

SMITH COLLEGE  
DIPLOMA IN AMERICAN STUDIES  
ALUMNI

## Newsletter No. 4, July 2016

Dear Diploma Alumna/us

Greetings from London where the mood is very sombre following the result of the EU referendum. It is very hard for those of us who voted to remain in the EU to see the country turning its back on our neighbours and allies and the larger European project. We will have to work harder to maintain connections and contacts.

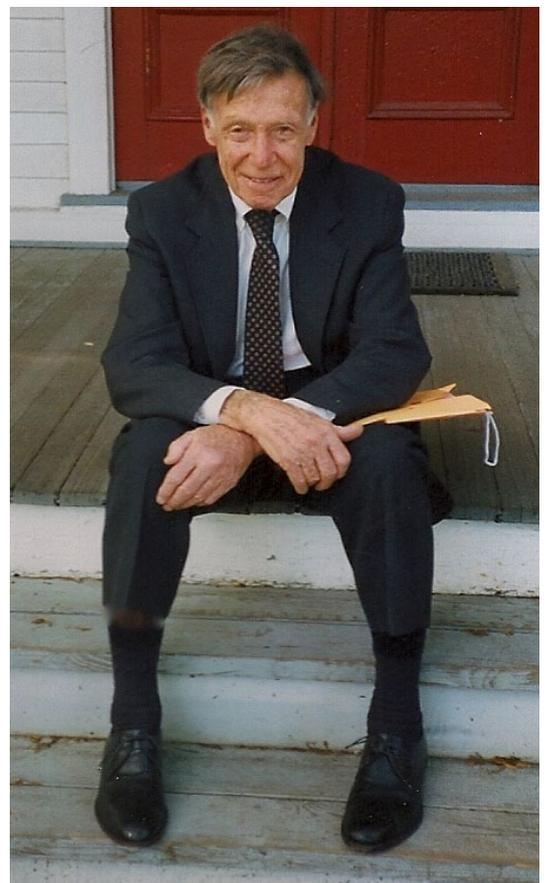
Since the last newsletter in May 2015, another group of ten students has graduated and we welcome them to the Diploma Alumni Group. This brings the number of people who have been awarded the Diploma since 1963 to over 500 (including those who have since died). But this has also been a year of losses. I am sorry to report the death in Japan on November 9, 2015, of **Tetsuko Abe** Am.S.Dipl '67, at the age of 82.

In addition, two professors who were involved with the Diploma program in its early years have passed away.

Daniel Aaron died on April 30, 2016, aged 103. He taught at Smith, where he was the Mary Augusta Jordan Professor of English, for thirty years from 1939. Having received one of the first doctorates in American Civilization from Harvard in 1943, Dan was among the group of faculty who introduced a pioneering American Studies undergraduate program at Smith, and then led the committee (of which Peter Rose was a junior member) that inaugurated the Diploma in American Studies in 1962. Members of the Diploma classes from the 1960s, such as **Lien Guidon** Am.S.Dipl '65, recall with gratitude the role he played in recruiting them to the program. In the early 1970s Dan moved to Harvard, from where he retired in 1983 as Victor S. Thomas Professor of English and American Literature Emeritus, although he continued to go into his office at Harvard until he was over 100. As the *Boston Globe* wrote in his obituary, Dan was "a defining figure in the field of American studies." In 1979, he became the founding president of the Library of America, which was established to make classic American writers available to the public in accessible, authoritative texts.

Among the authors he knew were Sinclair Lewis, Ralph Ellison, Saul Bellow, Robert Frost, Lillian Hellman, Alfred Kazin, Truman Capote, Czeslaw Milosz

Daniel Aaron on the steps of Tyler Annex, Smith College, May 1999



and Edmund Wilson. “Never have I known an intellectual and a great scholar who wore his learning so lightly, and with such capacity to delight,” said James Simpson, the Donald P. and Katherine B. Loker Professor of English and chair of the English department at Harvard. “He has a place of deep affection in the hearts of everyone who was lucky enough to be touched by his angelic smile and singular intelligence.” His books included *Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives* (1951), *Writers on the Left* (1961) and *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War* (1973). His memoir, *The Americanist*, which includes material on his years at Smith, was published in 2007, and his *Commonplace Book, 1934–2012*, came out last year. Dan had visiting professorships at Helsinki, Warsaw and Sussex and was a dynamic participant in the early postwar sessions of the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies, the prestigious annual gathering of American and European scholars in Austria. He received the National Humanities Medal in 2011.

Allen Weinstein died on June 18, 2015, aged 77. He was Professor of History at Smith in the 1960s and 1970s and co-director of the Diploma program with Peter Rose from 1973 until he moved to Georgetown University in 1981. He was the ninth National Archivist of the United States, 2005–08. His book *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* (1978), which argued that Alger Hiss was guilty as charged in one of the most famous spy trials of the postwar era, caused considerable controversy. Weinstein said he had started out writing the book to prove Hiss innocent, only to reverse his judgment in the face of the evidence. Other books by Weinstein include *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America – the Stalin Era* (1998).

### Alumni Gatherings

Alumni continue to meet at mini-reunions, Smith gatherings, or, by chance. Some of these are reported in the Alumni News section below, but here are details of some of the other get-togethers.

In Japan last November, receptions in Kyoto and Tokyo for President Kathy McCartney were attended by the following Diploma alumnae: **Akiko Murakata** Am.S.Dipl '65, **Sachiko Ohi** Am.S.Dipl '86, **Erika Sunada** Am.S.Dipl '03 and **Tetsuko Kudoh Yamashita** Am.S.Dipl '81.

*Below left* Diploma alumnae at the reception for President McCartney, Tokyo, November 2015.

*L to R:* Erika Sunada Am.S.Dipl '03, Kathy McCartney, Akiko Murakata Am.S.Dipl '65 and Sachiko Ohi Am.S.Dipl '86; *Below right, L to R:* Tetsuko Yamashita Am.S.Dipl '81 and Akiko Murakata Am.S.Dipl '65 at the Kyoto reception, November 2015



Eight Diploma alumnae attended a Smith gathering in Hamburg in early November (right) and seven Diploma alums attended a lunch in Geneva in January (below).

*Right* Diploma alums at a gathering in Hamburg, November 2015. *Front row, L to R:* Stella Frei Am.S.Dipl '15, Janine Kolmorgen Kühl Am.S.Dipl '99, Antje Scherffig Am.S.Dipl '99, Helga Bechmann Am.S.Dipl '92; *Back row, L to R:* Katharina Frisch Am.S.Dipl '15, Wiebke Henning Am.S.Dipl '04, Christiane Thurner Am.S.Dipl '92, Andrea Hofmann Am.S.Dipl '88



*Left* Diploma alums at a lunch in Geneva, January 2016. *L to R:* Julianna Sandholm-Bark Am.S.Dipl '00, Julia MacKenzie Am.S.Dipl '79 (visiting from London), Caroline Demierre Burri Am.S.Dipl '92, Isaline Wahli Am.S.Dipl '95, Sylvie Castagné Haas Am.S.Dipl '82, Cécile Baux Am.S.Dipl '89 and Martine Tafelmacher Egger Am.S.Dipl '77

In May this year, several Dutch alumni gathered to have dinner with Peter Rose when he and Hedy passed through Amsterdam on their way to Salzburg. In the photo (right) are: *Front row, L to R:* Mariëtta Nollen Am.S.Dipl '94, Sabien Onvlee Am.S.Dipl '94, Aliet Rogaar Am.S.Dipl '95; *Standing, L to R:* Anne van Putten (one semester '00), Anouk Adriaansens van der Wal Am.S.Dipl '96, Peter Rose, David van der Wal Am.S.Dipl '96, Dee van Leeuwen Boomkamp Am.S.Dipl '07, Caroline Straathof Am.S.Dipl '85, Evelyn Olabisi Am.S.Dipl '97, Marijn Freud Am.S.Dipl '14, Paula Prins '86 and Piebe Teeboom Am.S.Dipl '00.



## Smith-in-Europe, Edinburgh, October 6–9, 2016

Every two years the Smithies who live in Europe meet in a different city for a weekend of events. This year, the Smithies living in Edinburgh are playing host. At the last gathering, in Berlin in 2014, seventeen Diploma alums attended and we hope there will be a similarly strong turnout this time. Those living in Europe should have received information but if you want to attend, please contact the organizing committee on [smithineurope2016@gmail.com](mailto:smithineurope2016@gmail.com) or go to this website: <http://smithineurope2016.wix.com/register>. The arrangements are such that you can make your own booking for accommodation wherever you choose and you can also just attend the Saturday events and dinner instead of the whole weekend. There is a limited number of burseries available. Please contact the organizers for details.

## Reunion, May 25–28, 2017

There is less than a year to go to our next Diploma Alumni reunion at Smith. This will take place on campus May 25–28, 2017. Please build this into your travel plans for next year and encourage your Diploma classmates to join you. (And for those of you who graduated in 1972, 1982, 1992, 2002 or 2012, your Smith classmates will also be on campus that weekend for their class reunions.)



Our reunion co-chairs are now **Karin Schmid-Gerlich** Am.S.Dipl '86 and **Mercedes Garcia Lenberg** Am.S.Dipl '86 and I would like to thank them for taking on this role. An event of this kind does not happen without a great deal of work and Karin and Mercedes would very much like to hear from other alums who would be willing to take on a small task in the preparation of the celebration. We are counting on volunteers to make the reunion happen! And being involved in the planning is actually a lot of fun (really!). Please contact Karin ([kte@chello.at](mailto:kte@chello.at)) or Mercedes ([mercedes.lenberg@gmail.com](mailto:mercedes.lenberg@gmail.com)) if you would like to help in some capacity.

## News from Northampton

This year ten students participated in the Diploma program. One of them, Gaétane Krebs, is the sister of Diploma alumna **Celine Krébs** Am.S.Dipl '10. It is the first time that siblings have participated in the Diploma program.

The group (and university the students came from) was: Abel Castano Bravo, Córdoba; Nadezhda Chotreva, Geneva; Janine Hutter, Hamburg; Charlotte Jegou, Paris (Sorbonne); Gaétane Krebs, Geneva; Tamara Nehls, Hamburg; Celia Nijdam, Amsterdam; Madeleine Osorovitz, Paris (Sciences Po); Stefanie Schuster, University of Regensburg; Alessio Zuri, Florence.

Once again, early in the academic year, **Margaret Freeman** Am.S.Dipl '63 very kindly hosted a lunch for the group with the Franklin County Smith Club at her home near Heath, MA. This was the third year running that Margaret has welcomed the Diploma students and the current and former directors (Lane Hall Witt, Peter Rose and Jim Hicks) to Myrifield, and we thank her wholeheartedly.

As the more recent Diploma graduates know, Smith arranges for Smith undergraduates to interview some of the Diploma students. The interview with **Gaétane Krebs** Am.S.Dipl '16 was published in the Summer 2016 issue of *Global Impressions* (a journal by Smith students in and for the world) and it can be found here: <https://sophia.smith.edu/blog/impressions/2016/04/14/american-studies-student-interview-gaetane-krebs/>

Peter and Hedy Rose celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in March this year and we send them many congratulations on reaching this milestone. Peter continues to be active in his field and this spring, forty-six years after the first edition of his edited two-volume collection of controversies entitled *Americans from Africa* was published, a new edition of vol. 1, *Slavery and Its Aftermath*, and vol. 2, *Old Memories, New Moods*, came out. Next fall, the same publisher, Transaction Books, will publish his book of essays: *Mainstream and Margins Revisited: Sixty Years of Commentary on Minorities in America*.

### *Campus Regeneration*

On campus the process of reimagining and redesigning Neilson Library continues, led by designer Maya Lin (who designed the famous Vietnam memorial in Washington, DC, and whose mother was a Smith alumna) and design firm Shepley Bulfinch. Provost Katherine Rowe explains some of the thinking behind what will be the largest capital project in Smith's history: "If you spend any time inside Neilson, it's clear that it's an old building. It's also clear that while the library houses many of the components we need to pursue intellectual life at Smith – books and other materials, cutting-edge digital resources and, most of all, an incredible staff of librarians – the way the building is configured doesn't meet the needs of the people who use it. It's time for us to look ahead, not only at the needs we have now, but to a building that will still meet our needs thirty years from now. Neilson is



The Diploma Class of 2016 at Myrifield, October 2015 (with past and present directors of the program): *Front row, L to R:* Jim Hicks, Peter Rose, Tamara Nehls, Madeleine Osorovitz, Nadia Chotreva, Lane Hall Witt (crouching), Celia Nijdam, Janine Hutter; *Back row, L to R:* Gaétane Krebs, Alessio Zuri, Abel Castano Bravo, Charlotte Jegou, Stefanie Schuster

a space that's had a long and very productive life on campus. But it also exists in a way that divides the campus like a massive wall. It's time for the library to be reimagined." The design has yet to be unveiled but it is possible that some of the extensions to the original building that have been added over the years – and contribute to the feeling that the library complex divides the campus – might be demolished and some of the books moved permanently to an off-campus facility. Neilson will close for construction in the summer of 2017 until the completion of the project – expected in 2020. More information can be found here: <http://www.smith.edu/libraries/redesign>



Neilson Library, photographed shortly after it opened in 1909. Subsequent extensions have meant the building divides the campus. The current redesign might include the demolition of some of the later additions so the building more closely resembles its original form

## Alumni News

**Eva Amann-Brockhaus** Am.S.Dipl '69 (Siegburg, Germany):

*Initially, in September 2014, I wanted to do something for the Afghan interpreters who had worked for and with our soldiers there and are now threatened by the Taliban. That proved too complicated and I therefore joined a local Christian organization that provides social services and in that capacity had organized a 'round table' for people keen on helping with the growing number of refugees (no comparison to the waves of refugees in September 2015). When we met for the first time there were many people present who had been my pupils or parents of pupils. They assumed I would want to take over some of the privately offered language courses, but I did not want to continue my professional life this way and opted for a more practical kind of assistance: two other women and I were assigned two houses where roughly ninety people from Eastern Europe, Afghanistan, Syria and Iran were lodged. There were families with several children, single young men, single mothers with a child or two. What they had in common was that they had already spent some time in Germany, usually in one of the registration centers. Our first task was to get people sorted, showing them where to go for financial aid, to apply for vouchers for doctors' visits, to register for possible employment, etc. Then we made sure the children and youngsters were put into the proper institutions, and registered the adults for German classes (or found courses for them where they were taught the Latin alphabet or found partners for them for individual language tutoring). For some of these tasks when communication with your hands was not enough we needed interpreters (my language skills were hardly any use – I should have learnt Russian and/or Arabic!), particularly for visits to doctors, psychiatrists – and lawyers, once the refugees were asked to appear for their hearing, which determined their right for asylum.*

*Many efforts were made to enliven the bleak lives of these people who live in very modest, rather cramped quarters (luxurious in comparison to what is offered now!) where they have to share a kitchen and a bathroom*

*with other refugees whose language they do not understand. You can imagine the constant clash of cultures and the many quarrels that arise from this juxtaposition. We took the children on visits to a farm, to music and painting classes, introduced the young men to free sports activities offered by the local sports clubs, showed the grown-ups around our town, organized international coffee hours or potluck dinners to establish contacts with both German and other nationals.*

*What have been my experiences so far? First of all it was great to meet all these well-motivated German people who were ready to spend their valuable free time helping others less fortunate than they. Not all of them are retired! I truly admire their untiring dedication – I would not have been able to come up with such a commitment during my years as a teacher. I have come to a more positive attitude towards our municipal administration, too: Most of these employees are very committed as well and try to make things possible although they are stretched to the limits of their capacity with regard to housing, schools, day care, etc. As to the refugees, my experiences have been mixed: a small number is definitely abusing our system and even seems involved in shady deals. Some people are obviously not refugees (i.e. persecuted in their own countries) but are looking for a better life here, want more opportunities for their children – all very understandable motives, but no grounds for asylum. They are actually the truly hard cases: because the administrative and legal procedures take so long, their children are usually well integrated, do alright in school – and then they are all asked to return to a country where the grownups know they don't stand a chance and which their children consider a foreign country. And then there is the group of those who have been through hell, who need constant medical or psychiatric attention, those who have left family behind in camps that they are desperate to be reunited with. And once you get to know people they are dear to you and you care for them regardless of their status.*

*After September 2015 and New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne and other big cities everything changed. I know that my comments are incomplete and certainly biased, but they might provide a glimpse of what is happening here at the moment [written in January 2016]. The way I see it Frau Merkel's decision to open the borders in September for those who were stranded in Budapest was an error of judgment because the pictures that went around the world – signs with 'Refuges [sic] welcome' in Munich, a selfie with Frau Merkel and a beaming refugee – signalled to the world that Germany invited each and everyone. If I were a cartoonist I would have depicted Frau Merkel as Lady Liberty:*

*Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me*

*And they all came – at least, that was the way it looked to us. The famous German competence to organize, to order, went up in smoke: no proper identification or registration, hastily set-up tents, school gyms filled with fold-up beds. After four months it is still the same – and the number of*

people arriving here is still staggering. There are feeble attempts to force the genie back into the bottle, but that's impossible. All this is grist for the mills of right-wing movements (PEGIDA in Dresden, for example) and has brought about a huge rift in the German population: there are those who are ready for any sacrifice on behalf of the refugees and those who want them all pushed out, and, a minority still, are even ready to set fire to buildings intended to house these people. The events on New Year's Eve – thousands of young men from the Maghreb, other African countries or the Middle East molesting women and stealing from them while the police were outnumbered and looked on without trying to control what was happening – exacerbated this heated-up situation and seemed to prove all the prejudices that exist against foreigners.

That's the situation now and the government is scrambling to pass new laws to reign-in a situation that is definitely out of control. I'd be very happy if both politicians and normal people were able to return to some common sense and leave ideology aside for a bit.

**Elizabeth Jones** Am.S.Dipl '68 (Manchester, UK):

Having passed the national proficiency test and fulfilled all the training and practice criteria, I've been invited to join the national register of professional counsellors. Meanwhile, I continue to enjoy online mentoring of a mature student in East Africa completing his MA in Counselling Psychology, looking at teacher burnout in the hard-pressed education system. He has set up an alternative community school for those excluded by inherited illness (HIV) or poverty, using an enriched national curriculum, in a very basic local building. Starting an alternative school was a dream of mine for a long time but the obstacles were great. Then an old man approached my colleague: he had seen how he helped subsistence farmers and families in tough times. He offered him free a basic building as a school. A college offered trainee teachers to run it and local children with no hope of an education otherwise were thrilled to be able to join, answering all their prayers.

**Martine Tafelmacher Egger** Am.S.Dipl '77 (Geneva):

I decided to take early retirement in 2012 (seven years ahead of the legal time) after a career in teaching. My decision was largely motivated by the fact that I remarried and wanted to live my new life to the fullest. My husband, Philippe, and I spend time in South Africa, on a private game ranch where he owns a home and is involved in the protection of endangered species, and in Spain (Catalonia), but our base remains our home in Switzerland. We are quite active and play lots of sports to have fun and keep fit. I believe the saying 'mens sana in corpore sano' (a healthy mind in a healthy body) represents an objective that makes great sense for everybody who turns sixty!

**Ania Gardziel** Am.S.Dipl '77 and I have kept in touch during all these years and my husband and I visited Krakow, Ania's hometown, in October 2014, and invited Ania and her husband to our vacation home in Spain last June. It was really very nice to be able to talk about the highlights of our year in 8 Bedford Terrace [the graduate students house, later Dawes House].



Martine Tafelmacher  
Egger Am.S.Dipl '77

**Julia MacKenzie** Am.S.Dipl '79 (London):

*Since being elected president of the Diploma group in 2012, I have wanted to get to know as many of you as possible and have therefore taken the chance to meet Diploma alums whenever the opportunity has presented itself. On a trip to the US in May 2015, I was pleased to see **Marta Vrbotic** Am.S.Dipl '86 and **Sichu Mali** Am.S.Dipl '12 in Washington, DC (below left). In New York, it was good to get together with **Géraldine Babin** Am.S.Dipl '11, **Mariette Monpierre** Am.S.Dipl '85 and **Siliva Beier** Am.S.Dipl '91 (below right). If you come to London, please let me know.*



**Isabelle Ben-Chaabane** Am.S.Dipl '81 (Orléans, France):

*I left Paris in 1996 and have lived and worked in Orléans as a teacher of English since then.*

**Tissa Jayatilaka** Am.S.Dipl '83 (Colombo, Sri Lanka):

*I continue to work as the Executive Director of the United States–Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission, which administers the mutual education exchange between the United States and Sri Lanka. I have been at the Commission since May 1989. I also continue with my part-time teaching and writing. In October–November 2015, I spent a few days making presentations at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, on the theme of US–South Asia partnership in the light of China’s rising role in regional affairs.*

**Catharina Wulf** Am.S.Dipl '87 (Paris):

*I’ve been living and working in Paris for the past fifteen years, lecturing in the fields of cross-cultural management, organizational behaviour and international ethics. I am also coaching in the field of personal development. After Smith, I decided to go to Montreal to pursue a Master’s degree at McGill University and then completed a doctoral degree in France. As well as teaching business education, I’ve published and edited two books in the humanities and written academic articles with a particular focus on intercultural virtual collaboration. I’ve also designed online platforms for international training purposes.*



Isabelle Ben-Chaabane  
Am.S.Dipl '81



Catharina Wulf  
Am.S.Dipl '87

**Simone Walper** Am.S.Dipl '90 (Fehmarn, Germany):

*In August 2015, after twenty-eight years in Hamburg (with stops at Smith and in Spain), my family and I moved to the island of Fehmarn in the Baltic, off the north coast of Germany. I had already quit my job with the publishing company Hoffmann und Campe in the summer of 2014 and since then worked with my husband in his own IT company, ForMES Service. I help our clients with the development of homepages, write texts or do public relations for them. Since we were not bound to a special location and our two daughters had to change school/kindergarten anyway, last summer we decided to fulfill our dream of living by the sea. So far everything has turned out well and we are happy here. As for my Diploma classmates: I still meet **Karolin Halmai** from Bremen and her family from time to time and we plan to spend a weekend together with our older daughters in Berlin in the early summer.*



Simone Walper  
Am.S.Dipl '90 and  
family

**Silvia Beier** Am.S.Dipl '91 (Boston) very kindly hosted **Stefanie Schuster** Am.S.Dipl '16 last fall when she was a student at Smith and needed somewhere to stay near Cambridge when attending a conference at Harvard. Silvia also met **G eraldine Babin** Am.S.Dipl '11, **Mariette Monpierre** Am.S.Dipl '85 and **Julia MacKenzie** Am.S.Dipl '79 in New York in May 2015 (see the photo under Julia MacKenzie's entry above)



Stefanie Schuster  
Am.S.Dipl '16 and  
Silvia Beier Am.S.Dipl  
'91 in Cambridge,  
Mass, November 2015

**Enrica Balestra** Am.S.Dipl '93 (London):

*After graduating from the American Studies Diploma Program in 1993, I moved to NYC to pursue a PhD in Comparative Literature at Columbia University but eventually moved to London in 1998. I retrained as a psychotherapist and got married to fellow Columbia University student Tim Lawrence. I now have two daughters, Carlotta and Ilaria, who are 14 and 10. After giving up my job as a student counsellor in a Further Education college, I decided to dedicate myself to full-time private practice and supervision. In September 2015, I joined the Farrington Practice in St John Street (Clerkenwell), where I work with both adolescents and adults.*

*Two years ago we went to the States as a family and took a day trip to Smith. It was very special to be able to show my daughters around the campus, although I am not sure they fully understood why I could not stop crying!*



Enrica Balestra  
Am.S.Dipl '93 and  
daughters at Smith

**Antje Künnemann** Am.S.Dipl '93 (Hamburg):

*My husband, Walter, and I have been on a sabbatical traveling around the world this spring. We started in Dubai for a couple of days before we flew to Bangkok in order to travel around Southeast Asia for four months. We travelled to Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam before flying to New Zealand via Sydney. On the way back to Europe we visited Hawaii for two weeks. We really enjoy traveling and meeting new people.*

While on their travels, Antje and her husband met **Anne-Catherine Berrut Maréchaud** Am.S.Dipl '11 (from Switzerland) in Christchurch, New Zealand, where Anne-Catherine is studying.

**Femke Van Der Geest** Am.S.Dipl '96, who lives and works in the Netherlands, and **Ines Maturana Sendoya** Am.S. Dipl '86, who lives and works in Massachusetts, met each other for the first time in May 2015 at the NAFSA (Association of International Educators) annual conference at a session on intercultural learning. Femke wrote:

*Someone asked if I had ever been to Boston before, and that conversation led to the Diploma program, which is when Ines jumped in. This is a conference with 11,000 people, numerous sessions to choose from, and there were at least ten large tables in the room. So both of us ending up at the same table is pretty amazing.*

**Maike Fuchs** Am.S.Dipl '99 (Berlin):

*In April 2016, Antje Scherffig, Ling Huang and I enjoyed a mini-reunion in Berlin. It was fantastic seeing Ling for the first time since our graduation seventeen years ago and we were all amazed at how easy and effortless it was to reconnect after such a long time – great conversations, nice food and a little bit of fun sightseeing in chilly pre-spring Berlin.*

**Eve Demange** Am.S.Dipl '00 (Bordeaux, France):

*My husband and I moved from the Paris area to Bordeaux last summer with our three boys (Leonard 11, Jules 9 and Théodore 6). We are so happy about this change. The city is beautiful, dynamic and it takes less than an hour to go to the Atlantic coast and see the ocean. I am still working as a freelance web content strategist and copywriter for my on little company, Plume Interactive, and write a new novel (set in France in 2050) when I have some time left between web*



Anne-Catherine Berrut Maréchaud Am.S.Dipl '11 and Antje Künnemann Am.S.Dipl '93



Femke Van Der Geest Am.S.Dipl '96 and Ines Maturana Sendoya Am.S.Dipl '86



L to R: Maike Fuchs, Ling Huang and Antje Scherffig, all Am.S.Dipl '99, in Berlin in April 2016

projects. It is a lot of work but challenging and interesting. I hope to be done by next year.

Last December, I was in Paris for the COP21 (UN Climate Change Conference) and it was a great empowering experience! I wrote a feature 'Storytelling & ecology' for the blog Place to B about the way we talk about ecology, climate change and the future. Place to B was a creative space and meeting point where journalists, thinkers, artists and citizens could gather and collaborate. It was created especially for the COP21. I loved it! <http://www.placetob.org/category/storytelling/>

Below left Flavien Collet Am.S.Dipl '02 and his wife, Natalie; Below right, L to R: Tommy Borger, Flavien Collet and Davide Ceriani

**Flavien Collet** Am.S.Dipl '02 (Smithfield, Rhode Island):

I got married to Natalie on Saturday October 24, 2015 in Boston. Another 2002 alumnus of the Diploma program was in attendance, **Davide Ceriani**, and Tommy Borger, a fellow student at Smith. Natalie is American and works for a translation firm called Luz in downtown Boston.



**Erina Iwasaki** Am.S.Dipl '10 (Yangon, Myanmar):

Since 2010, just after graduating from the Diploma program, I have been working in Myanmar (Burma). Times have been exciting here with the first democratic elections since 1988 and the election of a new president and cabinet. We all hope that this is only the beginning of many positive changes to come.

In Yangon, my family (my parents, sister and I) have been running and developing the Khayay school ([www.khayayschool.org](http://www.khayayschool.org)) since 2004. We started it as a small early childhood education training center and it has since developed into a preschool and elementary school with students from twenty-one countries. It is now a multilingual school that fosters socio-emotional development, rooted in peace education.

I have also been active in the creation of the Myanmar Music Festival ([www.myanmarmusicfestival.com](http://www.myanmarmusicfestival.com)) with American pianist Kimball Gallagher and Taiwanese pianist Kaiyin Huang. This international classical music festival takes place annually in June. It supports aspiring young Myanmar musicians and the development of music education in the country. Thanks to this initiative, a young self-taught Myanmar pianist received a full scholarship to study piano at a college in the US – probably the first Myanmar pianist to study in the US on a full scholarship – and he just won the Missouri State Piano Competition.

My family and I are also engaged in youth development activities through sports, particularly baseball. This started in 2000 with a few Myanmar players asking my dad to coach them. Myanmar baseball now has a national federation and national team, of which my father is head coach. Currently, there is a young Myanmar baseball player, Zaw Zaw Oo,

*playing professionally in a minor league in Japan. He is said to be the first Myanmar professional athlete to be playing overseas.*

*These projects have kept me happily busy the past years! If any of you are planning to visit Myanmar, feel free to get in touch with me. I'm always happy to meet fellow Diploma alumni! (Editor's note: When I was on vacation in Myanmar in February with a couple of Smith friends we had a very enjoyable get-together with Erina.)*

**Joséphine Landais** Am.S.Dipl '13 (Paris):

***Mallika Humpert** Am.S.Dipl '13 got married in July 2015 in Geneva and we had a mini-reunion for this great occasion. **Louise Fudym** Am.S.Dipl '13 came and **Rosalin Happe** Am.S.Dipl '13 made a surprise appearance – she flew all the way from Massachusetts to get there. We all stayed at a good friend of Mallika's for a few days (who also happens to*



Julia MacKenzie  
Am.S.Dipl '79  
and Erina Iwasaki  
Am.S.Dipl '10 in  
Yangon, Myanmar,  
February 2016



*L to R: Joséphine Landais, Rosalin Happe, Mallika's husband, Mallika Humpert and Louise Fudym*

*have visited us while we were at Smith in 2012) and we helped prepare the wedding (from the baking – I made wedding cupcakes to fit the nautical theme of their wedding – to the decorations); it was so much fun. We realized how much we missed – and still miss – spending time together. Now we look forward to finding another opportunity to gather and share unforgettable moments like this one.*

**Naima Limdighri, Marijn Freud and Gaia Cozzi** (all Am.S.Dipl '14) had a mini-reunion in Italy in the summer of 2015, and according to Gaia had “the best time.”

**Megan Venter** Am.S.Dipl '14 (Manchester, UK):

*Since leaving Smith in 2014, I've had something of a whirlwind time – I have changed careers, started another Master's degree, and got married! My studies*



*L to R: Naima Limdighri, Marijn Freud and Gaia Cozzi, all Am.S.Dipl '14, in Tuscany in 2015*

at Smith introduced me to the allure of the archives, and I am now part way [written in February] through an Archives and Records Management Master's degree at the University of Liverpool, after working at Barclays Group Archives as their archives assistant. My own archival research directly concerns some of the issues I was introduced to at Smith, and I'm grateful every day for the many hours I spent in the Alumnae Gymnasium pouring over old records. Since my foray into the archival field, I have contributed to the InterPARES project as well as having several articles published in the UK. After my engagement (which happened a few days prior to my Smith graduation), I was married on August 22, 2015, and was delighted to welcome Margaux Kapfer Am.S.Dipl '14 and her husband, Clement, to Manchester to celebrate the big day. I was also lucky enough to attend Margaux's own wedding earlier in the year, and we meet up regularly in Paris.



The wedding of Megan Venter Am.S.Dipl '15, August 2015

**Stella Frei and Katharina Frisch** Am.S.Dipl '15 hosted their Italian classmate **Gloria Alberti** in November. Stella wrote that they had “five glorious days together, spending hours reminiscing about our year at Smith and exploring Hamburg – all the while laughing about Smith insider jokes only we would understand.”

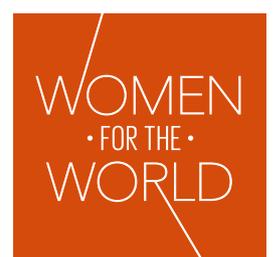


L to R: Gloria Alberti, Stella Frei and Katharina Frisch, all Am.S.Dipl '15

### Fundraising Campaign

To date, through gifts to the Rose Diploma in American Studies Program Scholarship Fund, the Diploma alumni have raised over \$15,000 toward our goal of contributing \$20,000 to Smith's Women for the World fundraising campaign, which runs through to December 2016. Please help us raise the final \$5,000 by the end of the year and enable the college to reach its \$450 million goal for the Women for the World campaign. Every bit helps! To date, Smith has raised more than \$400 million of the desired total. Think what the Diploma program did for you and contribute generously to help current Diploma students.

To contribute to the Peter and Hedy Rose Diploma in American Studies Program Scholarship Fund please use Smith's on-line gift giving website <https://www.smith.edu/future/giving/giftform.php>. Fill in the Contact Information. Then go to the “Gift Purpose” tab on the online form, click on “Other Designations” and enter the amount you wish to give (ignore



THE CAMPAIGN FOR SMITH

the dropdown menu below). Then go to the “Gift Details” tab, click on “Comments” and type the name of the Rose Fund in the “Comments” field and include the fund number: 447951. Then fill in the Payment Information. Thank you.

### **Lost and Found Diploma Alumni**

There are still about fifty alumni who are considered “lost.” In this newsletter I include those alumnae/i from Austria, Denmark, England, France, the Netherlands and Sweden for whom we have no current contact information, in case anyone has any knowledge of their whereabouts (I give the university they attended before Smith).

Geneviève Dell’aria Poulat Am.S.Dipl ’67 (University of Lyon, France)  
Britta BJORSETH Am.S.Dipl ’69 (University of Gothenberg, Sweden)  
Neil Brown Am.S.Dipl ’73 (University of Nottingham, UK)  
Orla Christensen Am.S.Dipl ’74 (University of Aarhus, Denmark)  
Jennifer Green Am.S.Dipl ’74 (University of Sussex, UK)  
Helga Gruber Am.S.Dipl ’74 (University of Graz, Austria)  
Anna Magi Am.S.Dipl ’81 (University of Stockholm)  
Sarah Green Am.S.Dipl ’84 (Derby Lonsdale College, UK)  
Gaelle Decultot-Hernot Am.S.Dipl ’95 (University of Paris–Sorbonne)  
Arnout Molenaar Am.S.Dipl ’99 (University of Amsterdam)

In the past year, Marcela Haro Juarez Am.S.Dipl ’88 (Argentina) has been found.

Do remember to keep [alumnaerecords@smith.edu](mailto:alumnaerecords@smith.edu) informed of changes to your email and postal address. We do not want to “lose” any more alumnae/i.

And send me your professional and personal news for the next newsletter and *high-resolution* photos. Thank you.

On behalf of the Diploma Alumni Group Committee,

Best wishes

Julia MacKenzie Am.S.Dipl ’79

President, Diploma Alumni Group

email: [jcgmackenzie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jcgmackenzie@yahoo.co.uk)