

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TREASURER'S REPORT

Thank you for the spring 2006 issue, one of the best I have ever seen. It helped me remember a host of good thoughts about my years (1950–1964) as the treasurer.

Tom Hassan's report on Kathie Saltonstall reminded us of her gracious hospitality when we first came to Exeter in 1950. We stayed in the Saltonstalls' house and had breakfast at their kitchen table. That was just the beginning of her contributions to the lives of our family.

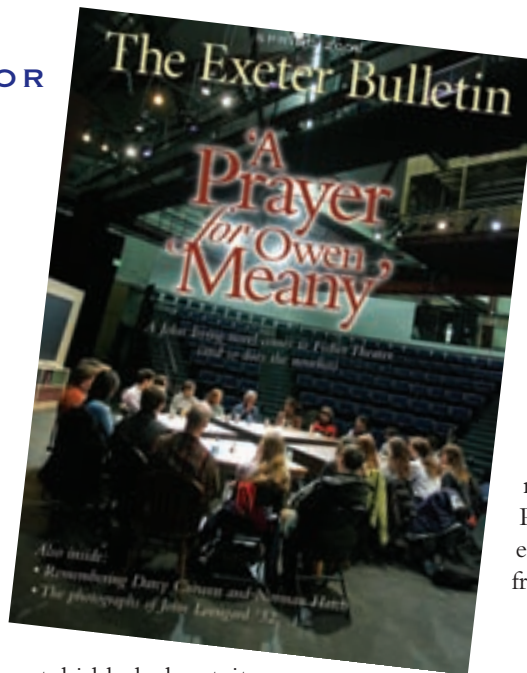
I liked the good story by Megan Gilbert '07 on the play *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, based on the novel by John Irving '61. We recognized most of the town and gown characters in the book. I wish I could have seen the students' efforts to interpret the book.

I also enjoyed Kathleen Curwen's report on Darcy Curwen, and the poem "Magnum Iter" by Jack McCarthy '57 on Norman Hatch. I knew Darcy and his wife very well. In the early 1960s, he helped me put together the book *Exeter Remembered*, which we mailed out to all alumni as a fund-raiser. It is still good reading. And when I was chairman of the scholarship committee, "Hatchie" was an important member with great insight about boys. He was always looking at the applicants for a quality he called *rigor*. And he reminded us to read carefully the letter of recommendation for what was said after the word "but." With Pike Rounds' and Hammy Bissell's guidance, we had a remarkable group of scholarship students. The news that Hobart Hardej, dean of admissions for the summer school, has been honored tells me that the Academy is still extending its great opportunity to remote parts of the country, as we did with Hammy Bissell's help.

Finally, the recognition the Academy has received for its efforts to conserve energy is very encouraging. I spent *lots* of time trying to get faculty to turn out the lights until I

DON'T FORGET TO WRITE

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got kidded about it.

One time when we had a power failure and everything went dark, someone said I was "going too far."

*Jim Griswold '31 (Hon.)
Exeter, NH*

HOT DOGS WITH 'SALTY'

The picture on page 2 of the spring 2006 Bulletin shows Kathie Saltonstall (and two of her children) watching her husband, Principal Bill Saltonstall, cook hot dogs. Besides "Salty" himself, others I can identify include Ralph Jones '48 and John Morrell '48. The picture was probably taken in the spring of either 1947 or 1948.

I mowed Salty's lawn as part of my bursary student responsibilities; in the fall it was full of black walnuts which had to be removed; my fingers remain stained to this day!

*John H. Koenig '48
York, ME*

Editor's note: The photo of the Saltonstalls cooking hot dogs appeared in LOOK Magazine on January 6, 1948, as part of an article on the Academy.

GOOD WRITING TAUGHT HERE

I particularly enjoyed the piece in the spring 2006 issue about Darcy Curwen, who taught me so much about good writing. One of my recollections is that three spelling errors in the weekly theme assign-

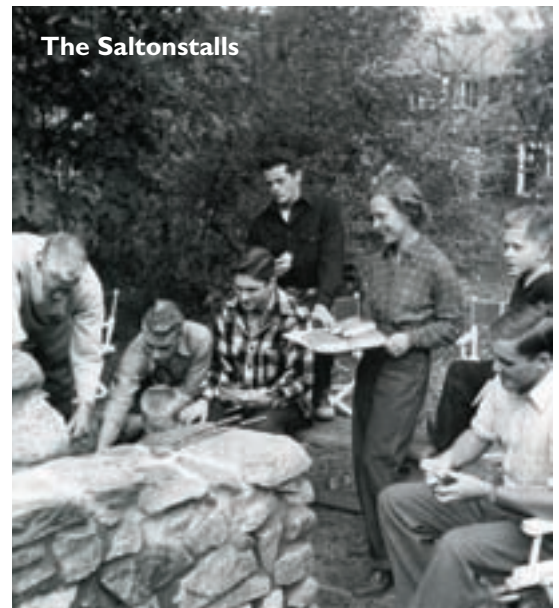
ment resulted in an automatic "E" grade. Not a bad idea for modern proofreaders who rely on spell-check programs, which are not yet able to cope with the vicissitudes of the English language. And of course he introduced us to Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers! A byproduct of the Saturday night movies was that the large vacuum tubes used for sound amplification required periodic replacement, much to the benefit of the Radio Club when we were able to liberate the still-functional type 211 tubes from the service people.

*Gordon McCouch '37
Wallingford, VT*

UP FROM THE DEPTHS

Congratulations to Kathleen Curwen on her outstanding article on Darcy Curwen, a very accurate portrayal of this truly outstanding Exeter teacher.

I had the great fortune of having him as my instructor in my upper middle year in



1942. My performance during the first semester was so abominable that he wrote on my report card that I was the most inept student in his class, except for a boy from South America who was not yet proficient in the English language. This was the only time I can remember my parents sharing my report card with me. Fortunately, by the end of the school year I had made great progress and received a respectable "C" or

better. I have been grateful ever since for raising me from the depths.

All of us who were taught by Darcy Curwen were immeasurably fortunate. Any ability I have to express my thoughts clearly in English I attribute principally to his wonderful tutelage and caring for his students.

*Franklin E. Parker '43
Menham, NJ*

QUESTIONS LEFT UNANSWERED

The essays on Curwen and Hatch in your spring issue raise a couple of interesting questions. I was at Exeter from 1945 to 1947 and did not happen to have either of these men as teachers, though I did have a couple of others with apparently similar characteristics.

It is clear from both essays that both Curwen and Hatch were dedicated and very influential teachers, and that both used methods which, as noted in the various letters and notes, might no longer be acceptable in today's classrooms. The use of active intimidation and insults may have been effective teaching tools as reported by the ex-students, but what else did they teach—about English and Latin, as well as about being a student, about being a young adolescent, and about these men? What was the appeal of these classroom behaviors to these teachers (and to several others at the Academy at that time)?

Several years ago, there was another encomium to Mr. Hatch, and I wrote a letter like this one in response—and to my surprise, the *Bulletin* printed it. In response, I received one letter (only one) from another alumnus, who said he felt exactly the same way but was reluctant to say so in public.

These are not simple questions, and would not have simple answers—but it seems to me they need to be asked, and in your pages. I had a very good time at Exeter in those years, perhaps partly because I had classes with only a couple of similarly abusive teachers—they were not the ones whose effects I remember with pleasure!

*Leonard Opdycke '47
Poughkeepsie, NY*

AN INSPIRATION STILL

What a treat it was to read Kathleen Curwen's article on "The Darce"! I was at

Exeter as a PG in 1956–57. Having graduated as valedictorian of my small-town Texas high school, I was dismayed to get my first grades at Exeter and find that I had done miserably, including a D+ in English. Seems like I finally got my grade up to a B-, but I don't remember exactly. What I do remember is that H. Darcy Curwen was one of the most delightful teachers I encountered in all my schooling, including my five years at Yale.

He intimidated me in some ways, but I could tell that he liked me and was truly interested in helping me improve.

I loved taking the few openings he gave to spar with him, and I think he admired my gumption in doing so. One time he said something that I thought was contradictory, and I said, "But, Mr. Curwen, yesterday you said ..." I can still hear his thundering voice, interrupting me in midsentence: "Cockroach, don't damn me with my own words!"

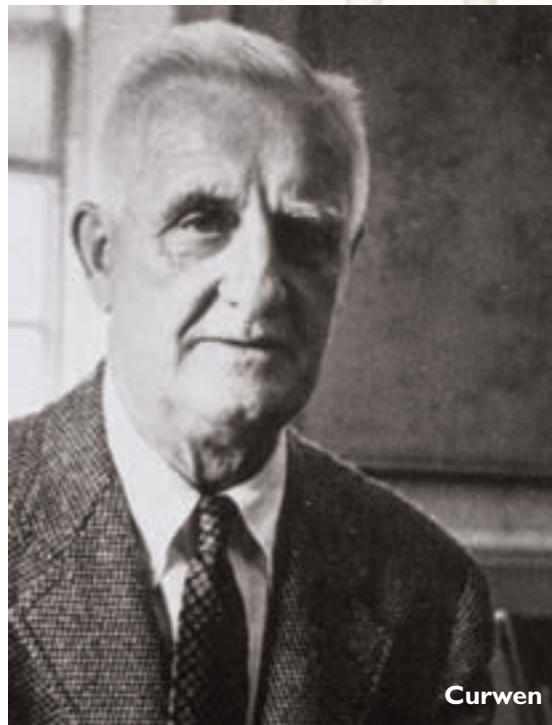
I learned a lot from what he said, but I think I learned more from what he was—a brilliant and knowledgeable man who was also witty, bold, dramatic, unique and very caring. I adored the man, and still tell stories about him when the occasion arises. I am a business consultant and a leader of CEO groups with Vistage (formerly TEC International), a teacher of sorts, and I can see parts of The Darce alive and well and passing to more future generations through me. What an inspiration he still is!

*John F. Adams III '57
Raleigh, NC*

BETTER THAN OLIVIER

Thank you for Kathleen Curwen's meditation on "The Darce" and Jack McCarthy's "Magnum Iter" in the spring 2006 Bulletin. I would like to add a brief memory of my own to each of them.

At the Saturday night movies in Thompson Gymnasium, which in my time were a standard Academy recreation, we normally had a newsreel, a cartoon and a first-run feature film. One Saturday, the newsreel



included a clip about President Truman—I have no memory of its content—and the boys began to boo. The projector went off, the lights came on and Mr. Curwen stalked to the front of the room. In a tone of icy anger, he informed us that no matter what one might think of Mr. Truman, there would be no booing of the President of the United States. Another such infraction, he stated, would result in the cancellation of Saturday movies for the rest of the year. There was, of course, none.

I, too, experienced Latin IV with Norman Hatch. No one who ever heard his woofly voice ever forgot it, and it was impossible to mimic. However, he could, when he wished, make it beautiful, even lyrical. I remember his reciting for us these lines, which he also required us to memorize:

*Talibus insidiis periurique arte Sinonis
credita res, captique dolis lacrimisque coactis
quos neque Tydides, nec Larissaeus Achilles,
non anni domuere decem, non mille carinae.*

In his voice, conveying and transcending the power of the verses themselves, the whole pathos and tragedy of the fall of Troy was contained. No Olivier, no Gielgud could have done it better. And I swear I saw
(continued on page 16)