

Live *wire*

WHITMAN COLLEGE
Young Alumni Magazine



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winter 2011

Live|wire

What is the purpose of the ALUMNI BOARD?

In 1895, Whitman College alumni organized the Alumni Association to promote the interests of its members and their Alma Mater. Today the Whitman College Alumni Association continues to foster and maintain those interests between Whitman and its extended family.

To carry out this mission, the Board of Directors of the Alumni Association maintains standing committees which advise the Alumni Office on alumni matters and communicate alumni reactions to college programs.

In other words, they work to keep you connected, and to bring your concerns back to the administration. Let them know how you feel!

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WHITMAN COLLEGE



Photos by Greg Lehman

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Exploring the meaning of “minority”

By Jessie Elisberg '02

As I made my way down the dirt road sewing together the town of Bahia Ballena one early morning in September, I contemplated what it means to be a woman in the developing world. I trudged along, a five-foot-eight-inch *gringa* with a big red surfboard balancing on my head. In my solitude on the mile-long route home, I imagined that instead of a surfboard I could have been carrying a jug of water or a bundle of firewood or a basket of produce, and instead of one mile it could have been five or 10 or 20 miles I had to carry those things. The key word there was *had* to ...

“ ... how many millions of women rise at dawn every day and carry heavy loads for miles because they *must*, because they know no other way, because they have no other opportunity?”

Here I was, waking at daybreak to start my day surfing on a quiet Costa Rican beach because I *could*. Meanwhile, how many millions of women rise at dawn every day and carry heavy loads for miles because they *must*, because they know no other way, because they have no other opportunity? Only one week after leaving the United States, it dawned on me that I would be an ethnic minority for the next eight months of international travel. It also struck me that regardless of where I go in the world, I am part of a different minority of fortunate women who have the freedom to imagine — and reach for — any opportunity.



More than two months and 12,000 miles later, I gazed out across a sea of children, neatly ordered in rows for their morning exercise, and found myself delighted by the smiling faces peeking out from under a variety of ethnic costumes.

By Chinese standards, this was no ordinary routine and no ordinary school. Jin Xing Primary School is an experimental school that prioritizes ethnic minorities in the composition of both the student body and the curriculum. Thus some students favored



Jessie with the students of Jin Xing Primary School, Kunming, China.

costumes from their cultural heritage rather than traditional school uniforms, and we were treated to a medley of ethnic dances on this cold cloudy day in Kunming. After the music ended, we headed back to the building to finish our guided tour, but along the way, 40 or 50 of the most adorable little jackals picked me off from the pack of Americans. They grinned, laughed, waved, shouted, and mobbed me, practicing their battery of English phrases such as “How are you?” and “I love you!” and

~ Continued on Page 4



Jessie with one of her Thinking Beyond Borders students, Alexandra Cardinale, in Machu Picchu, Peru.

~ Continued from Page 3

demanding in the most gleeful of ways that I take their photograph. Such unbridled enthusiasm was a refreshing twist on my status here as a zoo animal-celebrity hybrid. However, I found this status surprisingly comfortable. My three years in East Asia post-Whitman taught me that in “homogeneous” cultures, foreigners are frequently allowed to operate outside the complex societal norms that bind locals. My return to China reminded me that if a society assumes I won’t follow their rules, I am free to define my own. Sometimes being in the minority can actually be liberating.

“Sometimes being in the minority can actually be liberating.”



Jessie on the beach in Bahia Ballena, Costa Rica.

These vignettes are two parts of a larger narrative that began four months ago when I left Washington, D.C., to begin a new job as a leader for a “gap year” program — a position that is such a perfect blend of my passions (travel, teaching and development) that it hardly seems fair to call it work. I find myself, along with two co-leaders and 14 American students, surfing in Costa Rica, planting trees in Ecuador, hiking to Machu Picchu, teaching English in China, and watching the sun rise over Angkor Wat. These experiences are a part of the Thinking Beyond Borders program, the purpose of which is to expose young people to development issues across the world and inspire them to become agents of change. As 2011 unfolds, my companions and I will be volunteering at a sustainable agriculture research center in India, and by spring we will be supporting HIV caregivers in South Africa, all while continuing to teach, learn, travel, explore, and grow.

About the Author

Jessie Elisberg’s permanent address is still in Salem, Oregon, because she hasn’t stayed anywhere else long enough to change it. She graduated from Whitman in 2002 with a self-designed major in language and linguistics, and a minor in music. While at Whitman she was an active part of several music ensembles and ASWC, as well as taking leadership roles in a number of campus clubs, including Coalition Against Homophobia.

After Whitman Jessie spent three years teaching in Japan through the JET Programme, and in 2009 graduated from George Washington University with a master’s degree in international development studies, focusing on sustainable community-based tourism development.

Although she spent the better part of the past three years working in the microfinance industry, she has returned to teaching and is currently a program leader for the international gap year program Thinking Beyond Borders (www.thinkingbeyondborders.org).

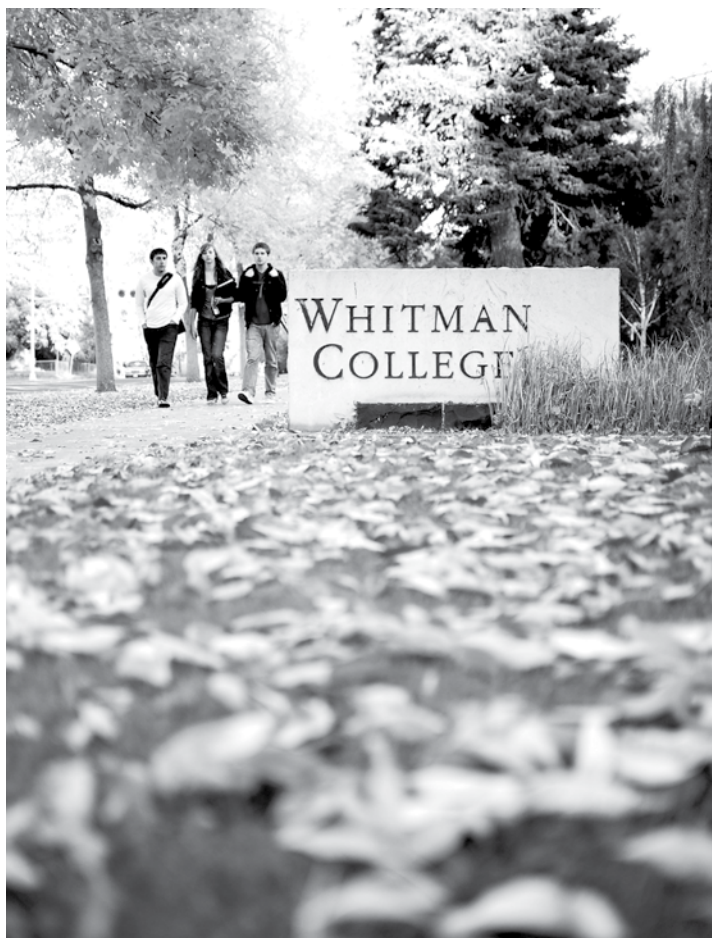
Pete Reid Award for Young Alumni

The Pete
Reid Award
for Young



Alumni is given by the Alumni Association to an alumnus/a whose enthusiasm is demonstrated toward his or her career, community or Whitman College as exemplified by **Pete Reid '49** in his service to the college. This award is limited to graduates of the last 15 years. Standards for recognition include outstanding recognition in his or her career or field of work, or outstanding commitment in service to others, and a demonstrated commitment to Whitman College.

To submit your nomination of a deserving classmate, use the form at www.whitman.edu/content/alumni/involved/alumniawards. Remember to be as specific as possible in order to facilitate our selection process. Written nominations may be sent to Nancy Mitchell, c/o Whitman College Alumni Office, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362.



WHITMAN ONLINE is the best way to keep in touch with classmates and make connections with other Whitman alumni.

Register at www.alumniconnections.com/whitmancollege/.

You'll need your Whitman ID (WID) to verify your account.

Do you remember yours? If not, contact the Alumni Office at alumni@whitman.edu or 1.800.835.9448, ext. 1.

Features:

- :) Search by name, class year, geographic location and more.
- :) Upload your resumé.
- :) Set up an e-mail forwarding address to use with sites like Facebook.



Photos by Allison Felt '14 (top)
and Greg Lehman

LOST

LOST alumni

If you know the whereabouts of or e-mail address for any of these Whitties, please contact addrchg@whitman.edu.

2001

Michelle E. Hannibal
Katy Guzman Izaguirre
Mark A. Kilmer
Edward H. Miller
David C. Shur

2002

Ian B. Bell
Heather T. Carew
Brook A. Elliott-Buettner
Faruq Hasan

2003

Emily J. Bennett
Wendy M. Hanson
Yoko Hasegawa
Mark R. Hinshaw
Yeri Lopez
Cuong M. Luu
Ana G. Petrovic
Meredith E. Richardson
Charlene Renee Strozinsky

2004

Juli A. Armstrong
Cindy S. Godard-Gross
Sofia Natalie Mariona
Anna B. McCarthy

2005

Laura English Davis
Benjamin R. Eichorn
Andrew M. Fraser
Kurt P. Lervick
Leah E. Morse
Julia B. Talley

2006

Samuel Choi Barnhart
Gareth Collin Campbell
Anudeep Gill
Jordan Richard Kline
Natalie Udwin
Megan Hutchison Wallace

2007

Nicholas Blakely Bodnar
Robyn D. Edwards
Heather MacQuarrie Hassett
Kyle Jordan Martz
Jessica Lee Salvador

2008

Shaheryar Akbar
Katharine Marie Avery
Katharine Jean Farrington
John Robert Frasene
Baron Wolfgang Haber
Annelle Alejandra Mendez
Benjamin John Sexson

2010

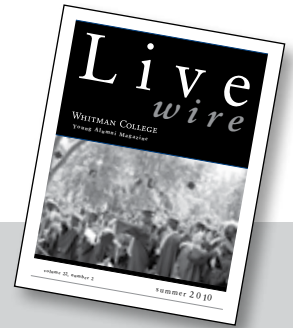
Jerreh Badjie



Allison Felt '14



Greg Lehman



Submit to LiveWire!

Has something wonderful happened in your life this year? Send a photo and caption for *LiveWire* by filling out the Class Note submission form at www.whitman.edu/alumni/classnoteform.htm. Then e-mail your photo to livewire@whitman.edu.

Electronically submitted photos must be at least 300 dpi for a 3-by-5-inch photo. Or, mail original photos to Whitman College Alumni Office, Attn: *LiveWire*, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362.

If you would like your photos returned to you, please include a note. Don't forget to name everyone in the photo!

WHITMAN COLLEGE YOUNG ALUMNI MAGAZINE

WHITMAN COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362

Upcoming Reunions

2011 Fall Reunion Weekend

Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2011

Tenth Reunion, Class of 2001

Fifth Reunion Cluster, Classes of 2005-07

Visit www.whitman.edu/content/alumni/events/reunions
for more information and to RSVP.

2012 Fall Reunion Weekend

Sept. 28-30, 2012

Tenth Reunion, Class of 2002

More information in 2012!



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