social interaction and norms) this often is not the case. It won’t surprise anyone to hear that students are considerably more fashion-conscious than their teachers. And believe me, they notice what you are wearing. I’ve heard many a snarky observation by students traping out of other people’s classes and have even had comments written on my teaching evaluations about how that student’s other professors dress! (Really, the half-page tirade I once received about some misguided soul who wore the same outfit — a red sweater and black slacks — to class every day was something to behold.)

Their reaction, by and large, is not, “Professor Doffsweater must be brilliant!” More likely it’s, “What a schmo” or “Wow, is she out-of-touch.” Or more pointed and problematic, “He doesn’t even care about himself — he clearly can’t give a second thought to me.” One thing is certain: While they are labeling the prof as a dweeb in their heads, they aren’t likely to also be thinking, “This person is just like me, I want to be just like her when I grow up!”

And let’s not leave us administrators out. When we refuse to stoop to even business casual, the message to our colleagues can often be something different than efficiency and industriousness. More likely, distance and inappropriate status display are inferred, neither of which is likely to help produce a genuine or productive interaction.

WHAT TO DO TO CORRECT ALL OF THIS? We’ve got a long way to go, judging from the sartorial sensibilities displayed at the most recent faculty gathering I attended. But before we call in Joan Rivers to critique what happened on the O’Shag carpet last week, ask Professor Blackwell to create a worst-and-best-dressed list at the annual President’s dinner, or create a hot-or-not voting website to accompany Course Instructor Feedback evaluations, we could just start small. Spend a few moments thinking about what kind of reactions might result from the following small set of faculty fashion flops. Then go, and sin no more:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twenty Popular Faculty Styles*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m not an Oxford professor, but I play one at Notre Dame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This outfit worked at IBM in 1957, so why not wear it every day?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why tuck in my shirt? I’ll just have to do it again tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow ties say “intellectual,” are not the slightest bit nerdy and, as a bonus, they emphasize my growing midsection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versace Monday, Armani Wednesday: I’m sure to get a red hot pepper on rateyourprofessor.com.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have time to iron. I was up all night changing how we understand the fundamental building blocks of the entire universe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That hole burned by 18 molar hydrochloric acid isn’t that bad. Why waste a perfectly functional pair of pants?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you can get it at Sears, it’s still in style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspenders and a belt. I teach security studies after all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one will notice I’m wearing black tennis shoes with this suit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need those elbow patches. Reading is hard work!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyester is the new black.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My gigantic glasses from 1987 are still in perfectly good shape. I think I’ll just replace the lenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace and Love. It’s still the ‘60s, isn’t it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This leather jacket will let them know that I’m cool, man... I mean, dude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m a low-level administrator, but I really, really want to be a high-level administrator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanna wear jeans! But I’d better make it formal by adding a blazer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not that dirty. It was on the top of the laundry hamper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My black pants aren’t too short. How else am I going to show off my new white socks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Tweed or not to Tweed? That is the question. And the answer is: To Tweed!!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Fictional composites of well-known stereotypes — any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental. However, if you resemble one (or more) of these descriptions, you might want to reconsider your fashion choices.

— Daniel Myers
A box about the size of a computer rests on the table in Linda Przybyszewski’s kitchen, filled with just a portion of her vast collection of vintage Vogue and Simplicity pattern books from the 1940s to the 1960s. Sorting through the box, she gestures and turns as the skirt of her presser swirls and swishes, a la Donna Reed in It’s a Wonderful Life.

I compliment the dress, asking about its design. That’s all it takes to get Przybyszewski gushing about the dress she’s made using a vintage 1945 Vogue pattern. The passion in her voice as she marvels at the garment’s details brings to mind Julia Child describing her 1945 vintage 1945 Vogue pattern. The passion in her voice as she marvels at the garment’s details brings to mind Julia Child describing a perfectly cooked beef bourguignon — some of the terms may be unfamiliar, but it doesn’t matter because you know by the sounds that it must be nearly perfect:

“It’s my new favorite from 1945. I made it in navy blue polka-dot rayon faille with long sleeves gathered here at the cuffs. Look at this gored and pleated skirt — and the bodice is cleverly yoked to allow gathers over the bust. It’s the quintessential 1940s skirt from wartime. If you think of what it would look like in white with short sleeves, it would make the perfect nurse’s uniform!”

Przybyszewski (Preh-beh-SHEV-ski) is a Notre Dame associate professor of history, master dressmaker, collector of vintage pattern books and expert on the history of fashion. She owns more than 600 vintage pattern publications, fashion magazines, home economics textbooks and U.S. Department of Agriculture pamphlets. She’s written a book to be published next year whose working title is Nation of Slobs — an attempt, she says, to bring back the art of dress.

“We used to live in a world where people cared about how they dressed. I am shocked how often I will be out somewhere, whether on a street or in a restaurant, and I see only a handful of people who seem dressed appropriately, and even fewer dressed beautifully,” she says.

Drawing inspiration from generations of women who taught the principles of dress in high schools and colleges — women she refers to as the “Dress Doctors,” Przybyszewski longs for the days when women in this country, well, knew how to dress appropriately.

She even teaches a class called Nation of Slobs: The Art, Ethics and Economics of Dress in Modern America, though her areas of academic specialization are actually cultural and legal history.

So how have we lapsed from a culture which so valued the art of appropriate dressing that it was included in public education curricula across the nation, to a culture that accepts (nearly expects!) to encounter grown women wearing pajama pants and slippers at the grocery store?

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, educating young women in the “art” of dress was as integral a part of their formal education as the “science” of housekeeping. High school and college textbooks with titles like The Mode in Dress and Home and Art in Home and Clothing enlightened the young female mind, assuring that garish gauntlets or passé peplums never hampered the future happiness and productivity of educated American women.

In 1923, the United States added a national Bureau of Home Economics to the USDA. By the 1930s, every public high school in the country and 36 land grant colleges had Home Economics Departments right alongside English and Science departments. Basic information like the six occasions for dress was taught to young women with the same academic rigor as algebraic equations or the periodic table of elements. (Incidentally, the six occasions for dress were: school; work/travel/city; housework; sports/spectator; evening in or out; afternoon affairs/tea.)

Simple, artful dressing (and living) was at one time so valued that home economists elevated the concept to the level of morality and honesty. Consider this, from Shelter and Clothing, a 1914 college textbook written by two women who taught at Teachers College at Columbia University:

A home based on the right principles will be simple. There will be simplicity of living, honesty in the expression of what is offered in the home. No ostentation or living beyond one’s means; simplicity in entertainment and in offering freely of what one has to friends, without apology or explanation; simple furnishings, simple, healthful food, simple, artistic clothing, all help to simplify life and give the homemakers more time for the family joys and intercourse.

So what happened?

“Blame it on the Baby Boomers!” says Przybyszewski.

“An increasing informality crept in after World War II as parents of Baby Boomers moved to the suburbs, and suddenly patios and dens became central to entertaining.
People didn’t have to dress in formal attire as frequently."

No need for evening gowns at a patio party, right?

Then women’s hairstyles began to slowly supplant the hat—a sortorial symbol of propriety.

“Poodle cuts, the sort of big hairdos, start in the late ’50s, and when you’ve inflated your hair to that degree, you don’t want to wear a hat and squish it. Sure, you’d see Jackie Kennedy wearing hats, but they really didn’t fit because of her big hairdo,” Przybyszewski says.

Then came the Youth Movement of the 1960s. In bygone eras, a teenage girl would look forward to looking like a grown-up, but when the ’60s rolled around, all the grown-ups wanted to look like teenage girls.

“If you take pattern books from the 1950s and the 1960s and you lay them side-by-side, it’s as if every model became a child. You go from this extraordinarily sophisticated look in the ’50s—sophisticated in design, sophisticated in cut, in color, so worldly, really—to just one decade later, when everyone is sporting what would have been known in another era as a toddler’s dress: a simple, A-line dress.”

The gradual simplifying of design, according to Przybyszewski, eventually just becomes “stupidity of design.”

Paging wistfully through the couture section of a mid-1950s pattern book, she explains, “Dress designs of the 1950s were just more complicated, more difficult to create. So much more thought was put into them. There wasn’t even such a thing as a crew neck in dressmaking in the 1950s—this is what they did instead,” Przybyszewski says, pointing out a chic trapeze neckline.

Fast-forward just one decade, to the mid-’60s: “Even the way fashion illustrators draw the models is transformed in the ’60s. These are supposed to be adults,” she says, scoffing at the models’ disproportionately oversized heads and large eyes, reminiscent of a small child. Think Twiggy.

“They don’t even bother to cut out sleeves in these dress styles... They’re just sort of all one piece.”

Then came the 1970s, when home economics began to be formally dismantled, starting with a collective feminist sneer at the entire field, accompanied by congresswomen who openly criticized the federal funding of home economics on the grounds that it stereotyped people—96 percent of people in the field were women.

“The number of people pursuing graduate degrees in home economics, specializing in costumes and textiles, drops precipitously in the 1970s,” Przybyszewski explains. “People just fled this field. The thought was: ‘If you’re not going to consider teaching people how to dress as a traditional art, then why should you bother studying the art principles and how they apply to clothing’?”

Home Economics in public schools got dumbed down or shrunk during the ’70s, and the entire system of teaching dressing, both in schools and in women’s magazines, was dismantled.

“All the knowledge that the Dress Doctors used to pass on to new generations was gone,” Przybyszewski says.

But there’s an interesting moment in the 1980s, as more women entered the workforce, when a book titled Dress for Success, first published in 1975, attempted to resurrect some semblance of the art of dressing.

“What this book did,” says Przybyszewski, “is rediscover some of the basic principles of what the Dress Doctors had been teaching for decades. The author advises that since women are going to enter the workforce, they had to dress in a more professional way.

“And since everyone during the ’60s and ’70s dressed like they were going to either the playground or a patio party, women needed to learn how to re-dress. Unfortunately, what they ended up with were lots of suits with little ties—designers’ attempts to re-create for women what men had in a standard suit and tie.”

It didn’t work.

So where does that leave us today? Are we doomed? Despite the gradual dismantling and marginalization of the art of dressing as an academic subject, how is it that some 21st century people still have managed to learn and apply the Dress Doctors’ basic principles of design, fit, color and occasion?

“Well, bits of the Dress Doctors’ advice, as though the pages were scattered to the wind, do show up in magazines and modern books, and some people may have put it all together. Secondly, these well-dressed people may simply prove that the Dress Doctors were right—that the principles of art, when applied to dress, naturally satisfy the mind and the eye. Some people still seek that satisfaction when they get dressed.”

But probably not the lady in pajama pants at the grocery store.

See this magazine’s Spring 2008 conversation with Linda Przybyszewski at magazine.nd.edu/news/1290.
SIDEWALK STYLE

At first glance, Notre Dame in the wintertime isn’t exactly a bastion of fashion. Couture takes a backseat to cozy in the teeth of South Bend’s chilling climate.

But take a look past the dull blacks and browns, and ND’s subtle sidewalk style starts to emerge. Outlined against the blue-gray sky, bursts of bold color and offbeat accessories announce individuality, moxie and a determination to look — dare we say it — cool.

**Kevin Strickland ’14**
Southborough, Mass.

“The shorter the shorts, the more the donations.”

**Lauren Matich ’14**
Newport Beach, Calif.

“I really like classic things that have their own unique sort of style...I grew up watching 1960’s sitcoms so I love the mod haircuts and the A-line coats.”
Margaret Harrison ’14
Northborough, Mass.

“I like bright colors, and shiny accessories are a must. I wear lots of things that symbolize what I enjoy. I wanted to experiment, and I wanted it to be something bright and eye-catching.”

Felicia Byrd ’14
Rocky Mount, N.C.

“I don’t really have a particular style. I just try to dress up so I feel good. It’s like the saying, ‘if you dress good, you feel good, and if you feel good, you play good.’”
Many given Saturday during football season, the Hammes Notre Dame Bookstore is brimming with students, alumni, parents and friends looking for that perfect piece of Irish apparel. Whether it’s The Shirt or the jersey of the season’s MVP, the options for fan gear seem endless. And with one walk across campus — game day or not — even a non-Domer will see the importance of ND-specific clothing.

But what happens when fashion makes its way onto the football field?

The Notre Dame football program has been synonymous with tradition for generations. From the gleaming gold helmets to a stadium intentionally void of a JumboTron, ND has made being classic a trend. Though green jerseys or special green accents have been utilized occasionally since the early 1900s, this football season saw changes that were more uniform — pun intended.

Celebrated former Notre Dame linebacker Maurice Crum Jr. ’08 described the new uniforms as “a great twist on a classic and a way to uphold the Irish tradition while being modern.”

The Irish first entered the world of style when they donned the “Under the Lights” throwback-style uniform for the Sept. 10, 2011, match-up against storied rival University of Michigan. The standard blue-and-white jerseys received some friendly competition from this adidas-designed version consisting of a white jersey with kelly green stripes paired with classic gold pants and the first shamrock-emblazoned helmet worn since the 1960s. Though the game ended in a heartbreaking loss, the uniforms remain a standout moment of the game in more ways than one.

Besides providing water cooler fodder for the following Monday, the uniforms also presented the University with a marketing opportunity by playing off of fans’ purchasing power and offering the retro-style jerseys for purchase.

The Irish pushed the bounds a little more a few weeks later when they descended on the Washington, D.C., area for the November 12 showdown against the Maryland Terrapins. This time, the Notre Dame helmets, gilded enough to rival the famous Dome, featured a shamrock design similar to that utilized for the Michigan game, but one writ larger in both size and flair. The helmet also displayed another deviation from the standard with a green facemask, a far cry from the traditional gray.

The uniform changes for this match-up were especially significant because they were the first displayed in a Shamrock Series contest. The neutral-site games in which the Irish face big-name opponents at even bigger-named venues will take the Irish to Chicago’s Soldier Field this fall for a (near) home game against the Miami Hurricanes, with a trip to Cowboys Stadium to face Arizona State the following year. Fans will be watching to see just how big and bold the team will get with its uniform tweaks and eye on style.

But is one shamrock-splattered helmet more than enough?

“I’m the biggest fan of the famous gold helmets . . . spray painted by students and then worn the next day at the game. They are the purest form of gold you’ll find on any athletic uniform,” stated SectionB blogger Alex McNamee. “And with the awful helmets [worn for the Maryland game], Brian Kelly is getting rid of that. . . . Respect tradition. Stick to it.”

However, the players seemed to enjoy the more brazen looks for the field. Some even took to Twitter and Facebook to playfully brag. Former Irish running back James Aldridge ’10 also enjoyed seeing something different on the field. “I like the new look because it is simple but has a modern touch,” he said. “It definitely feels like we have caught up with the times as far as our uniforms go.”

Some players went an extra step to pep their uniforms on their own. Kyle Brindza, Notre Dame’s freshman kicker, caused quite a stir with his electric-green cleats, which he described as a random bit of fashionable fate when he received one pair of purple and one pair of lime green cleats from Adidas. Brindza told ESPN he saw “no other choice” when selecting his fancy footwear. “I wasn’t wearing . . . purple shoes.”

It is unlikely that Notre Dame will go as far afield as some universities have with future on-field looks, but perhaps some continued flair will add a (kelly green?) line or two to college football’s most storied program.
DRESSING UP
Role-playing students swap daytime attire for a night on the town

BY ADRIANA PRATT '12

Adriana Pratt of Carmel, Indiana, is majoring in political science, with a minor in journalism, ethics and democracy. She is an assistant managing editor at Notre Dame's independent student-run paper, The Observer.

B andage skirts wrap shivering legs tight, as chattering platforms tap the alleyway pavement. Eager eyes scan the crowd, taking in the color, fit and cut of each costume. Girls pretend they see a friend and dart to the front of the line. Boys jealously watch, miles from the entrance. Holding out their IDs, the ladies wait for evaluation. Bouncers appraise each entry, with a quick peek at the card and a much longer look at the outfit.

It's a Thursday night at Feve.

To Feve or not to Feve — is that even a question? Notre Dame undergrads eagerly anticipate the day they can get into Club Fever, known as The Backstage Grill by day and the hottest club South Bend has to offer on Thursday nights. It's a Domer hot spot that starts the weekend off on a fun, carefree note, a place to forget exams and obligations for a few blissful hours.

Once inside, lacy layers abound, as everywhere you turn another skirt rides up another behind. Men rock plaid shirts and jeans, emphasizing just how “chill” they are. Hazy lights illuminate the basement, where Domers meet and mingle amid drinks. Conversation flows, easy and worry-free.

As you lay your eyes on your love for the night, you slowly but surely make your way to the dance floor. Maybe, just maybe, you end up in “the cage,” a barred and elevated stage students love to dance on. Whatever happens, it’s sure to guarantee laughs the next day.

Feve demands different levels of fashion intensity from guys and girls. Men keep it simple and casual, rarely venturing from their standard T-shirts or button-downs. For the ladies, however, Feve is a land of short skirts, tight shirts and heels your mother would die seeing you in. Girls let their hair down and their hemlines up during this special night each week, taking advantage of

Girls just want to have fun. Cyndi Lauper knew what she was talking about then, and her words still ring true today. Being young and free is a blessing, and we don’t want to miss taking advantage of it.

But no one can deny that the pressure to be a femme fatale sometimes weighs just as heavily as those textbooks in our backpacks. It’s hard to find the balance, and it’s hard to discern if and when we really need to. For now, when it becomes too much to worry about, you can find us on the Feve dance floor. ☼
The new documentary God Save My Shoes explores women’s intimate relationship with footwear. We covet shoes, we hoard them, we spend the rent on platforms, we baby suede booties, exposing them to the mean streets only when we’re certain it won’t rain. In testimonials from fashionistas, celebrities and collectors, the consensus is as clear as the Lucite stiletto worn by exotic dancers: The higher the heel and more impractical the design, the sexier and more confident women feel.

“Shoes,” muses singer Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas, “tell a story about you.” Hers is that she can rap, dance and prance effortlessly while balancing on 7-inch pins. So what do chunky, clunky Dansko clogs say about me and millions of comfort-conscious moms who can’t get through a Costco trip without them?

The name Dansko translates to “Danish shoe.” Last year, customers scooped up nearly 2.5 million pairs. This spring, given the variety of patterns, colors and materials like jute, Dansko will offer 385 different slip-ons, sneakers and sandals. But the classic Professional stapled clog in leather accounts for fully half the company’s sales. Look down the next time you visit a hospital, eat at a fine restaurant, get your hair cut or attend a parent-teacher conference. Smart people who earn a living on their feet and can afford the $120 price tag wear Danskos.

The clog confounds critics. These shoes are heavy, topping 2 pounds. They’re so big, each requires its own slot in a hanging shoe storage bag, unless you’re willing to let the beasts clutter your closet floor. While Dansko’s standard 2-inch heel does elevate, details like “roomy toe box,” “anti-microbial sock lining” and “superior shock absorption” are rarely, if ever, associated with high-fashion footwear. Luxury designer Christian Louboutin turns heads with his striking red soles; Dansko nonslip bottoms boast the seal of approval from the American Podiatric Medical Association.

Ann Dittrich has heard the sniping and seen the light. The stylish designer who cut her teeth at Cole Haan now serves as creative director at Dansko, which, in her opinion, produces more beloved and idealized footwear than what models march down runways.

“It’s easy to make a high-heeled shoe in a beautiful color and a beautiful material, but that doesn’t make it the best shoe,” Dittrich tells me on my recent visit to the company’s LEED-certified green
headquarters an hour outside Philadelphia in West Grove, Pennsylvania. “It has to feel great. It has to be beautiful and comfortable. There has to be an emotional connection. You need to love the shoe, really love the way it looks as well as the way it feels. If that’s missing, it’s not perfect.”

Besides, Dittrich adds, “I would not like to think we are considered followers of fashion. Dansko considers itself to be off to the side. We’re a little bit . . . quirky.”

* * *

FOR A BRAND FANS CAN SPOT across a crowded yoga studio, Dansko is surprisingly young. The company was born just 22 years ago when professional horse trainers Mandy Cabot and Peter Kellerup stumbled on “the perfect barn shoe” on a trip to Denmark and began shipping boxes to sell to equestrian friends in the United States.

Cabot was intrigued by the shoes’ unique design, but the initial attraction was pain relief, not style. “I didn’t love my clogs because they were Ugly Ducklings,” she tells me. “I loved them despite that.”

By 1999, Dansko had made Inc. magazine’s list of 500 fastest-growing privately held companies. But the bigger news that year may have been that Julia Roberts was photographed wearing a pair of Dansko black oiled leather Professional clogs.

I bought my first pair of Danskos in the mid-1990s. I was 25 and unmarried. I favor funky, overpriced heels for work, but found myself inexplicably drawn to the red clodhoppers. After a blissful urban test-hike along the unforgiving cobblestone of my historic Philadelphia neighborhood, these Euro clogs became my go-to shoe for “me time.”

I christened a second pair — same style, only in black — Julia’s — the official footwear of my 2000 honeymoon in Spain. I wore them sockless with culottes in Madrid to a bullfight. My stomach ached from all the flan and Rioja consumed on that trip. But my feet, legs and back felt divine.

Dittrich credits the “architecture” of the clog — the anatomy of the footbed, the contouring, the way the shoe seems to simultaneously force you to stand up straight and protect the foot from a pounding. The best piece of advice I ever received about buying Danskos was that they should fit loosely. The foot needs to rock forward and the heel should rise up slightly with each step. These shoes literally take wearers on a ride, so long as they’re willing to endure the stares.

“We tend to appeal to a girl or woman who’s a little bit individualistic,” Dittrich shares. “She doesn’t wear her shoes shyly. She likes to make a statement. Our shoes tend to be fairly bold, fairly recognizable.”

Famous aficionados include Tina Fey, Jennifer Garner, Julianne Moore and Heidi Klum, all of whom have been seen wearing Danskos on errands, to the park or at school drop-off. Kathleen Turner sported clogs with an evening gown on the red carpet at Cannes, a look I imagine she regrets. Last year, when Glee star Jane Lynch strutted to her seat on Conan in a gray pantsuit and shiny red patent leather Danskos, both the host and his sidekick obsessed over her feet.

“Oh my goodness,” Andy Richter marveled. “She’s wearing Dorothy’s clogs!”

“Look at those shoes!” Conan O’Brien followed. “They look like candy apples!”

The average Dansko customer is not a celebrity but a married suburban mother between 35 and 60 years old. “She’s fashion able but not a slave to fashion,” Cabot tells me. She earns more than $50,000 a year and owns multiple pairs for work and pleasure. She’s Sharon Lopatin, a 51-year-old ESL teacher with chronic foot problems I met ogling a size 38 kiosk inside the company store.

Her 26-year-old daughter deems Danskos “butt ugly,” but Lopatin brushes that off as youthful cluelessness. Lopatin argues that clogs are infinitely more fashion-forward than most “comfort footwear.” And she should know, having a closet full of flat, boring good-for-you shoes that did not live up to their billing.

“I think you reach a point in your life when you get more practical, but I’m not ready to be in my grandmother’s shoes,” Lopatin insists. “I’ve been wearing Danskos for 15 years. If they were truly unappealing, I don’t think I’d buy them.”

* * *

“THE ONLY PROBLEM WITH YOUR SHOES,” I tell Dittrich, “is that they’re seemingly indestructible.” I still have both my red and black Professionals, which remain perfectly serviceable after more than a decade of hard wear. If Danskos last forever, how could I ever justify buying more?

And yet, in a brown bag next to my purse, I sheepishly pull out $200 worth of discounted finds snagged moments earlier from the company store: The Rowena, a retro espresso-colored 1970s peep-toe slingback with a 1-inch platform, 3-inch heel and feminine floral cutouts; a refreshingly slimmed-down pair of black Mary Jane pumps with a dainty strap that snaps; and (gasp!) my third pair of Professionals, a dare-I-say-dressy design in shiny marbled gray patent leather.

I tell Dittrich I could wear all of these shoes to work, which I’ve rarely risked with my original clogs. She smiles approvingly, like a scientist recording a successful experiment. The styles I bought, she says, “didn’t exist until 2010. They’re more American, younger, more relevant. We needed to diversify, to give women something to wear at night, a heel, boots, a sport shoe, a sandal for the beach.”

Dansko now sells “vulcanized footwear” — think Keds and Converse but with sturdier materials and support. This spring, the company is debuting the Pippa, a jaunty, thermoplastic molded mule. Both lines will likely attract first-time buyers, but as a Dansko purist I wouldn’t wear either style. The pseudo-sneakers seem matronly; in magenta, teal or orange, the cuter Croc just doesn’t connect.

So even within the famously loyal Dansko community, there are fissures along fashion fault lines. I felt guilty until Lopatin admits she had the same reaction. “The sneaker turned me off,” she says. But not so much that it stopped the teacher with tired tootsies from buying three pairs of Danskos she knows will ease her pain.

Dittrich has toiled in footwear long enough to be unfazed by the whims of women dressing from the ground up. “I wouldn’t want to think everybody is going to love our shoes,” she insists. “That would mean we’re generic.”

Praise from the fashion press would be nice, but Dansko possesses something even more elusive: innate brand identity. How important is a signature look? Louboutin sued to keep rival Yves Saint Laurent from selling sky-high heels with scarlet soles, generating an intense legal debate over whether anyone can trademark a color.

“If someone is wearing Danskos,” Dittrich boasts, “you know they’re Danskos.” And you know her feet are grateful. □
BY NATURAL DESIGN
A California surfer-artist goes entrepreneurial to market his own line of freestyle clothing.

BY JESSICA TROBAUGH TEMPLE ’92

Andrew Sarnecki ’00 will tell you, “I don’t like the word ‘fashion.’” At least, that is, not in relation to his business. This from a guy whose merchandise sells in more than 500 shops in 16 countries, including Australia, Japan and Costa Rica. That merchandise? Men’s surfing and climbing apparel.

But to him, he explains, the word “fashion” evokes images of runways and models. “I think of ‘high fashion,’” he adds. “Something that is not obtainable for most people.”

And Sarnecki, the 34-year-old creator and part-owner of HippyTree, a home-grown clothing company geared toward the “open-minded,” as its website states, is no elitist clothier. Images at the site of Sarnecki sporting flip-flops kind of give that away. “I didn’t go to design school or study fashion,” he says, “but things weren’t lining up the way I wanted.”

So much so that after graduating from Notre Dame, where he majored in photography and graphic design, Sarnecki made the trek back home seeking work in the surfing industry.

Not long after his return, he took a job at Body Glove, a wetsuit company in Redondo Beach. During his six-plus years there, Sarnecki says, he touched all the creative functions of the business. Starting as an entry-level designer he moved from crafting hang tags and logos to product design of surfing wetsuits. Eventually he transitioned into advertising and marketing for the label and was hired as art director. All the while, he pursued his true career goal, surf and underwater photography.

He submitted his photos to the local surf magazines. “I was getting stuff published,” he says, “but things weren’t lining up the way I wanted.”

So Sarnecki, who had since moved to Hermosa Beach, in an area southwest of Los Angeles known as South Bay, started publishing his own surf photo booklets. He distributed them for free to surf shops. “I was building relationships with the shop owners,” he says, “who strongly encouraged him to create products they could sell in their stores, he says. In 2004, he released his first tide calendar, featuring his own art-driven photography, and a T-shirt under the HippyTree label. Within months, 12 stores sold out of his goods.

He continued to add to his product line, specializing in T-shirts that featured his playful graphics and photography. The company took off from there. “I’m an artist,” Sarnecki says. “I’m into designing practical garments that people need.” And what guy doesn’t need a dozen T-shirts a year and a sweet pair of nonbinding board shorts?

It may sound easy, Sarnecki says, but it isn’t. His sister Carolyn, who is a partner and the company’s COO, laughs, albeit sweetly, about her brother’s success. “We always knew Andrew had a special talent and that he would do something creative with it,” she says. “But, really, Andrew was an accidental businessman.”

However, she adds, over the years she has watched Sarnecki and the business evolve. The corporatization of the surf industry, marked notably by surf giant Billabong’s acquisition of other surfing retailers, she says, forced the company to adapt. In this regard, Carolyn credits her brother for his vision for the business. “He was able to look ahead and see how things would be changing,” she says, noting that the company is re-mapping its website and launching an online store. Still, she adds, “we appreciate the importance of the core surf shops. In order to be a relevant brand in our industry, you have to have a core.”

In return, Sarnecki lauds his sister, who holds an MBA from Columbia University, for keeping questionable business decisions in check. If he wants to shoot photos at Yosemite with some of their sponsored climbing athletes, for instance, his sister is there to weigh in on deadlines and dollars. Recently the label added climbing apparel to its line, Sarnecki says, tapping into the camping and outdoor industry with its “Surf and Stone” marketing platform. Reaching that niche, he adds, has been good for business.

Though HippyTree’s product-line is modest — mostly men’s T’s, sweatshirts and swim trunks — its marketing techniques take it beyond ordinary.

Sales manager and third business partner Josh Sweeney touts the company’s “Plant a Seed” campaign as proof of the effectiveness
of building relationships in business. For the promotion, HippyTree packaged sunflower seeds in some of its product tags. They then asked buyers to grow a plant from those seeds and send in pictures of themselves with the plants when they bloomed.

“It took several months for people to grow that seed,” says Sweeney, a childhood friend of Sarnecki’s. “And every time they touch it they are subconsciously thinking of our company.” Plus, he adds, he and his associates like the personal reward that comes from “creating a cool conversation and dialogue” with people around the world. “It’s fun.”

The casual wear continues to sport Sarnecki’s unexpected and whimsical graphics — a tree shaped in the hang-loose surf symbol, a curl of a wave formed by wheat grass. Images, he says, that reflect both his childhood and adult experiences of nature that range from the Sequoia National Forest to Patagonia to the Galapagos Islands. “Of course all these beautiful landscapes I’ve witnessed have inspired the work.”

Nature imagery reaches every age and demographic because everyone can relate to it, says Sarnecki, who gets a surf in every couple of days before heading to the office. And if business wasn’t such a natural part of his life already, even Sarnecki’s mom helps out with billing and inventory a few days a week.

“It’s important that we are accessible and touchable,” adds Sweeney. “Our customers and fans see that we are normal people, just like them.”

DOMERS BY DESIGN

Sure, a Notre Dame sweatshirt or a leprechaun painted on the garage door displays your true colors. But not everyone wants to be such a show-off. To discreetly cheer the home team, you could grab some items your classmates helped create and quietly let your inner Domer shine.

Proudly dress in cutting-rooms scraps and plastic bottles with a shirt or hoodie from SustainU, a company founded by Chris Yura ’03. The former ND football player and model knows that clothing featuring “100 percent recycled apparel that’s made in the USA” is the essence of cool. Help clean up the world at sustainuclothing.com.

For the Skechers Blazed youth sneakers, Scott Kelley ’03 ran the extra mile. He designed a utility patent on the shoe closure system, which is “capable of rapid adjustment in multiple planes of movement.” Yeah, what he said. The new zig-zag closure is great, but the flames are more apt to get the kids fired up. Can be found wherever Skechers are sold.

You probably can’t golf as well as Luke Donald, shown here at the 2011 Masters tournament at Augusta National Golf Club, but you could dress like him. Maureen Whitaker ’02, a design director for golf and tennis at Ralph Lauren, and her team designed and styled this look inspired by the azaleas spread throughout the Augusta course. The RLX tech piqué polo shirt and RLX Cypress pants are available at ralphlauren.com and select golf clubs’ pro shops.

Brian Murphy ’93 and his wife, Jessie Randall, put their best foot forward in 2004 when they formed Loeffler Randall. Murphy is the company’s CFO, while his wife, as president and creative director, continues to oversee the design of the brand’s high-fashion shoes, like this black/cream woven jacquard Dita platform sandal.

For custom designs and is known for her multi-chain necklaces with charming little attachments, but her fine jewelry is truly a treasure. So go for the gold — or, if you prefer, the brass or the silver chains — at katharinesise.com.

Anne Slowey ’82 is a Fashion Know It All. No, that’s not being snarky — it’s the name of her column for Elle magazine, where she is the fashion news director. While the men can get their tips from GQ, headed by not one but two ND grads, the ladies can ogle Elle to find Slowey’s advice or do a search for her blogs and columns at elle.com.

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Twice a year the world’s most stylish people descend on New York for seven days of runway shows, people-watching and elbow-rubbing with many of Hollywood’s fashion icons. But what really happens during Fashion Week? Arienne Thompson ’04, a Washington, D.C.-based fashion and celebrity reporter at USA Today, provides an insider’s look at what it’s like to be a journalist covering one of the most hectic and thrilling fashion events of the year. This is her diary from the Spring/Summer 2012 collections (shown in September 2011), live from New York.

I arrive in the city around 10:30 and don’t have much time to spare before the 11 a.m. Jill Stuart show. Fortunately, NONE of these shows ever starts on time, so at least I have that working for me. Luckily, I breeze through early check-in at the hotel, change quickly, slap on some makeup and am out the door by 11 on the dot. The weather is gorgeous, and if I weren’t in such a hurry, I’d walk the dozen blocks from my hotel at 54th and 7th to Lincoln Center. Instead I catch the first of many cabs of the week, dash inside the Tent — stopping briefly to take a photo with stylist/reality star Brad Goreski — and make it to my seat just in time to see Stuart’s quilted, Palm Springs-inspired collection.

Rise and shine! I’m up at the crack of dawn to catch the 6:30 a.m. Bolt Bus from Union Station in D.C. to midtown Manhattan. I hope I can catch some beauty sleep during my four-hour trip, since I’ll have to hit the ground running — and likely in stilettos.

Saturday, September 10

Arienne Thompson, who lives in the Washington, D.C. area, has literally chased Jay-Z for an interview, violated the Emmys’ red carpet dress code and made Ricky Gervais laugh — hysterically. She’s slightly obsessed with Marc Jacobs and has three closets to prove it.

Sitting front row? Kim Kardashian’s now-ex hubby Kris Humphries. He looks as bored — and as huge — as one would think.

Stuart’s macaroon-inspired color palette has made me hungry, but first I push my way backstage to do a quick interview with the designer, who despite being dressed in the all-black uniform of NYC tastemakers says she avoided using
the dark hue on the runway for the first time ever.

Lunch is a gigantic hamburger with fries (models might not eat, but journalists do) and after a quick check of the hotel mail for a few hard copy invitations and another wardrobe change, I head downtown for the Christian Siriano show.

Reality TV fans may remember Siriano’s fierce creations from Season 4 of Project Runway. I’m obsessed with the citrine max skirt he opens with.

and am pleased to spot his former mentor and Runway host Heidi Klum front row, looking mind-bogglingly perfect. Also in the house? Kanye West’s ex-fiancée Alexis Phifer, who

cuts a tough figure in a black jumpsuit.

There’s not much time to spare, as I’m expected at Pier 94 for Alexander Wang’s hot-ticket show in about 30 minutes, but I do find an extra minute for a few air kisses with a friend and fellow fashion writer, who excitedly tells me about her new gig at Glamour magazine.

Fast-forward a half-hour and I’m marveling at the cavernous space that is Pier 94. Unfortunately, I’m also marveling at the lack of air conditioning.

Bleh. Alexander Wang’s futuristic sporty collection makes the sweat worth it though. Overarching theme: Biker girls from the year 2035.

I finally have time for a breather at my hotel, where I build and write the day’s Fashion Week photo gallery for usatoday.com and gear up for a busy night that includes swinging by Midtown to catch part of the Notre Dame-Michigan game. I draw several blank stares from my friend John McQuade ’04 when I complain loudly and repeatedly about having to leave the game watch at Public House to head waaaaaaawaaaaay downtown for a date with Heidi Klum. “Boo-hoo,” he says sarcastically as I bounce out around halftime to catch a cab.

Twenty minutes later, I’m ushered upstairs to a green room inside the Suspenders Building where QVC is throwing a party to celebrate Klum’s new jewelry line. For the interview, I sit on the couch with Her Klumness and gab about jewelry, her children and her rocking nail polish. She tries on my neon-yellow purse, cementing our status as instant best friends.

It’s midnight by the time I get back to my hotel, where I write and publish my Klum interview and gather my invites for tomorrow’s shows: Victoria Beckham, Tracy Reese and Gwen Stefani’s L.A.M.B. Nighty night!

Sunday, September 11

It feels strange to be wrapped up in the fashion world on a day like this. Just miles from my hotel, the families of victims of the 9/11 tragedies from a decade ago are remembering their loved ones at an emotional ceremony being televised throughout the nation. The specter of terrorism — both past and future — has been looming over the city for weeks. Fortunately, my editor has ensured that I have a short day that won’t send me all over the city and into possible danger.

By 8:45 a.m. I’m standing on the steps of the New York Public Library in a faux leather T-shirt and a white eyelet skirt waiting to gain entry into the Victoria Beckham show. The former Spice Girl is a true lady, serving pre-brunch drinks in the lobby of the awe-inspiring library before we’re all directed to our seats. She shows a surprisingly sporty collection, complete with patent leather baseball caps.

When it’s all over, I attempt to fight the post-show crush in an effort to briefly interview Mrs. Beckham, but it’s hopeless. That is, until I squint through the atmospheric dark and finally realize that the slight Brit who’s been yammering away right next to me is V.P. herself. I only manage a question or two, including, “Where’s [newborn daughter] Harper?” (resting backstage, FYI) before her handlers insist that all spectators clear the hall. Oh well.

I have a deliciously long break until the 2 o’clock Tracy Reese show, but because of heightened security throughout the city, I head back to the hotel and use the time to catch up on email, write up the morning’s shows in the photo gallery, grab a bite to eat and organize my invitations for the rest of the day.

Next stop: Tracy Reese inside the Studio at the Tent at Lincoln Center. Reese, who’s one of my all-time favorites, proves she’s ready for spring with a room while displaying a designer’s clothes. They are photographed, pointed at and made to suffer in excruciatingly painful shoes (often for more than an hour), all in the name of style. In fact, I saw one of the L.A.M.B. models literally crying backstage as hair stylists installed her extensions. Beauty is pain, right?

After L.A.M.B. I’m done for the day, minus the writing I have to do, and feeling a bit somber and pensive because of the 9/11 anniversary. I call my parents, grab a salad for dinner and hole up in my hotel for the evening to count my blessings, among other things, on this emotional day.

Monday, September 12

One of my favorite designers, Tory Burch, ensures that today feels like a true Monday morning with her 8 a.m. welcome breakfast at her new flagship store on Madison Avenue. One jaw-dropping step after another introduces me to her latest gem, a converted townhouse decked out in

with her, take a photo, and a few minutes later run into actress Angela Bassett, who tells me I’m “just the cutest thing ever.”

Okay, I can officially die and go to heaven now!

After my loveliest with Ms. Bassett — who’s starring with Samuel L. Jackson in my playwright friend Katori Hall’s Broadway debut, The Mountain-top — I swing over to the Box inside the Tent to catch Gwen Stefani’s consistently funky Rasta-meets-skater L.A.M.B. presentation. Unlike a traditional runway show, a presentation is like a fashion museum. Models stand throughout a room while displaying a designer’s clothes. They are photographed, pointed at and made to suffer in excruciatingly painful shoes (often for more than an hour), all in the name of style. In fact, I saw one of the L.A.M.B. models literally crying backstage as hair stylists installed her extensions. Beauty is pain, right?

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Monday, September 12

One of my favorite designers, Tory Burch, ensures that today feels like a true Monday morn-
her signature orange lacquer walls, endless vases of hydrangeas and one room wrapped practically floor-to-ceiling in purple ikat fabric. I’d live here if I could, but instead of bedding down in one of the changing rooms, I take my gift bag and head to Avery Fisher Hall for Rachel Roy’s presentation.

Roy, a rising style star and designer for Macy’s, has installed her models on the terrace of the hall, and after a few minutes of note-taking, I find myself standing next to world-renowned makeup artist Bobbi Brown. She introduces herself (as if I don’t know who she is) and asks if I’ve ever modeled. I tell her I’m too short, but she counters, saying I might be perfect for a beauty campaign she’s working on featuring real-life women. Inside, I’m realizing she’s working on featuring real-life women. Inside, I’m feeling so good after my wedge salad and truffle fries that I foolishly decide to walk the eight blocks and four avenues to the Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet studio for the Donna Karan show at 2 o’clock.

By the time I get in line for the show, I’m on the verge of being a sweaty mess, but somehow my already perfect day gets a little better when famed fashion photographer Bill Cunningham snaps a photo of me. (My editor didn’t believe that one either!) Karan’s show is a beautiful nod to Haiti, and after the show I chat briefly with singer Wyclef Jean, who helped serve as inspiration for the collection.

My next show — Marc by Marc Jacobs — isn’t until 8, so I take my time getting back uptown to the hotel, where I nap and take care of some of my regular workday tasks, including writing about the day’s shows and locking down some of my regular workday tasks, including writing about the day’s shows and locking down an important interview happening tomorrow. As darkness settles on the city, I start to get ready for the evening, putting together an outfit of snake-printed skinny jeans, a silk, striped T-shirt and velvet sandals that I hope will make my idol Marc Jacobs proud.

I meet my editor outside the New York State Armory, where Jacobs holds his shows each season, and as we make our way inside it quickly becomes apparent that someone didn’t pay the utility bill because it is blazing hot. Sauna is an understatement, as we witness the rapid fall of fashionistas far and wide succumbing to the insufferable heat. But, in a flash, the show, a collection of youthful color-blocked separates and multi-colored sneakers, is over, and we’re released hot and hungry onto Lexington Avenue.

I end the night at dinner with Notre Dame friends Brittany Flint ’08 and Brandon Hall ’06 and a few hours later hit my pillow to dream about my most excellent day.

Tuesday, September 13
Show-wise, this is an easy, breezy day since I only have two shows, the second at noon. But I’m on edge most of the day because of a BIG interview I have scheduled for later in the afternoon. More on that in a bit.

Tory Burch, once again, gets things started bright and early with a 9 a.m. show at Alice Tully Hall. I catch up with her backstage amidst drool-worthy tables of shoes, boxes of sunglasses and racks of raffia-flecked spring sportswear. While sitting on my front-row perch waiting for the show to start, I receive a call from my sister, Amelia Thompson ’08, who asks if I’m wearing a black-and-white striped suit and oversized glasses. When I confirm that I am, she squeals, “I can see you online!” I then realize that the cameras lining the runway are also trained on the crowd for a live stream on ToryBurch.com.

Finally, my sister and I are attending a major fashion show together!”

Afterward, I make my way to Chelsea for Rodarte, an eclectic, edgy line designed by sister act Kate and Laura Mulleavy. However, the only sisters anyone cares about today are Beyoncé and Solange Knowles, who cause quite a stir as they make their way inside. Security makes it impossible to get close enough to chat, but like a true fangirl — I mean digital journalist — I manage to snap a few cell phone camera shots of the mom-to-be and her little sis. Completing the sister trifecta at the Van Gogh-inspired show are actresses Elle and Dakota Fanning, who tell me...
that unlike many sisters (including me and mine sometimes), they don’t tussle over clothes.

Post-Rodarte, I hit the hotel for a quick change before my MAJOR interview down at Chelsea Piers. My nerves have been so bad I’ve barely eaten all day, and my bright idea to choke down a bowl of soup before the interview quickly proves futile. Instead, I sip some tea, play Angry Birds on my iPad and eavesdrop when Extra host and actor Mario Lopez places his coffee order right next to me at craft services. I wait. And wait some more. And then wait a little more before I’m escorted into a room set up for a photoshoot, where a young blonde girl in literally foot-tall platform heels greets me in a throaty voice: “Hi, Arienne. I’m Lady Gaga.”

I spend 20 minutes laughing with and learning from a surprisingly thoughtful and articulate Gaga, who’s in town to promote her partnership with MAC Cosmetics and its Viva Glam AIDS research arm. We snap a photo together, and as I float out of the studio on Cloud 9, I call my mom to tell her every detail. That night, I meet a friend for dinner, another for drinks and call it a late night and another great day.

Wednesday, September 14

I have a full day of shows, starting with Michael Kors at 10 a.m. inside the Tent. As we mill around before the show begins, stylist Rachel Zoe’s husband Rodger Berman whips out his cell to show me photos of their adorable infant son, Skyler, who has a better wardrobe than most adults.

The veteran Kors draws a front row full of A-listers, including Michael Douglas and Avatar’s Zoe Saldana, but the real star of the show is the designer’s flowing sarong for men. The collection is obviously Africa-inspired, but I’m not so sure how the man-skirt will translate, even on safari.

Next stop is designer Michelle Smith’s Milly line, which I sneak a peek of backstage. I’m tempted to swipe some of the cheerfully mod pieces, but obviously think better of it before finding my seat, where I lust after the models’ matte pink lipstick and monochromatic ensembles. I head back to the hotel, and thus my laptop, to write about what I’ve seen so far.

A little later I am in Chelsea checking out the GAP presentation, which features a bevy of bored-looking models and a tasty charcuterie station. I gulp down a glass of champagne and jet back to Lincoln Center for my final show: Elie Tahari. I feel like a VIP when I get to my seat and see my name printed on the beautifully prepared runway note. The luxuriousness of the note matches the show, which is a gold-infused, Egypt-inspired delight.

My work day is done, and when I step outside Lincoln Center, one of my best friends in high school is waiting curbside to sweep us off for a night of margaritas and Mexican food after a long, long day.

Thursday, September 15

I wake up ready to go in more ways than one. As much as I love fashion and runway shows, an entire week of running from pillar to post, being in endless pursuit of celebs and finding different ways to write about shoes gets taxing. Not that I’m complaining...

I head downtown for the Ralph Lauren show, where, fortunately, I’m seated right behind star-on-the-rise actress Olivia Wilde. My iced coffee has barely had time to kick in, so I’m thankful I don’t have to move a muscle to interview her before the show starts. She’s lovely and down-to-earth, and as a flurry of photographers come to snap her on the front row, I wonder if (and secretly hope) my face will end up on the photo wire services. Not that I care... Lauren is obviously obsessed with The Great Gatsby, as I see more double-breasted suits and cloche hats than I can count in a sweetly posh collection punctuated by luxe beading and fur.

With a few hours to kill before my final show of Fashion Week, I head to the one place that can help get me through to the other side: the Marc Jacobs store on Bleecker. A pair of jeans, a scarf, a necklace and a few other MJ items later, I’m ready to tackle my final show of the week. I haul my MJ loot back to the hotel, pack my things and then head out in the rain for the Calvin Klein show, where I sit behind former White House social secretary Desiree Rogers. Klein creative director Francisco Costa sticks to his usual array of sleek modern shapes and simple silhouettes in hues of peach, black and champagne.

I watch the last waiflike Klein model exit the runway and am flooded with a sense of relief as I hear the final round of applause, signaling the end of an exhilarating, eye-opening week. Not that I’ll miss it or anything...
O’Brien embodies commercial success

By Liz Warren

Actor Dan O’Brien ’99 was tailgating before the Notre Dame at Stanford game last Thanksgiving weekend when a fellow tailgater began gesturing wildly in his direction and approached him.

As one of the co-stars of Whitney, NBC’s hit ensemble comedy (think Friends) O’Brien has had to adjust to being recognized — and sometimes accosted — by fans.

But this fan did not recognize O’Brien from the show. He was absolutely certain he had come upon the Fighting Irish leprechaun mascot — traveling incognito — and was determined to unmask him. “Yes you are! Don’t lie! I know you are!” the man insisted.

“I suggested the man might be thinking of the Xerox commercial that plays during Notre Dame games,” O’Brien recalls, chuckling.

In it, O’Brien’s character discusses copying with a cardboard cutout of the leprechaun. “See! I knew it!” the man announced triumphantly before asking O’Brien to pose for a photo with him.

When O’Brien traveled to his native Alexandria, Virginia, for Christmas — he is part of a large, close-knit Irish-Italian family — his cousins stopped by to have photos taken with him, “so they could prove to their friends we were related.”

Such attention, though flattering, seems to have little effect on O’Brien, who recently moved his family from New York City to Los Angeles, where Whitney is filmed. Despite being a seasoned pro — his resume boasts an impressive array of stage and screen credits — the 34-year-old actor displays none of the self-absorption one might expect from a guy on the fast track to Hollywood stardom.

He’s just jazzed to have the gig.

Working on a sitcom filmed before a studio audience, “is the best of both worlds,” O’Brien enthuses. “It’s like live theater — but with do-overs.” In addition, he says, “it’s the best schedule in Hollywood. You go to work every morning and come home every afternoon.” Whitney allows him to spend “more time than ever before” with his wife and three children.

His acting life wasn’t always so cushy. Before he landed the role on Whitney, O’Brien spent 10 years in New York — primarily on the stage. He worked “every odd job under the sun.” Some part-time jobs were what one might consider typical for an aspiring actor — waiter, bartender, theater manager, extra on Law and Order — others were more unusual, such as supernumerary (nonspeaking actor) in productions at the Metropolitan Opera.

“As an actor you are always having to quit jobs when you get a play,” O’Brien says, “so I was always on the make.” One of the “craziest” jobs was “working as an undercover spy for a private eye firm.” O’Brien’s job was to track down and tally the number of knock-offs (counterfeit products) in Chinatown. “They hired a lot of out-of-work actors,” he explains. To avoid being recognized, “we had to wear really silly costumes.”

Despite the odd jobs, “I was always sort of ‘making it’ as an actor in my mind because I was always working on a play,” O’Brien says. His break came when he was doing a play with friend Michael Hannon, who “took me under his wing and introduced me to his agent,” O’Brien says. “I owe my career to him.”

That agent helped O’Brien get commercial auditions and finally “break into the business” (defined as getting paying work) when he was hired to do a commercial for America Online in 2004. “I thought I’d be on easy street,” he recalls, “but in fact they hardly played it. I just barely covered my union entry fees.”

As his reputation grew, more work followed. “About five years ago I started making really good money doing commercials — conveniently around the time I started a family,” he says. But easy street wasn’t always easy for the stage actor who had labored long and hard for the purity of his craft. O’Brien struggled with nagging doubts: Had he “sold out” by doing advertisements?

“I had a moment when I walked into my commercial agency and told them I couldn’t do it. I told my wife we needed to give back the money I’d made. She was pregnant with our first child at the time. She was nearly in tears. I prayed about it and asked God to give me a simple answer. I talked to my parents’ priest. Finally, one guy, Father David, said, ‘Get a grip. Keep doing the commercials — you can use your money to do good things.’”

He met his wife, Julie Shavers, a playwright and fellow actor, in 2002 when he answered a casting call in Back Stage Magazine for a play she had written. At the audition, he recalls, “Julie told the director she had to cast me, because she was going to marry me.” O’Brien says he “knew” too, by the play’s second rehearsal. The couple has produced four plays together, including Silver Bullet Trailer, written by Shavers. They were married in 2005 and have three boys, Ammon, 5; Ivie James, 3; and Austin, 1.

O’Brien says the couple’s decision to...
move to Los Angeles was “a leap of faith. I prayed a lot about it. My sister-in-law is fond of saying ‘the Lord takes care of babies and fools,’ so I figured I was covered on all fronts.” Former classmate Andrea Kavoosi ’99 covered one front, introducing him to Vikram Dhawer of Authentic Management, who became his agent in L.A. Dhawer worked to get O’Brien many film and television auditions — including the one that earned him the role of Mark on Whitney.

“As soon as I watched his commercial reel,” Dhawer recalls, “I knew I wanted to work with him because he was ‘that guy’ — the guy I had seen in multiple commercials who was always funny and interesting enough to actually make me pay attention to the commercial.”

O’Brien credits Dhawer with also steering him toward more creative ways to get work — such as video auditioning for roles. With the advent of YouTube, if an actor wants a part nowadays, O’Brien says, it’s not uncom-

mon for him to videotape himself reading the part and send a video link to a director or casting agent. One online audition caught the attention of actor/director Clint Eastwood — and nearly landed O’Brien a part in the film Gran Torino.

Even live auditions that don’t pan out are not a waste of time, O’Brien says. “If you do a good job and maybe aren’t exactly right for a part, a director will remember you and you could get called for something else.” Such was the case when O’Brien auditioned for Ben Stiller, who was directing a television pilot. O’Brien didn’t get the role, but Stiller was so impressed with O’Brien’s reading that he hired him to participate in a reading of a film script by Aaron Sorkin.

O’Brien admits he was a little star-struck when he arrived at Sorkin’s Hollywood Hills home to find a room full of well known actors with whom he’d be reading. Despite being on a successful prime-time sitcom, O’Brien has trouble even now imagining himself a peer to legendary actors. Achieving celebrity later — rather than sooner in one’s career — “keeps you humble,” he says.

On Whitney, O’Brien plays Mark — an irreverent, girl-chasing, commitment-phobic police officer with a penchant for blurting purple prose. O’Brien, in contrast, is a devoted husband and father and devout Catholic who recently put his brother in “timeout” for calling each other “dummies.” His children are not allowed to watch the show — too adult.

The day after an episode airs, O’Brien says, he is often teased by friends about the “dirty” things he says on camera. But, O’Brien adds, “I like giving this guy a voice. He has a point of view, and I want to show it . . . to show how he got there.”

Whitney Cummings, O’Brien’s boss as well as co-star, says, “I saw hundreds of actors, and he had the job when he said the first line in his first audition. He was so fresh, so real, so inherently funny. I knew I had struck gold.”

As the character evolves, viewers get to see Mark’s vulnerability, and O’Brien’s influence. In one episode, Mark is a Notre Dame fan (O’Brien, whose father, grandfather and brother are also ND grads, lobbied for it in the script). In another, Mark lets slip that he’s not as sexually experienced as he’d claimed. When he’s called on it, he explains he was raised Catholic — and considers “the act” to be something “special.”

Cummings says she is “the most protective of the role of Mark because secretly Mark is me and all my propaganda. Mark is a very complex character who keeps unveiling new dimensions that I think are surprising everyone . . . watching him negotiate who he thinks he should be with what makes him happy.” On O’Brien’s influence, Cummings deadpans, “Dan’s real life isn’t much of an inspiration, because from what I know he just constantly churns out children.”

Bitten by the acting bug in 7th grade after landing a part in a school play, O’Brien began acting lessons, fell in love and never looked back. In high school, “I did all the plays and really found my group of friends there.”

He landed his first professional role — lead in an off-off-Broadway play — the summer after his sophomore year at Notre Dame. Today his resume reflects a solid balance of stage and screen work, plus a few special skills — “stage combat,” “accents” and “an unbelievably realistic cricket sound.” A lifelong musician and composer, O’Brien enjoys playing piano and guitar, and still plays in a garage band “when my wife is out.” He also plays the trumpet, an instrument he played in the Notre Dame Marching Band his freshman year.

O’Brien hopes to do more writing and directing, and is currently at work on a screenplay with fellow Notre Dame alum Pete Cilella ’99. He would also, someday, like to write a script “about the Catholic experience . . . being Catholic . . . from a liturgical point of view. So much is happening right now . . . changes to the Mass. I would really like to explore some of that.”
The Kings of Tharsis: Medieval and Renaissance Music for Epiphany, Schola Antiqua of Chicago, Michael Alan Anderson ’97, director. (Dis- cantus Recordings). The ensemble performs songs ranging from plainchants to six-voice motets, chiefly by 16th century composers, all celebrating the feast of Epiphany. The album features music that previously had not received a modern recording. Full texts, translations and previews of the songs on this 10-track CD can be found at chicagochant.org.

Pray for Rain, Mutts (Mutts Music). This first full-length album by the rock ‘n’ roll band with attitude, with lyrics by Mike Maimone ’04, is dedicated to “the protestors on Wall St. who have inspired people of all races, faiths & political affiliations to unite.” The trio of Maimone, keyboard/vocals; Bob Buckstaff, bass; and Chris Faller, drums, is described by Time Out Chicago as “Like Tom Waits fronting a garage band.” Songs from the 11-track album can be downloaded at muttsmusic.com.

God Bless America, University of Notre Dame Band, directed by Dr. Kenneth Dye. This celebration of the band’s 166th year and 124th football season is available both as a CD and a DVD. Among the highlights from its 2011 season are the band’s halftime show with the music group Chicago and its performance on the front lawn of the U.S. Capitol Building. Along with popular hits performed by the group, traditional school songs are also included. The CD and the DVD can be ordered at web.band.nd.edu/catalog/.

Discover Christ: Developing a Personal Relationship with Jesus, Bert Ghezzi ’69Ph.D. and Dave Nodar (Our Sunday Visitor). “What is the meaning of life?” “Why does Jesus matter?” “Why is the Resurrection important to us?” Through personal stories, scripture and testimonies, the authors guide readers through a series of pivotal questions that invite them to embrace the answer found in the New Testament. They conclude with a look at “Community and Sacraments: Why we need the church.”

Windfall Nights, William Claypool ’72 (L’Universe). A novel of redemption, the story follows Julian, a fifth-year college senior, and Thomas, a handyman Julian meets at his part-time job as a night bellman at a second-rate hotel. The two men later go their separate ways, but each arrives in Saigon at the height of the Vietnam War, where Julian is pursuing his career as a journalist and Thomas is following his destiny.

Here Lies Hugh Glass: A Mountain Man, A Bear, and the Rise of the American Nation, Jon T. Coleman (Hill and Wang). In 1823, trapper Hugh Glass was nearly killed by a grizzly bear, and two members of his company eventually abandoned the dying man. Glass then crawled 200 miles to safety and sought revenge on those two men. Coleman, a ND associate professor of history, here looks at the myth that grew around this frontier man and discusses how such tales of Western survival contributed to building the idea of American exceptionalism.

The Harrisburg 7 and the New Catholic Left, William O’Rourke (University of Notre Dame Press). The religious antiwar protests of the Vietnam War era form the background of this reprint, which brings to life the 1972 trial of seven anti-war activists who were accused of conspiring to raid federal offices, bomb federal property and kidnap presidential adviser Henry Kissinger. The 40th anniversary edition features a new afterword by the author, a ND professor of English, that includes a history of the new Catholic Left for the past four decades.

Contested Illnesses: Citizens, Science, and Health Social Movements, edited by Phil Brown, Rachel Morello-Frosch, Stephen Zavestoski ’94, and the Contested Illnesses Research Group (University of California Press). Health social movements are at the forefront of promoting social and policy changes to address such factors as environmental and ecological health. Here essayists examine such issues as “Air toxics exposures and health risks among schoolchildren in Los Angeles”; “Women’s experience of household chemical exposure”; and “The public paradigm of the environmental breast cancer movement.”

Undisputed: Notre Dame, National Champions 1966, Mark O. Hubbard ’72 (Vantage Press). Avid football fans still debate Coach Ara Parseghian’s decision to kick a field goal rather than go for a winning touchdown in the Nov. 19, 1966, 10-10 tie game between ND and Michigan State — which played to a TV audience of 33 million, at the time the largest TV sports audience ever. The author here covers the players, coaches and the details of that famous game and the winning 1966 season, which resulted in a national championship for the Notre Dame football team.

Compiled by Carol Schaal ’91M.A. Visit magazine.nd.edu for Choices in Brief.
THE LOOK OF THE IRISH
WHENEVER I’M COMING HOME from a trip, I always experience an internal tug of war between wanting to know the status of projects left untended and not wanting to know out of the fear that something bad happened while I was gone. This particular October I was even more anxious than usual. Maybe it was because I had been out of the country. Or maybe it was because it was Halloween.

Getting home required hopscotching across four cities: Rome, NYC, Dallas, and finally Austin. With each leg of the journey, my mind increasingly turned to matters I had successfully ignored for the past seven days. There was one thing in particular I really wanted to know but was afraid to find out. Finally my curiosity got the best of me and I posted the following on Facebook: “Boarding a plane from Rome to JFK. Almost afraid to ask, but what was the outcome of the Notre Dame game yesterday?”

When the plane touched down in New York, I turned my phone back on and scrolled through my messages. My friend Sheila had posted a comment, gently delivering the bad news.

“I think it was 28 to 27 Tulsa…. :-(

I was grateful that the news came from Sheila. If you have to get bad news about how your favorite team fared, better to get it from a fellow fan. After all, Sheila and I were friends from our days at St. Ignatius the Martyr Catholic School. Naturally we both loved the Irish.

I wanted to thank her for letting me know, but it was time to get off the plane. I didn’t want to be Inconsiderate Girl, absorbed with her phone, oblivious to the fact that she’s holding up a whole plane load of people. I would send her a message later. But when I got off the plane, I needed to clear customs, grab something to eat and go to the restroom. Before I knew it, it was time to board the next plane and I hadn’t responded to Sheila.

But Sheila was on my mind. Not only did I want to thank her for giving me the score, I needed to get back with her about when we could grab lunch. We had Facebooked back and forth before I left for my trip, but things got really hectic and we never nailed down a date. The ball was definitely in my court.

Sheila and I had met in first grade and were friends all the way through eighth
grade graduation. But after leaving St. Ignatius, Sheila’s family had moved far away to North Austin, while my family remained in South Austin. In the 30-plus years that followed, I think I saw Sheila only once — and that was when I bumped into her at a ZZ Top concert. (Stop judging me. It was the ‘90s and I had free tickets.)

In 2009 we reconnected. Her dad had seen a story I had written in our local paper and told Sheila about it. Shortly after that she tracked me down on Facebook. We talked on the phone one afternoon, filling each other in on the important ups and downs over the past few decades. She was the same old Sheila I had known and loved from my childhood. Funny, dry, a little sarcastic (my favorite flavor) and always upbeat. Before childhood. Funny, dry, a little sarcastic (my favorite flavor) and always upbeat. Before

The next thing I noticed was how many times she had reached out to me in the last few weeks compared to how many times I responded. On October 12, she commented on several photos I posted of my recent trip to Notre Dame to visit my son, who is in law school there.


Me: Nothing.

Sheila, commenting on a silly photo of me next to the ND mascot: “You’re the same height as the Leprechaun!”


Sheila’s comment on a photo of my son and daughter at the Grotto: “Beautiful children!”

Again, I didn’t reply.

It’s not that I never responded. It’s just that the ratio was about five of her messages to every one of mine. And here’s the thing: If someone would have asked, I would have told them Sheila and I were about even when it came to exchanging messages. But when I actually went back and checked, to the extent there was any genuine effort put forth, it all came from her.

I used to think Facebook made it easy to be friends. And I guess I can if you use it correctly. But Facebook makes it easier to be a superficial friend. After all, occasionally “liking” something your “friend” says is not the same as actually being there. And if you’re curious about what kind of friend you really are, Facebook makes it brutally easy for you to scroll back and get an honest answer.

“Let me know when you wanna meet for lunch. I know you’re busy, but it’s pretty slow around here most days . . . ”

That was the message Sheila sent me on September 8.

On the morning of November 4, as I rearranged my day so I could go to Sheila’s funeral, I found myself wishing I had cleared a little time on my calendar to have lunch with her a month or two earlier. Then, rather than sitting in the pews of St. Ignatius Church saying goodbye, I could have sat across a table from her getting reacquainted.

I’m not suggesting that my having lunch with Sheila would have cured her depression or prevented her suicide. (Trust me, my days of self-delusion are, at least for the time being, over.) I just wish I would have made time to catch up with her when I had the chance. More to the point, I wish I would have realized that I actually had the time instead of letting mundane tasks that don’t really matter take priority over people who do. I always thought that I didn’t have time then, but I’d have some later. I was wrong on both counts.

Earlier this evening my sister, who lives in Houston, called. She was having a bad week. Someone had hacked into her bank account, her husband was going to be out of town on business and her weekend plans had fallen through. “I wish you could come to town this weekend,” she told me. I wish I could, too, I replied. Then I rattled off all the reasons I couldn’t. My weekend was shaping up to be very busy.

After I hung up it hit me. I didn’t need to search my Facebook messages to know that my sister had always been there for me. When I was moving to Notre Dame for law school and married student housing didn’t allow pets, she volunteered to babysit my cat . . . for three years. When, as a college student in New York, my son landed in the hospital with an acute case of the chicken pox, she dropped everything and drove to town to stay with my 4-year-old daughter so I could go take care of him. When my marriage imploded and I was scrambling to furnish a new house in a hurry, she spent her day hauling an extra mattress to Austin so my daughter would have a bed.

“Fluff the pillows! I’m coming to town tomorrow!” I messaged her.

“Oh my gosh!!!! I’m overjoyed!!!!!!!!” was her reply.

I suspect I will be haunted by the events of that Halloween for a long time. I feel terrible about Sheila and what kind of friend I was (or more accurately wasn’t) to her over her last year. But since I can’t get a do-over, the most I can hope for is to do better. I’ve gotten it wrong plenty of times in the past. At least this one time I got it right.
The long, dusty, road-blocked road is good

By Dan Fahey ’90

The plan to meet the bishop seemed simple enough. My friend Father Alfred said we could drive to where the bishop was staying, some 60 miles away. If we left after lunch, we would arrive in mid-afternoon, see the bishop and return by evening. In many parts of the world it would have been a quick and easy trip, but this was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the simplest of trips can turn into an epic journey. And so it was with this excursion, which reinforced lessons important for enduring the physical and emotional rigors of the Congo.

The trip started in the town of Bunia, in northeastern Congo. I had been to Bunia numerous times for my dissertation research on Congo’s wars, but this time I was in town for a consultancy project on the minerals trade. After one of my previous trips, my mother and uncle were so moved by my photos of a destroyed Catholic school that they wanted to donate money for its reconstruction. I needed to talk to the bishop about their proposal, but he was out of town visiting the parish at Fataki, north of Bunia. Father Alfred arranged a meeting, and we were supposed to leave one weekday at 1 p.m.

Lesson 1: Starting times are variable

At the appointed time, Father Alfred, our driver, Roger, and I were ready to go, but we had to wait for another priest who was coming along for the ride to finish his lunch. While we waited, my stomach felt a bit unsettled, but I was unsure if it was something I ate or my anxious desire to get moving or both. The longer we delayed our departure, the greater the likelihood we would come back at night. Traveling on Congo’s roads is always difficult, but at night it can also become dangerous.

We finally left shortly after 2 p.m. As we bounced along from Bunia in our four-wheel drive vehicle, Alfred said the road to Fataki was “good.” This evoked memories of the time my friend Pascal and I drove along this same road, but coming south from the Uganda-Congo border toward Bunia. Someone told us “the road is good” on the way to Bunia, but then we came to a halt in a line of vehicles behind a truck trapped in a big hole. We were stuck for 14 hours there and spent a nervous night locked in our car.

“The road is good” became a joke between Pascal and me. I hoped this time the road would be good.

Lesson 2: The roads are never good

About an hour into our trip, the road became dustier and dustier. The roads are often dusty, since there are no paved roads in the Congo’s Ituri region, but this was exceptional. It had not rained in a couple of weeks, and the many large trucks that travel this road every day, carrying goods from Uganda, pulverize the dirt. Inches of powder covered the road, and the verdant roadside foliage had become brown.

An extraordinary amount of dust was sifting into our vehicle, and, one by one, we all started coughing. I donned my motorcycle goggles and covered my nose and mouth with a handkerchief. Later I blew what seemed like grams of snotty dust out of my nose.

During a brief stop, I asked Roger about the dust. He told me the car had been in an accident some months before. The repair job was less than perfect, and the dust was entering through gaps under the doors and around the rear windows.

In addition to the dust, the road was in terrible condition. Roger swerved around bumps and holes and rocks, but despite his maneuvering we were constantly hitting obstacles and being thrown back and forth, up and down, making for a wearisome trip.

As we neared Fataki, we were surprised to see the bishop’s car heading in the opposite direction. Both cars skidded to a dusty halt, and we learned the bishop was returning to Bunia earlier than planned for an important meeting. After I presented him with the letter from my mother about reconstructing the school, the bishop’s car headed south and we continued north. I wanted to go back to Bunia, too, but the priests in Fataki were expecting us.

Around 5 p.m. we arrived at Fataki. The daylight was getting thin, but my frustration was thick. We would be driving back at night, when the roads are much more dangerous, and any breakdown could leave us stranded for some time.

At the parish we emerged from the car, dust falling from our clothes. After we greeted the priests, we each washed up and entered the sitting parlor, where a nun served up beer for the priests. I requested a soda. My stomach was still feeling funky. Was it anxiety or a simmering illness? I couldn’t tell. I watched the clock tick past 5:30 p.m. toward 6 when Alfred finally said we would go. But first we would stop by the seminary . . . my frustration grew again.

Dan Fahey is a postdoctoral fellow in the political science department at Colorado College in Colorado Springs.
We finally left Fataki around 6:30. The car lurched and weaved and bounced down the dark road. After a few miles, the dust returned in force. We all started to cough again. My breathing was labored, my chest heavy. I felt tired and ill. After what seemed an eternity, we reached the outskirts of Iga Barriere, about an hour from Bunia. The trip is almost over, I thought.

Lesson 3: It ain't over 'til it's over
We passed through Iga around 9 p.m., but about a mile outside of town we came upon the bishop’s car, which had broken down. We pulled over and got out, and Roger and the bishop’s driver worked on the car’s engine. After a half hour, they tried to start the car, but this only produced a clicking sound. It’s the battery, someone said.

I naively thought they would use jumper cables for this job, but of course there were none. To my surprise, Roger removed the battery from our car and held it over the battery in the bishop’s car, while the other driver held two wrenches in his hands. Instead of using jumper cables, they were connecting the batteries with bare metal wrenches! I looked away, thinking the battery might explode or someone would get electrocuted. Amazingly, this technique worked and the bishop’s car started up. Roger replaced the battery in our car and soon we were off again, following the bishop back to Bunia.

Lesson 4: Blessed (and shrewd) are the peacemakers
A few miles down the road we came to a roadblock. A soldier approached the bishop’s car and signaled it could pass, but then a man in civilian clothing emerged from the darkness near the bishop’s car. He seemed to be upset and pleading with the bishop for help.

When a loud argument erupted next to the bishop’s car, we got out to investigate. I had trouble following the discussion, which mixed French and Swahili, but pieced together the story. The man in civilian clothing complained that the soldier wanted a bribe to let him pass with his vehicle. The soldier asserted the man was smuggling a car into Congo from Uganda without paying the proper taxes. The soldier was relatively calm, but after the man hurled a slew of insults at him, the soldier took an aggressive stance. I thought there was going to be a brawl.

There might have been a fight if not for the action of Father Alfred. As the two men moved closer to each other, Father Alfred straddled a ditch next to the road and held his arms straight out from his sides, keeping the two apart. He was the epitome of a peacemaker.

At this point the bishop, still sitting in his car, suggested that each man call his supervisor to straighten out the dispute. The soldier should call his commanding officer, and the other man — who it turned out worked for the Congolese customs agency — should call his boss. This shrewd move completely defused the situation. It quickly became apparent that both the soldier and the customs agent were up to no good, and neither wanted to call further attention to what he was doing. They soon began talking to each other in hushed tones. Then the soldier indicated the man could pass.

Lesson 5: Find the positive in every experience
As I stood there watching the argument and its resolution, my earlier frustration melted away. I felt a peace wash over me, and suddenly I was thankful for this day. It had it all: a rough drive, terrible dust, mounting frustration, profound fatigue, a mechanical breakdown, an encounter with corruption and a successful peacemaking effort.

But the day was not done. We continued on through three or four more roadblocks, passing safely through each one as soon as the policemen or soldiers realized the bishop was in the lead car. As we arrived at Bunia, we stopped at the bishop’s house, where he invited us inside for a late dinner. I took off my dusty jacket and a nun helped me to wash my hands. After the meal, as we prepared to leave, the nun approached me, her arm outstretched, holding a tied-off plastic bag into which she had placed my filthy coat.

I arrived at my hotel shortly before midnight. I stood in the shower and let the lukewarm water dribble over me. My hair was stiff with dust, and the water pressure was insufficient for me to really get clean. Still, it felt good. Finally, I climbed into bed, exhausted but grateful for this classic Congo day. ☑
In the beachfront ghetto of Asbury Park, New Jersey, a dank, dirty dive bar called The Stone Pony slouches between a weedy parking lot and worn boardwalk, the last defiant sentinel of a bygone era when the sweaty heroes of rock and roll called its sooty sleaze their home.

Like everything in Asbury Park, the Pony has seen better days. No longer do the leather-jacketed bards of the boardwalk stomp its stage. But once upon a time the likes of Bruce Springsteen and Southside Johnny launched their careers here, and one clear Sunday afternoon five years ago a group of unshaven suburban kids made their debut at this lead-painted cradle of rock.

“We clearly had no idea what the hell we were doing.”

“Excuse me, do you have a riser I can put my keyboard on?” I asked the stage manager.

“You want a riser? Who the f*** do you think you are, Britney Spears?”

Greetings from Asbury Park.

It was the summer of 2007, and my high-school band had finally landed a gig at the biggest banner in the local rock band circuit. A good Stone Pony gig was immediate street cred, but we got even luckier: We were opening for the Jonas Brothers, a bubble-gum pop band that was clearly on its way, getting scooped up by the Disney machine a few months later. So lots of girls were showing up to this gig, and, sure, the venue meant getting our name out there — but hordes of screaming girls was another matter entirely. We knew the real reason we had joined the band.

We practiced about six hours a week, which put us way above most of the other bands on the circuit. We were pretty good, by local band standards, but the rock gods would not bear such hubris, as we were about to find out.

To the Stone Pony’s management and the crowd, we were about as meaningless as a Catholic classical pianist playing keyboards in a guitar-driven rock band — which, of course, I was. I had spent the morning lecturing Sunday Mass for the old ladies at St. Dorothea’s, looking polished in my Catholic-school uniform of jacket and tie, desperately pretending I was not going to spend my afternoon inhaling secondhand smoke at a dive bar in Asbury Park — which, of course, I was.

The band arrived early to load in at the Stone Pony, where my request for a riser as a pianist with a local band earned us a spot on the afternoon’s food chain somewhere between small rodents and whatever small rodents eat. We weren’t a “national act” like the professional punks who toured the country playing bars like the Pony. Those guys knew they were cool. They had the expensive gear, the nicotine-stained fingernails and all the street cred. One national act’s guitarist kept referring to the head stage manager as “that funny cat,” but he got away with it.

We had spent the past few weeks desperately promoting our gig to all our friends on MySpace (MySpace!), and between our friends and grandmothers we had sold about 30 tickets. The stage manager smiled, collected all the ticket money we had made and gave us 10 percent — which we immediately decided to save for recording-studio rent (although we did buy a monster basket of fries from the bar’s grill, whose chef looked like a toad, though a cheery toad, and whose fries were damn good, particularly with the house-blend BBQ sauce, although I was afraid to ask The Toad what was in the sauce).

We hauled our amplifiers and instrument cases from my dad’s aging Suburban to the...
back stage, my eyes struggling to adjust from the wholesome clear of that Atlantic afternoon to the dive’s grimy dim. The Pony was a weary madam, her chipping paint and sticky floors lit by the purple-green glow of the arcade games. The bathroom walls bore the words of the prophets before us, the disaffected youth of that benighted decade — the ’90s.

The female bartenders wore cowboy hats and ripped, skintight jeans. I imagined they were husky-voiced ex-strippers from the seedy club down the block, and their lives of cigarettes and late nights had dragged them well past their prime. (Not that our drummer didn’t occasionally skip a beat when one of those pairs of jeans walked by.)

The Sound Guy, a bearded barbarian in the back booth, was the ultimate power in our minds. At his array of dials and buttons, he wielded the ability to take any band from mediocre to great. Or, more usually, from bad to worse. Above the sound board, Sound Guy had taped his own Dantean warning:

**Sorry, I can’t un-suck the band.**

We had some time to kill before we played, so we sat around and tried unsuccessfully to look very tough in front of the other bands. The staging area looked like a garbage-man convention in the hold of a pirate ship. Dirty Conversees, ripped jeans. Flannel shirts over yellowing Ramones tees and stained wifebeaters. I glanced over my own costume of choice. My shoes were a little too clean, my plain white shirt a little too bleached, my scruff a little too even. My Catholic high school had a dress code, man, and I had been to Mass.

I took stock of my band. Jimmy, the guitarist, was only 15, but he looked and played like he was born with a Fender in one hand and a pack of Marlboro Reds in the other. He was a lousy student — I did his English homework in middle school — but a fear of ordinary will probably just earn him a place among the knuckle-dragging cave dwellers were pale-skinned, bushy eyebrows were carnivorous.

Stage hands are a funny breed, because they rip off deh heads an’ fed ‘em to the bouncers.

Our drummer was Jeff. If the Scooby-Doo characters Daphne and Shaggy had a kid, that kid would have been Jeff. A pale, weedy ginger with a scrubby red goatee, Jeff worked landscaping, so he was always showing up to gigs in a rusting ’87 Chevy loaded with grass clippings or Mexican farmands. Jeff had a penchant for gray wifebeaters, menthol cigs and mumbling. He was also damn good at the drums.

Chris, our bassist, was a phenomenally talented musician who made up for his technical ferocity on the bass with a complete lack of social charm, particularly via ripping his shirt off at shows. Chris once asked out a girl he knew via text message. She presumably had replied, “Thanks, honey, but to me you’re like a brother.” Poor Chris. **Friend zoned.** (He actually quit the band not long after the Pony show. His replacement, Sean, had a charming habit of forcefully hiccupping during awkward silences.)

Our fearless leader was Cam, a guitarist with an imposing Napoleon complex to compensate for his distinctly nasally voice — and, you know, his height. This was Cam’s band. Cam wanted us to sound like the Dave Matthews Band, but Cam sang nothing like Dave Matthews. We sounded like Oasis with a better guitarist. And when you are sitting in the staging area of the Stone Pony, you do not want to be anything close to Oasis. Oasis is fungus on the food chain of rock ’n’ roll.

The band before us, aptly named something like Nine Reasons to Die, had apparently finished early, because the head stage manager suddenly shouted for us to load our gear onstage. At least, that’s what I think he said. He really said something like: “WHO-EVEA THE F____IN’ NEX’ BAND IS BETTA F____ IN’ GET DEH S____T ONSTAGE IN LIKE TREE MINITES O’ I’M A PUNCH YAS.”

The Pony’s stage manager had the cheerful disposition of a hung-over Oscar the Grouch and the beady-eyed appearance of an overfed gutter rat. His name was Elmo. Elmo was 5 feet tall. Elmo had a ponytail. And I was dead certain Elmo’s enormous bushy eyebrows were carnivorous.

Stage hands are a funny breed, because they are perpetually smoking, cursing angrily, or both. Asking them for anything out of the ordinary will probably just earn you an insult to your manhood. The Pony’s cartoon-dragging cave dwellers were pale-faced, flippant toward authority figures and deeply suspicious of the new brand of BBQ sauce at The Toad’s grill. So go ahead, tell a stage hand that your band’s keyboard player needs a specialized input jack for the PA system. No? Didn’t think so.

We scrambled to get our gear onstage. The guitarists needed to tune, so I was left to carry my instrument up to the stage by myself. My weapon of choice was a Yamaha S90, a not-quite-top-of-the-line keyboard that weighed in at a literally staggering 52 pounds. We sound checked. I wiped the sweat from my forehead, suddenly nervous and self-aware. Sound Guy did his best to un-suck our sound, then gave us the thumbs up. Fans of the Jonas Brothers were nowhere near the stage. Chris scanned the audience, preparing to once again rip off his shirt.

Cam launched into his usual pre-show introduction of the band. His introduction sounded something like this: “Hiieveryone, we’re Hollander an’ we’re regonnasang asong fer you now, we reallyhopeyoulike it.”

Um, yeah. Let’s rock?

The entire concert was a sweaty haze of green and orange, courtesy of the colored stage lights that blinded us from seeing the audience. At one point, however, I did notice that most of our grandmothers had shown up to watch us play: a clutch of marmalade-haired ladies in floral sweaters, smiling proudly and doing their best to blend in with the Pony’s home crowd of bartenders,ushers and bouncers. Nice, too, to see strong representation from the church.

The undisputed highlight of the show? One of the speakers caught fire, a sacrifice to the rock gods. Elmo, cursing mightily, clawed his way up the stage and unplugged it, but not before everyone in the bar started cheering for our accidental pyrotechnics display. (To be honest, it had a much better tone when engulfed in flames.) Jimmy, ever the entertainer, started playing his Flying V so fiercely that I can only assume he was trying to ignite the rest of the amplifiers. Chris ripped his shirt off. No one noticed.

We finished the last song in our half-hour set to a roar of applause from our handful of friends. It sounded like we had won a few new fans. Our grandmothers cheered, and Elmo, scowling, roared for the next band to get onstage before he ripped off deh heads an’ led ’em to the bouncers.

We had finally played a concert at the Stone Pony, the fiery crucible of rock royalty. We survived.

“Not bad, right Cam?” I said, trying to goad our Negative Napoleon into a positive mood.

“Dude, we sounded like as.” I couldn’t even hear myself think, your keyboard was so loud.”

Huh. I couldn’t hear my keyboard.

Thanks, Cam. Sound Guy, who was finally unplugging the last of our gear, was surprised, however. “Dude,” he said, “little man over there has harsh.”

I shrugged. The smoke from the amplifier — or was it something else? — hung in the air.

“Sorry,” I laughed. “I can’t un-suck the band.”
Shopping for me

BY Maraya Goyer Steadman ’89, ’90 MBA

I live in fear of those cable television shows where they videotape some unsuspecting woman, stage a fashion intervention where all her friends and family tell her how awful she dresses, then throw away her entire wardrobe, give her lots of money to go buy new clothes and cut off her hair. I sometimes hear the hosts’ voices when I’m at the grocery store.

“Okay, so there she is getting out of her car, wait is that a car? It’s gigantic, it’s like a parking lot Titanic. How many kids does this woman have!”

“And she is wearing jeans, of course, I mean what else would she wear to the grocery store?”

“How big is that purse?”

“I think it’s bigger than her car.”

“What is that in her purse?”

“OMG, it’s a diaper!”

“She’s putting her wallet and her keys in a diaper bag — this woman uses a diaper bag as a purse. Really? Tell me, who does that?”

“And please tell me those are not . . .”

“Yes, they are.”

“ . . . gym shoes.”

I did not always carry diapers in my gigantic purse. After graduating with my MBA, I spent an entire summer living at home, waiting tables, being insulted and saving money just to buy my wardrobe to go off to work in the big city.

Eventually I invested in a corporate wardrobe of expensive clothes that I didn’t buy with my waitressing tips but with my salary. The look was easy. It was a corporate look that was based on what my firm, my clients and my peers expected me to wear. And then I quit.

At home with my daughter I had no idea what to wear or if it mattered what I looked like. It was much easier for me to be fashionable when I was getting a lot more sleep and someone or something else was projecting what I should look like.

While watching those shows on cable television with the ambush in the parking lot, I worried that I had become frumpy and unfashionable. I realized my husband’s Chicago Bears pullover probably wasn’t the best choice to accentuate anything, but should I be wearing designer boots to the park? Were turtlenecks a truly terrible choice for my neckline while I was doing unmentionable things to the toilets with a scrubby brush?

Since I tend to worry about everything, including turtlenecks, occasionally I would venture to the mall and try to decide if I really wanted to make more of an effort, to try to improve my look and wear skinny jeans and those tall black boots the other moms were wearing to pick up their kids from school.

On one of those trips to the mall I walked into a store I used to work downtown. I was drawn to a stunning suede jacket. A saleswoman asked if I’d like to try it on.

“Oh yes, please,” I answered.

As I admired myself in the store’s mirrors, my obvious first question was not “How much does it cost?” but “How do you clean it?”

“You don’t.”

“What do you mean you don’t clean it?”

“Well, it’s suede, you just brush it.”

“You just brush it?”

“Yes, you brush it.”

“Aren’t there any special cleaners?”

“No, you brush it.”

“With what?”

“A suede brush.”

“That will never work. Can you use water?”

“No, it’s suede, you brush it.”

Losing her patience because I could not get it through my head that there were things in this world you didn’t scrub with a scrubby brush, she asked, “What could you possibly get on it anyway?”

“Slobber, spit up, milk, goldfish mush [which I explained was mushed-up Goldfish crackers and Gatorade], black banana, marker, crayon, Hello Kitty lip gloss, possibly urine and vomit.”

The saleswoman took the jacket out of my hands, hung it back on the hanger, and got pretentious and said, “I don’t think this is the right jacket for you.”

Then she said, “Maybe you should just go to Sears.”

Yeah, maybe I should. Truthfully, I feel comfortable shopping for my clothes in stores that sell power tools and lawn furniture, where I can buy a new summer dress and a basic black T-shirt. At my life stage I no longer need, or want, suede jackets that can’t get peed on.

Recently, dressed up to go out to dinner with my husband, I walked down the stairs to the playroom to say good-night to our children. Our younger daughter jumped up and shouted, “Mommy, you’re beautiful, you look just like a princess!”

I used to carry a diaper bag for a purse. Now that my kids are out of diapers, my purse is still gigantic enough to hold all the stuff I want to keep in it, sanitizing wipes and a gallon of Sani-Slime hand sanitizer for the inevitable trips to the public toilets, a roll of hockey tape, four Band-Aids, a wallet full of grocery store receipts, Matchbox cars, a pack of crayons, homework pencils and Cinderella, all dressed up to go to the ball where she’ll meet her prince and live happily ever after, wearing her gym shoes.

Maraya Steadman, who lives in a Chicago suburb, is a stay-at-home mother of three children. See her biweekly “The Playroom” column at magazine.nd.edu and at her website, maraya steadman.com. She can be reached at maraya@steadmans.org.
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