



Last July, “On Beyond Exeter” offered seven weeklong Harkness classes for alumni/ae and other adult friends of the Academy, including “D-Day and the Battle for Normandy,” taught by history instructor Jack Herney.



“We spanned a broad range of professions and two generations in age,” says Dorothee von Albert Engers ’90 of her Moby Dick classmates. “This greatly added to the richness of classroom discussions.”

GEORGE H. KALIKMAN ’71, P’04: HISTORY LESSONS

I took Jack Herney’s course “D-Day and the Battle for Normandy” for a week last July because of my late father, Samuel Kalikman. His role in this story began with a conversation in the autumn of 1934.

My father was in his first year at Harvard Law School. One day he turned to one of his classmates, Hank Wiley, who graduated from Exeter in 1930, and asked him what he thought about being there. Hank spoke positively about both Harvard Law School and Harvard College, which he’d also attended. “But,” Hank said, “The best four years of my life were the four years I spent at Exeter.” My father, a public school kid, looked blankly at

HAROLD BROWN

Hank and asked, “‘Exeter’? What’s that?” The picture of Exeter that Hank Wiley painted remained vivid in my father’s memory for years.

On June 6, 1944, my father was the navigator on an LST (Landing Ship, Tank) that landed British troops on Gold Beach. Though my dad almost never spoke of D-Day, it was clearly one of the most influential experiences of his life.

In 1966, my father told me Hank Wiley’s story about Exeter. I visited PEA and decided to attend after I was lucky enough to be admitted. When my father broke the news to his father, Philip, my grandfather expressed consternation that I would be going to school so far from home. “Why does he have to go there?” my grandfather asked. “What’s so special about Exeter?”

Summoning all of his professional skills, my father thought for a moment and replied, “Pop, Ike’s grandson went to Exeter.”

My grandfather’s eyes widened; General Eisenhower was his hero. “Ike’s grandson went to Exeter?” he echoed. “Fine.”

In the autumn of 1967, I walked into Dunbar Hall to begin my prep year. The following year, we “old boys” in Dunbar welcomed an Exeter rookie named Jack Herney to his third-floor faculty apartment. Very quickly, Jack became one of the most popular and respected faculty members at PEA. He was brilliant, witty, devoted to his students, and radiated a joy for teaching. In my senior year, I enrolled in Jack’s History 42, a class studying the rise of Nazi totalitarianism. It was the highlight of my academic experience at the Academy.

HAROLD BROWN

I came to Exeter in 1967 because of a chance conversation that my father had 33 years earlier. I returned to Exeter 40 years later to sit at

Jack Herney’s Harkness table, learn about D-Day and the invasion of Normandy, and imagine what it must have been like for a 30-year-old lawyer-turned-Naval officer to participate in one of the greatest and most harrowing events in history. It was an extraordinary gift to be able to sit with Jack at the table again.

My grandfather, Philip Kalikman, died in the spring of my prep year. He never got to see Exeter. My older son, Philip Kalikman, graduated from PEA in 2004, and returned there this summer as a teaching intern. That, too, was an extraordinary gift.

George H. Kalikman ’71, P’04, practices law in San Francisco.

THE HARKNESS TABLE FOR 'ON BEYOND EXETER'

DOROTHEE VON ALBERT ENGERS '90: 'A BRAIN SPA'

Last spring, when I was feeling drained from the daily challenges of my life as a working mom, I received an invitation to do some time traveling.

I was invited to come back to a place of many happy memories, to visit dear people to whom I still feel close, and to immerse myself in a topic of my choice, together with a group of enthusiastic people.

It was the invitation to "On Beyond Exeter," a weeklong program very different from a regular reunion. Reunions are a wonderful way to meet up with former classmates, but you usually spend a short, nostalgic day as an outsider, wandering around campus, looking on sentimentally.

Seventeen years before, through the generosity of Phillips Exeter Academy—which every year grants scholarships to the American Field Service student exchange program—I had had the privilege to spend my senior year at Exeter. Ever since then, I have felt a little bit homesick for PEA. This time, I would be allowed to be part of the action again. I would come back for a week as a *student*. I would sit down at the Harkness Table and *learn*.

It sounded like the perfect getaway from the stressful present, an experience that promised to be both relaxing and stimulating—a "brain spa." I said yes.

My favorite course during my senior year had been English classes with Mr. Mangin. Given the opportunity to tackle another great piece of literature, I chose to embark on a literary journey with Harvard Knowles as my "captain" and to explore the American epic *Moby Dick*.

"Welcome aboard!" it said on our class schedule, and it occurred to me that a Harkness class resembles a boat trip in several aspects. The dynamics of Harkness learning rely on teamwork, mutual respect and an interest in other people's views and opinions. And for this session of "On Beyond Exeter," the student body was even more diverse than in our schooldays: not only did we come from different places, but now we also spanned a broad range of professions and two generations in age! This greatly added to the richness of classroom discussions, as people drew on their life experiences as well as their academic and professional backgrounds. Moreover, like seafarers sailing the wide ocean, we found that the currents of a lively debate could lead us somewhere very different from where we had initially thought we were heading.

Let me add that Harvard Knowles in no way compared to *Moby Dick's* gloomy demagogue, the tyrannical Captain Ahab. He subtly and skillfully helped us navigate our way through this enormous novel in the pursuit of DHM (PEA slang for "deep hidden meaning")!

The discovery of petroleum in 1857 may have marked the end of the whaling industry, just a few years after Melville completed *Moby Dick* in 1851. But *oil* (and not blubber) was the substance that accounted for Mr. Harkness' economic success, and I personally am immensely grateful for the way in which he decided to share his wealth with Exeter. I have never again encountered a learning environment as exciting, democratic and stimulating as in an Exeter classroom, sitting around this famous piece of furniture. Happy 75th Anniversary, dear Harkness table, and thank you for a fantastic one-week celebration of your educational magic.

Dorothee von Albert Engers '90 lives in Düsseldorf, Germany, with her husband and two young sons. She works part time as a doctor of internal medicine.



In 1981, Michael Scott '81 took part in instructor Peter Greer's original interdisciplinary English/Outdoor Challenge course; in 2007, he returned to take the course—now known as "Literature and the Land"—a second time at "On Beyond Exeter." (For a related article, see page 12.)



Students in Chris Matlack and Rich Aaronian's "Ecosystems of New England" course did field study work in local saltmarshes and tidal pools, and took a birdwatching trip to the Isles of Shoals.

Look for news of 'On Beyond Exeter 2008' at <http://phillips.exeter.edu/onbeyond/>