



COMMUNITAS

Fall 2015

WETHERSFIELD REVISITED

THOMAS MORE COLLEGE RENEWS AFFILIATION WITH STILLMAN ESTATE

Chauncey Devereux Stillman (1907-1989), prominent Catholic convert, patron of the arts, and philanthropist, was a longtime friend of Thomas More College. Mr. Stillman, an architect by training, was a chief benefactor of the College; Stillman House, the men's residence hall, was named in his honor.

About three hours from the TMC campus, on 1,200 rolling acres in New York's Hudson Valley, lies Wethersfield, the estate where Mr. Stillman pursued his lifelong passions for horses, gardens, and the intellect. There, atop the highest point in the region, he built a Georgian mansion set in a ten-acre Italianate garden. Views stretch thirty miles to the Catskills and the Berkshires. Today, visitors can tour the Main House furnished with antiques and artwork from the fifteenth through twentieth centuries, learn about Stillman's equestrian pursuits in the Carriage



*Chauncey Devereux Stillman
(Courtesy of Wethersfield, Amenia, NY)*

House Museum, and explore twenty miles of maintained horse and walking trails.

Mr. Stillman's legacy has two equal goals: to maintain the Estate for visitors and to offer—at the Estate and in Midtown Manhattan—lectures, seminars, colloquies, and similar programs focused on Catholic history, theology, culture, and the arts. Mr. Stillman's conversion to Catholicism was a joyous, transcendent event in his life. He had one of Wethersfield's rooms converted to a house chapel, and was named Privy Chamberlain to His Holiness Paul VI in recognition of his support of Catholic causes.

Thomas More College has been excited to renew and strengthen its long affiliation with Mr. Stillman and Wethersfield through two new joint initiatives: annual Wethersfield/TMC Fellowships for recent TMC graduates and annual Wethersfield/TMC Shakespeare Workshops for rising high school juniors and seniors.

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NOURISHING TRADITIONS: DONOR SECURES THOMAS MORE TREASURE FOR STUDENTS

The Catholic Faith, traditional farming, online marketing, and organic foods are rarely associated with antiquarian books and English conspiracies, but for Constantine Soutsos all are matters of passionate interest.

Constantine Soutsos is a model Thomas More donor. Liberally educated, he has successfully navigated the High Tech business world, and with proceeds from Silicon Valley he looks to enrich culture and promote Catholic traditions for his family and for others.

“I was fortunate to receive a Liberal Education when we simply called it Education,” Mr. Soutsos quipped. “One of the interesting things about business, even High Tech—or maybe especially High Tech—is the importance of connecting complex ideas and problems into a coherent solution narrative. The story of how our proposal solves not just any problem, but your problem, is the key to earning in any business. This is a very important translation project that requires habits of mind different from the habits of my more technically educated colleague. I greatly appreciate

the work Thomas More is doing to teach these habits of mind and connect them to the praxis of regular life through their guild projects.”

Constantine and his wife Kathleen have been regular supporters ever since they were introduced to Thomas More College by former Dean, Christopher Blum. Now their eldest daughter Evangeline is a student at the College.



Donor Constantine Soutsos

Nearly a decade ago, the Soutsos’s purchased a lovely farm in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Inspired by Chesterton’s fiction, Constantine named the farm Notting Hill. From Notting Hill, he continues to manage IT projects and negotiate enterprise deals for large corporations. Yet using skills learned in the tech world, he has created the Northern Valley Pastoral Guild,



Decorative initial from an original sixteenth-century edition of More's English works

through which he and other families market “beyond organic” meats online to help revive an interest in healthy and sustainable farming methods.

“In a digital era where goods arrive daily from anywhere in the world via Amazon, the farm reminds us that we are incarnated creatures,” he said. “When the children ask why we chose a farm (usually after a cold day’s chores), we don’t give them the usual stuff about hard work; instead we remind them how the farm works us; it shapes our time, defines our options, and teaches us the limits and rhythms of ordinary life. We need these habits and this formation in a digital age, lest we go slowly mad.

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PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Lasting human endeavors are made possible by four contributors: the visionary, the man of energy, the man of discipline, and the good steward. Sometimes, but rarely, one and the same person holds several of these powers together in his personality. Thomas More College has been blessed with all four types. There have been men and women of heroic

vision who have seen the needs of the age and launched bold projects. To push these forward, the determined soul has always appeared, wrestling each flashing notion from the realm of ideas and grounding it in the world of the practical and doable. The man of discipline, though slow, is steady, calmly insuring that good works will be ordered, maintained,

and renewed. Often forgotten is the faithful steward who sustains the entire endeavor with his own treasures and sometimes with his very life. This issue of *Communitas* reveals all four types to us and confirms that each offers a path to imitate Christ, the one Who perfectly sees, enacts, orders, and sustains all that is beautiful, good, and true.

—William Edmund Fabey, Ph.D.



Architectural rendering by Alec Sanderson

FROM POETRY TO CITY PLANNING, TMC ALUMNI CONTINUE STUDIES AT GRADUATE LEVEL

By Carley Novotny '15

Not only did Messrs. Jonathan Wanner, Andrew Strain, and Alec Sanderson brave the academic rigor of Thomas More College and live to tell the tale, but they have now gone on to pursue their intellectual interests at the graduate level.

Mr. Wanner '14 was well-known at the College for his theatrical prowess. He wrote and directed three original plays for the College, each showcasing his ear for poetry. He has now enrolled in the English Literature program at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he will complete his Master's degree in the spring before continuing on to doctoral work.

When I caught up with Wanner in September, he had just finished a

class on Willa Cather. While his M.A. courses draw upon both American and English texts, Wanner plans to focus his doctorate on Renaissance poetry. The most rewarding aspect of his studies thus far, he says, has been "to be able to spend time concentrating on these beautiful works of art." It is for the sake of sharing such works of art with others that Wanner's greatest occupational desire for the future is to teach. He was able to hone his teaching skills at TMC last summer by directing Summer Program students in a dramatic production of Franz Kafka's novella *Metamorphosis*.

Mr. Andrew Strain '13 is Wanner's roommate at CUA. He entered the School of Philosophy last fall and is also on a combined M.A./Ph.D. track. The program takes an "historical approach" to philosophy, examining the areas of ancient Greek philosophy,

medieval philosophy, and modern philosophy. "The professors want you to be comfortable and exposed to the entire history," Strain said. In addition to being well versed in Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy, "students need to know about the contemporary discussions" in order to "have a certain depth, a broadness to their studies," Strain explained.

"To be a good urban planner you have to know what the good life is."

—Alec Sanderson '14

Strain told me that he found himself well prepared by TMC to understand and analyze any text and to be able to produce his own scholarship on those texts in the form of essays and term papers. Additionally, he says that the character formation he received at TMC as well as the community life served as exceptional foundations for building new relationships and fostering a similar spirit of *communitas* in the graduate school environment.

Mr. Alec Sanderson's studies at TMC led him to enter a field both practical and speculative in nature. He graduated with Wanner in 2014 and began

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A scene from Mr. Wanner's 2015 production of *Metamorphosis* performed by TMC summer program participants

SUMMER CAMP FOR YOUNG LADIES AND GENTLEMEN



Summer Program participants enjoy the view from atop Mt. Monadnock.

Teenagers from across the nation converged on campus this summer to participate in what has become an annual rite of passage: Thomas More College's Summer Programs for high schoolers. In the Catholic Writers Program, anchored by renowned author Joseph Pearce, students read works by Dante, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Evelyn Waugh, while honing their own writing skills. In the Great Books Program, Dr. Sara Kitzinger guided students through St. Thomas More's *Utopia* while TMC alumnus Jonathan Wanner '14 lead them in a production of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

Rigorous intellectual engagement is at the heart of all TMC programs, but it is only part of the story. Following her Renaissance humanist patron saint, the College aims to educate the whole person.

"Summer program students enjoy a New England summer in the context of this great community of friendship which grows up organically," explains Admissions Counselor Jonathan Rensch, who also ran this summer's programs.

He defines them as "one part intense coursework, one part classic summer camp, one part spiritual retreat."

**"The best two weeks
of my summer."**

*—Jon Syren, 2015 Participant,
Great Books Summer Program*

Mass is offered daily. Chaplains are available for confession and spiritual direction. For many students the TMC tradition of Friday Latin Mass is their first taste of the Extraordinary Form.

Outside of the classroom and chapel, students tour Boston's historic North End, hike Mount Monadnock, lounge on the beach in York, Maine, and canoe down the Merrimack River. This summer's biggest hit may have been a makeshift slip-and-slide constructed of tarps, baby oil and leftover shampoo.

One of the distinctive components of Thomas More's programs is the technology policy: students surrender

their phones and all electronic devices for the duration of their stay, except to call home or in case of emergency. Some students are initially reluctant to part with the contemporary equivalent of a comfort blanket. "Our intention is not to demonize technology. Rather, we want students to experience the richness of focusing on the community around them," Rensch explains. "The students come to see the no technology policy as a real blessing."

Another unique blessing is Thomas More's focus on forming young ladies and gentlemen. This summer the boys received lessons in wrestling and a gentleman's poker game. Anna Topping, whose husband Fellow Ryan Topping was teaching a course on the North American Martyrs, invited the girls over for tea and her legendary cocoa balls. Alumnus Stephen Lajoie '15 reprised his swing dancing class.



Canoeing down the Merrimack

"Inside and outside the classroom, the TMC Summer Programs are a place where young people learn to live as ladies and gentlemen," Rensch sums up. "When they head home to states as disparate as California, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Alaska, they leave with their minds sharpened, their bodies refreshed, and their characters strengthened."

SUMMER PROGRAMS LINK GENERATIONS



Nicole Syren with sons Jon (L) and Joseph (R)

When fifteen-year-old Jon Syren stepped onto the Thomas More College campus for the Great Books Summer Program, he was also stepping back into family history. Jon's mother, attorney Nicole Syren (née Mosesian), attended the Summer Program in 1985, and she graduated from the College in 1992. Still, it was far from inevitable that Jon would follow his mother's footsteps to Merrimack.

Though she cherished her memories of TMC, Mrs. Syren was concerned that the college had changed. "We sort of watched events from afar," she admits—quite afar, it turns out, since she and her husband, Lester, also an attorney, were busy raising a family in Anchorage, Alaska. Besides Jon, they have six other children: Joseph, 17, Eleta, 14, Lillian, 11, Mary, 10, Luke, 7, and Vivienne, 3.

Then there was the matter of the family's collegiate allegiance. Lester Syren is a proud graduate of Thomas Aquinas College.

"I believe in all the small, faithfully Catholic liberal arts colleges," Mrs. Syren confides. "It's just that the others will always be second place to Thomas More in my mind." Why? "There are so many reasons—the intimate size, the sense of community, but above all, I'd have to say, Rome."

All TMC sophomores spend a semester in Rome under the tutelage

of Dr. Paul Connell and the peerless cultural patrimony of the Eternal City.

"Oh, the fun that we had with the sisters on Via Garibaldi! And Dr. Connell's quizzes! Reading Dante right there in the heart of the Church—it really brought everything together; how can it get any better?" Mrs. Syren reminisces. "The stories we could tell from Rome would fill volumes."

Rome was unusually quiet that semester—the Gulf War was raging and many schools had cancelled their programs—"But not Thomas More!" Mrs. Syren recalls. She particularly treasures a quiet Wednesday Audience with John Paul II: "We were so few that we were each able to kiss the Holy Father's ring and shake his hand."

With memories like those fresh in

**"The spirit of
the College that
I remember is
alive and well."**

—Nicole (Mosesian) Syren '92

her mind, and in search of a summer program for Jon, Mrs. Syren logged on to the TMC website. "I was very happy to see some familiar names on the website. Fr. Healey and Chef Pat were there in my time." So was Pam Bernstein, who reassured Mrs. Syren that TMC's Summer Programs were open to fifteen year-olds. "We really did our homework before deciding. We looked into other colleges, but there was just something special about Thomas More."

Jon could not agree more. He described his time at the College as "the best two weeks of my summer" and is eager to return.

Mrs. Syren was overjoyed to hear about Jon's experience. "It seemed to



Nicole Syren with Dr. Connell and classmates

me that the spirit of the College that I remember was alive and well," she shares. "Thomas More prepared me personally for law school and I know that a liberal arts education is the perfect foundation for whatever people decide to do." She is delighted that future generations are receiving that foundation at Thomas More College.

Will Jon keep following in his mother's footsteps and attend Thomas More for college? "He's certainly announced that intention. We'll have to see what the TAC side of the family has to say about that," she chuckles.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Syren is eager to share Jon's experience and her own renewed zeal for Thomas More College.

Syren (L) and Megan (née Hodel) Klekotka '92 (R) during their Rome semester in 1991





“I WANT TO BE AN INSTRUMENT OF DIVINE MERCY”: AN ALUMNA’S CALLING

“She was young, joyful, white-robed, a black veil hung from her head and a long rosary from her waist. I remember thinking, ‘I want to be just like her.’”

Amy Green '15 was eight years old, baptized, but not a practicing Catholic, when she saw a nun for the first time—a Dominican Sister of St. Cecilia, or “Nashville Dominican”—at a Marian Conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. How she and her mother wound up there is a mystery of Providence for which she can name no mediator. There was no Catholic church in the rural Wyoming valley where the Greens lived; her father’s family was Mormon.

A few years later, when Amy was eleven, she and her mother returned to the Faith. Soon after, Mrs. Green discovered St. Faustina Kowalski (1905-1938), the Polish mystic. The Saint’s *Diary* and Divine Mercy Sunday, established in fidelity to her visions, nourished Mrs. Green’s revived faith. Amy attended Mass with her mother, but also Mormon services with her father’s family. It was Mormon discomfort with reason and conversations with an Idaho priest who explained how true faith builds on reason that fully reconciled her to the Church. Again she felt called to religious life.

In high school, though, influenced by her peers, she tried to convince herself that she did not have a vocation. Her sense of betrayal was all the worse because she continued to feel drawn to religious life: “I knew that I was living my life wrong, and I wanted to fix it. One of my mother’s friends told me about good Catholic schools.” She wound up at Thomas More.

“I loved the history of England and the English martyrs,” she explains, “so I decided to attend a summer program before my junior year of high school.” The aesthetic, intellectual, and moral formation she received that summer overwhelmed her. A year later, in lieu

of other churches. While on pilgrimage to Poland, she was inspired by the joy and zeal of a Sister of Our Lady of Mercy, St. Faustina’s order. Amy still remembers her words: “You’re the generation that’s given the task of proclaiming God’s mercy. Whatever you do in your life,



of her senior year of high school, she returned to TMC as a college freshman.

Like many of her peers, Amy identifies the Rome semester as decisive for her future. She spent long periods of silence in the Gesù, Santa Maria in Trastevere, St. Peter’s, and myriad

do it well, with that task in mind.” Before leaving Rome, Amy had set up a come-and-see visit with the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration (the “EWTN Sisters”) in Alabama. She was intrigued by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy,

but incorrectly assumed that they were active only in Poland.

It was over a year later that Amy learned that St. Faustina's order had an American presence, when classmate Gracie Lloyd '15 invited Amy on a retreat at the order's Boston house. After the retreat, Amy confided to Gracie and Nicole Martin '15 that she was at peace.

Amy began corresponding with Sister Caterina of the Boston community, but it was months before she was able to return. Meanwhile, she was exploring another interest: graduate study of theology and Church history. Sister Caterina encouraged her to pursue graduate studies. "I felt 99 percent positive that I had this religious

announced an open weekend for Amy to go on retreat with the community: the weekend of Divine Mercy Sunday 2015.

**"Without repentance,
mercy can't happen."**

—Amy Green '15

One night on retreat, a sister visiting from Poland sought out Amy. "You have a really big decision to make, don't you?" the nun asked. Amy was surprised, since she had not vocalized any disquiet.

nocturnal counsel kept haunting her. At last, in prayer, she reached a decision that filled her with "complete peace."

Amy Green applied to join the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy on the Feast of St. Mark (April 25th). After spending the summer raising the money to pay off her student loans, she entered the community on October 22nd, when the General Roman Calendar remembers Pope John Paul II, who canonized St. Faustina and established Divine Mercy Sunday. On November 1st, the Feast of All Saints, Amy was admitted to postulancy, a year dedicated to living and working with the community while studying its constitutions. After postulancy, with the blessings of God and the Mother General, she will take the habit, receive her name in religion, and enter the novitiate, a period of further study and discernment that precedes simple vows and, ultimately, solemn vows.

Founded in 1862 by a Polish countess on the model of a French "House of Mercy" for women and girls, the congregation's constitutions were reformed in light of the revelations of St. Faustina, who is counted as Spiritual Co-Foundress. At the heart of God's revelations to St. Faustina, typified in the Divine Mercy Image, is His love for those most in need of His mercy. The congregation communicates this mercy through a blend of the active and contemplative charisms. Life in the convent is monastic, chiefly dedicated to prayer and study, but the sisters also lead Ignatian retreats and spend part of each day in active work. This work varies from house to house. In Poland, the sisters run "Mercy Houses" for young women and single mothers in need of "deep moral conversion." The Boston House, founded in 1988, engages in prison ministry, visiting the sick and elderly, giving retreats and talks, and distributing Divine Mercy materials.

Spreading the message of Divine Mercy is the core of the congregation's mission and of Amy's vocation. She defines that message as "the love and encounter God wants to have with each



Amy Green (second from right) with Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and her parents at graduation

vocation, I just didn't know when," Amy explains. When she was offered a spot at the prestigious Angelicum in Rome, she accepted, found a roommate and an apartment, and prepared to return to the Eternal City. Her plans were interrupted when Sister Caterina at last

When she outlined her dilemma, the sister told her simply, "Don't go to the Angelicum."

Back at TMC after the Easter break, senior theses were due and finals were approaching. Amy had two weeks to make her decision. The Polish sister's



Profession of Vows of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Poland

human soul. Grace is there, waiting for the individual to respond.” But like a true lover, God does not force His way into our hearts: “without repentance,” she clarifies, “mercy can’t happen.” Providence-repentance-mercy—their interplay is the narrative of Divine Mercy that Amy reads in her own conversion and discernment. Called to repentance through her infant baptism, through the Gospel mediated by a

Nashville Dominican, an Idaho priest, and the TMC community, Amy has responded to God’s invitation to love him more perfectly in the religious life. “I want to be an instrument of divine mercy,” she summarizes, “by loving each person as Christ Himself.”

The entire Thomas More College community unites in praying God to bring many souls from the brink of eternal loss to the knowledge of

His mercy through Amy’s prayer and work, and through the example of her betrothal to His Son, her Bridegroom.

Learn more about the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy by visiting www.faustyna.pl. The Boston House maintains a website at www.sisterfaustina.org.

POETRY TO PLANNING

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pursuing his M.A. in Architecture at the University of Notre Dame the following fall. Sanderson told me that his interest in architecture and urbanism was largely piqued by TMC’s Way of Beauty courses as well as the sophomore semester in Rome. “Being able to sit in a piazza and observe how it is like a living room for a whole neighborhood,” deeply affected him.

His exposure to Aristotelian moral philosophy at TMC also played a major role in his decision to study architecture and urbanism. “As an architect or, more importantly, as an urban planner,” he said, “you have to know how to live

well because that’s your angle—to help people have better lives and do that by creating healthier, better, more sustainable neighborhoods. In order to do that, you yourself have to know what the good life is.” Sanderson also explains that the community life at TMC had a great impact on him and his pursuit of urbanism: “It’s a very healthy community, and it’s very ideal in a lot of ways. That was very formative for me, and that’s something I want to pass down to other people in different ways. We all had very common goals at Thomas More. There were principles behind it, like having ample communal spaces and activities. It led to me wanting to create something like that.”



Architectural rendering by Alex Sanderson

NOURISHING TRADITIONS

(Continued from page 2)

Similarly, while books may be viewed as simply ideas to be digitalized, some books need to be incarnated; they need to exist as more than an idea—sometimes as a gift, sometimes as a talisman, sometimes as an artifact.”

Mr. Soutsos was pleasantly surprised when the College contacted him this summer to help preserve just such a book: a sixteenth-century edition of Thomas More’s English works, published by More’s family during the reign of Mary Tudor, the Catholic daughter of Henry VIII. In partnership with another College patron, Mr. Soutsos provided funds to purchase the rare treasure along with a complete set of the fifteen-volume *Works of Thomas More* published by Yale University Press. These volumes are monuments of scholarship and represent nearly half a century of modern discoveries about Thomas More and his age.

“I’m not opposed to digital books,” he clarified. “In fact I rather like the ability to search for text and regret the hours lost in college looking for quotations I

thought I had properly marked (hours, if regained, I’m sure would have been constructively put to mastering the finer points of Euchre). But physical books ought not disappear—even if our use of them might change. In fact, one of my prized possessions is a small pamphlet that Hilaire Belloc self-published for distribution to friends for Christmas 1931: ‘The Praise of Wine: An Heroic Poem.’ So, when Dr. Fahey reached out about acquiring a well-used artifact of the Tudor era with marginalia and handwritten inserts, I was excited to assist.”

The sixteenth-century original edition of St. Thomas More’s works had been located by Dr. William Fahey in August. After the chance discovery, Dr. Fahey knew he had a few short days to purchase the work or lose it forever in an auction. He also knew he had an inspired donor who could help. “I was thrilled when Constantine said he would step forward to spearhead this project,” remarked President Fahey. “I haven’t seen an original edition of St. Thomas More’s works for acquisition since 2006—and that copy sold in a London auction for tens of thousands of dollars.”

The edition acquired by the College has a unique history, perhaps singular among surviving early editions. It was at some early point “disbanded.” Sometimes books were disassembled because they contained controversial material, sometimes so that the reader could carry a shorter work or section of a weighty text with him—creating a sort of homemade “paperback.” The

“Some books need to be incarnated; they need to exist as more than an idea.”

—Constantine Soutsos, Donor

College copy was disbanded and ill-treated at an early date, according to Fahey. The memorial letter to Queen Mary, has been removed as has the very controversial early life of Richard III. Other sections that were removed or damaged have been painstakingly restored by a later owner. “What we may have in our possession is a Recusant copy,” suggests Fahey. “Certain sections have been removed or destroyed, only to be carefully restored by a pious and scholarly owner.” Recusants were those English Catholics who refused to bow to the government-led Anglican church, which inflicted torture, exorbitant fees, and exile upon Englishmen and women who refused to abandon the Faith. Fahey contends that the value of the book may be exceptional because of the rarity of the handwriting found in it and the story that the excisions and repairs tell.

Student enthusiasm matches the President’s. “When Dr. Fahey brought the book to our history tutorial, I felt like a relic of St. Thomas More was set before us,” said Joseph Schroeder (Class of 2017). “Here was a book five centuries old, which by its very survival transmits not just information, but a story about our Faith and the English past.”

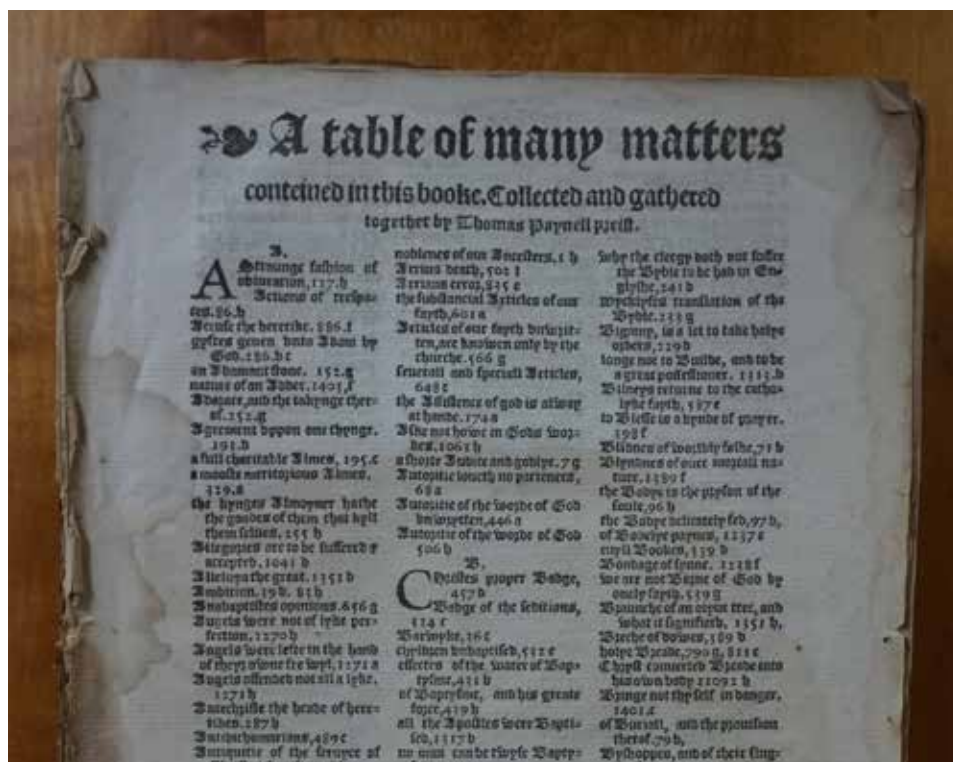


Table of contents from the College’s newly acquired edition of More’s English works



Dr. Powers (L) and Dr. Fahey (R) lead a seminar during the Shakespeare workshop at Wethersfield.

WETHERSFIELD REVISITED

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“WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH A LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE?”

Recent Thomas More graduate Nicole Martin '15 had become used to hearing this question. She never dreamed it would be answered with something like, “Live on a 1,200-acre estate while cataloguing the art collection of one of the most prominent Catholic philanthropists of the twentieth century.” Yet that is precisely what she and two other recent alumnae, Amy Green '15 and Gracie Lloyd '15, are doing. The three current Fellowship awardees live in the Carriage House, in rooms adjacent to Mr. Stillman’s collection of over two dozen sporting and formal carriages and the stalls where distinguished Hackneys once were groomed and friendly horses still reside.

The Fellows are engaged in archival work which would be the envy of someone with a more specialized degree in museum studies or art history. As Miss Green explains, “We are currently creating a collection catalogue using

major museum archival software; photographing the paintings, furniture, and decorative arts; digitizing archival material; and giving tours of the Main House and Carriage House Museum.”

“The Fellowship Program at Wethersfield is a perfect complement to what we do here at Thomas More to foster Catholic arts and culture.”

—Dr. Amy Fahey

Throughout this process, adds Miss Martin, “we are learning about a range of subjects: from stylistic characteristics of mid-eighteenth-century American art to what sets Thomas Chippendale apart from other eighteenth-century furniture designers.” Miss Martin, who recently accepted the position of Assistant Curator at Wethersfield, emphasizes that the diversity of the holdings is

exceptional for a private collection. “We have pieces by Impressionists like Degas and Cassatt, American artists like Gilbert Stuart, Abbott Handerson Thayer, and John Singer Sargent, and even a Baroque Madonna and Child by Murillo.”

Under the auspices of the program, the Fellows have also been welcomed at Dumbarton Oaks, Mt. Vernon, Kykuit, and other major house and garden estates.

“The Fellowship Program at Wethersfield is a perfect complement to what we do here at Thomas More to foster Catholic arts and culture,” says Dr. Amy Fahey of TMC. “In both our Way of Beauty curriculum and our Guild Program, the College engages young people in the crucial task of restoring, promoting, and furthering Catholic arts and culture. The opportunity for our students to live out this Catholic vision, while gaining valuable skills in museum curation and digital cataloguing, is utterly unique in Catholic higher education today. We are grateful to Mr. Stillman and Wethersfield for this rare opportunity for our graduates.”

Fellow Gracie Lloyd agrees. “Working at Wethersfield has been the best

job experience I have ever had. The environment is breathtakingly beautiful. Mr. Stillman wanted the public to enjoy what he enjoyed, and the fact that Wethersfield is overseen by a private foundation and open to the public is a tribute to this man's greatness."

THOMAS MORE BRINGS SHAKESPEARE TO WETHERSFIELD

Also last summer, Thomas More conducted its inaugural Shakespeare workshop at Wethersfield, bringing together select high school students from around the country to discuss the works of the Bard with Thomas More Fellows Dr. William Fahey, Dr. Patrick Powers, and Dr. Amy Fahey.

Through the generous support of Wethersfield, the program is offered at minimal cost to participants. Students reside in Estate rooms—bearing names like The Goldfish Room and The Bamboo Room—and enjoy delicious offerings from the nearby eatery Babette's Kitchen. They also receive an extensive tour of the gardens, art collection, and Main House. "Staying at the Estate," says Nicolas D'Amelio of

North Carolina, "was simply stunning, and was both a cultural and a historical experience."

The heart and highlight of the program is the opportunity to discuss the plays of William Shakespeare with Thomas More professors and alongside students interested in tracing the aesthetic, moral, and theological dimensions of the plays. "Shakespeare's characters are as much a reflection of human nature as the *Confessions* of St. Augustine are of human spirituality," says senior Maura Tuffy of Long Island, New York, who hopes to attend Thomas More College after graduation. "It was great to meet new people who shared one's love of Shakespeare."

Senior Mary Stirton of New York agrees: a highlight of the workshop for her was the dramatic reading of *Othello* by participants, and the performance of a scene from *The Merchant of Venice* by Thomas More students. "The program was both educational and incredibly fun—the best possible combination."

In summer 2016, TMC will offer two Shakespeare Workshops at Wethersfield: one from August 3-5 dedicated to Shakespeare's comedies and



(L to R) 2015 Wethersfield/TMC Fellows Amy Green, Nicole Martin, and Gracie Lloyd

another from August 8-10 dedicated to select tragedies. High school students interested in applying for the 2016 Shakespeare Workshops should contact Dr. Amy Fahey (aefahey@tds.net) or access the TMC website for application information. "It's the chance of a lifetime to get to discuss Shakespeare like that," says Nicolas D'Amelio.

Through these twin initiatives, TMC continues to further its integrated vision of liberal learning and deepen its long-standing affiliation with Wethersfield. Perhaps Fellow Amy Green captures the natural fit between Wethersfield and Thomas More best: "At Wethersfield, I have witnessed what the preservation of the arts and culture looks like in the modern world. Essentially, what we learned and discussed at Thomas More concerning the revival of Catholic culture, we have been able to see taking place at Wethersfield."

The Wethersfield Estate is open to the public from June through September for tours of the Main House, Gardens, and Carriage House Museum. The twenty miles of trails are open to the public from mid-April thru mid-November. For further information about the Estate, including lectures in Midtown Manhattan and other events, please access: www.wethersfieldgarden.org.



The Italianate gardens at Wethersfield are among the East Coast's finest.



THOMAS MORE COLLEGE
of LIBERAL ARTS
Six Manchester Street
Merrimack, NH 03054

THE SOCIETY PAGE



ENGAGEMENT: 1. Mary "Gracie" Lloyd '15 and John Schofield.

WEDDINGS: 2. TMC Artist-in-Residence Gwyneth Holston and Andrew Thompson-Briggs, TMC Fellow; 3. Erin Monfils '15 and Augustine Palmer-Kamprath '15.

BABIES: 4. Katie (née Lloyd '11) and John Martin '11 with son Thomas and daughter Georgia; 5. Ingmar Mitchell, son of Kate (née Almeda '13) and Liam Mitchell '14;

CONGRATULATIONS: 6. Jesse Kurtz '07 wins Atlantic City council seat.

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