

SPOTLIGHT ON NEWNHAM US ALUMNAE

SINGLE MOTHER SUCCESS



Margaret Weitkamp's (N'57, History) parents were determined she should have a better education than they did. She came from a working class family in England that sacrificed much for her to attain her education. With the encouraging words of her grammar school headmistress who suggested she might be able to attend university on a scholarship she applied and was granted a state scholarship. She felt very fortunate that those monies covered all her college expenses.

After Newnham she spent a year at Hughes Hall and then married an American medical student. They moved to Rochester, NY and lived there for two years where she taught at a local high school. They then moved to Madison, Wisconsin where she became a copy editor for the University of Wisconsin Press. Although she wanted to continue teaching, she lacked the necessary credentials. They next moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan where she continued working for the Press. There she also gave birth to her daughter. It was also there that she divorced and as a single mother found herself needing a higher paying job. She began her career in the affordable housing field and spent the next thirty years doing a mixture of hands-on management, training and consulting. Moving to Northern California she worked for the National Housing Law Project and the California Housing Partnership. Margaret's last, and she says, most enjoyable job involved running the Affordable Housing division of American Baptist Homes of the West where she and her staff built and operated housing for the elderly – using local and federal government grants and loans and obtaining rent subsidies to make housing affordable to local residents. She retired in 2000 and continues to live in Kensington, California.

Margaret's daughter Emma Weitkamp followed in her footsteps by going to Newnham. After attending Reed College for her undergraduate work she obtained a Ph.D in Biochemistry at Newnham (1987). She married an Englishman and lives in Wiltshire, where she is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the West of England and is raising three children.

INTERNATIONAL IMMERSION

“My name is Erin Leigh Gardner and I was born on June 15, 1982. I'm from Palo Alto, California, went to Palo Alto High School, attended Stanford University for my undergraduate studies and graduated with a BS in Civil Engineering - Environmental Specialty. I studied Environmental Design in Architecture at Cambridge starting Oct. 2005 and completed my thesis.

Ideally, I would like to be an environmental designer. My interests include (obviously) the environment, literature, philosophy, feminism (but not the scary kind!), boogie boarding, walking and friends. I lived in Japan for a year and a half (one year in high school with a host family and half a year with the Stanford Center in Kyoto, three months of which were in Tokyo working for a Japanese steel manufacturer). I enjoy Japanese calligraphy, LOVE the food and keep in touch with my friends over there. I also went to India with my Cambridge course to work on an urban redevelopment project (for a month). I studied Spanish for six years and still enjoy practicing very occasionally (having unfortunately lost most of my ability). I am slightly embarrassed to admit that I am also known to my friends as an authority on hair products.”



June 2007 update: Erin will be working with Buro Happold Consulting Engineers PC (in Oxford Circus London). She writes:

“I'm going to be a Graduate Engineer working on the 'Sustainability and Alternative Technologies' (SAT) team. Buro Happold is a consulting firm that offers services mainly in structural and mechanical engineering, but also houses quite a few specialty disciplines such as fire engineering, blast engineering, sustainability consulting, computational analysis and modelling, plumbing engineering and a few others. The sustainability group sometimes works on projects in conjunction with other disciplines in the practice, usually structures and mechanical, but also can take on projects with other firms in order to provide sustainability consulting.”

DAUGHTERS AND LAW

Elisabeth Traugott (N'91, Social & Political Science) graduated from Newnham in 1994. She writes:

"I am one of the lucky few Americans who spent time at Newnham as an undergraduate. Originally a junior-year-abroad student from Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, I successfully lobbied my director of studies and the College to let me stay on to finish my degree - I could not bear to leave the beloved (Newnham) gardens and my new friends behind!

"After a year at Leeds, earning an M.A. in Literature, I moved to Northern California where I worked for a year or so at a small newspaper covering city politics. I then went to law school at Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, graduating in 2001. I spent a year clerking for a federal judge and then came to Morrison & Foerster LLP, where I currently practice civil litigation, representing companies in commercial disputes, including intellectual property matters. Along the way I married my Cambridge boyfriend (James Rickett, Gonville & Caius '91) and had twin daughters, now 20-months-old. Though I now live half a world away, Newnham and Cambridge are always with me, binding me across an ocean to friends and wonderful memories. I am so grateful for the experience."



INTRODUCING THE US COMMITTEE MEMBERS: ANTONIA VON GOTTBERG



Antonia von Gottberg (Banks) spent three years at Newnham from 1988-91, reading for an Undergraduate degree in Engineering Science. While at Newnham, Antonia spent a year as Secretary of the JCR, at least partly because it meant she got to choose her third year room at the top of the ballot! Antonia has very fond memories of sitting on the window seat of the ground floor bay window room in Sidgwick looking towards Peile, sometimes working and often enjoying coffee with friends after they came back from rowing.

After Cambridge, Antonia spent a year at MIT on a Kennedy Memorial Scholarship and completed a Master's in Chemical Engineering. Antonia was intending to return to the UK to work in industry when that was finished, but she met her husband Fred, who is originally from Austria, while at MIT. She quit her job in England six weeks after they starting dating, got engaged a few months later and married a year after that – not necessarily a good career move, but in this case it worked out well.

Since graduating, Antonia has worked in the membrane industry with particular focus on treating water and wastewater. She has traveled all over the world to work on projects including seawater desalination, water reuse and disinfection of surface water. Currently, Antonia is Technical Director at Koch Membrane Systems.

Antonia lives with her husband Fred, and two sons Max (4½) and Theo (9 months), in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She recently joined the US Alumnae Committee. Antonia still keeps in touch with several friends from Newnham, but would be delighted to hear from others who remember her.

US Alumna Newsnibble

Patricia Higgins (N'63 Nat. Sci. Physical - featured in our spring 2007 newsletter) has now released her vineyard's very first vintage (2005 syrah and cabernet franc) at the Santa Barbara County Vintner's Festival to good reviews. Her vineyard's website is www.cimarone.com. If you are in California you can order the wine from the website or pick it up in Solvang and Los Olivos but those in other states will have to wait until next year to sample her creations.

