Westmont Faculty, Student 'Fundamentally Sound'
After Tea Fire

Driven downhill by 70 mile-per-hour Santa Ana winds across tinder-dry chaparral, the fire hit campus less than 20 minutes after starting in a nearby estate. Students, interrupted in their Thursday evening routines, moved calmly to the fire-proof Gym, where many of them would eventually spend the night. John Rodkey was on campus at the time, and spent the night acting in his emergency response role, maintained communication with the outside world by regular updates to the Westmont homepage. This meant venturing into the night numerous times to make these updates from the library basement.

John describes the firestorm:

"You don't really understand what a wildfire is like 'til you've been in one. Trees were exploding and huge pieces of flaming debris were flying through the air -- it was like a war zone. Very scary." said a Westmont student who spoke anonymously. "Westmont lost eight buildings and fifteen faculty homes in the fire. With over 200 homes destroyed, the Tea Fire is comparable in size to the 1964 Coyote Fire which covered much of the same ground."

-- Erik

See http://www.westmont.edu/teafire

Major Changes for Erik

Erik started his second year at Westmont by declaring art as his major, a logical choice, given his interest in film making. However, after extensive soul-searching following the Tea Fire, in which the limestone sculptures he had painstakingly fashioned over the course of the semester were destroyed, Erik determined that music brings him both immediate and long-term satisfaction. This January marks the one year anniversary of his cello lessons, but when choosing a primary instrument, Erik prefers one that he always carries around with him: his voice - a rich baritone inherited from his grandfather. Already this voice is in high demand: a member of the College Choir and the Chamber Singers, he sang an extended solo at the Westmont Christmas Festival. In February he will be performing in the musical ‘The Secret Garden,’ cast as both Mary’s father and Ben Weatherstaff.
Jeanne loves babies!
Jeanne can hardly find words to express her joy with her job at Life Network, performing obstetrical ultrasounds for at-risk mothers. She finds particular pleasure in distressing Erik with her descriptions of the day’s sightings - a baby yawning in utero or twins "bouncing up and down like a pogo stick!" Overcoming concerns that her friendly demeanor might be taken as unprofessional, she provides warmth and cheer to all who come to the clinic. As this temporary job winds down, she has been preparing for a possible job in public health by taking a class on child development at Santa Barbara City College. This class offered an academic approach to child development, a helpful complement to Jeanne’s primary method of research in this field: direct interaction with children, a practicum in which she has logged innumerable hours. Her most recent research subjects include Keara (age 7) and Sierra (age 3) Rodarte. Living temporarily with Silvia and Cody, the boisterous and exuberant girls were introduced to their favorite Rodkey storybooks, recipes, activities, and academic traditions. During the summer months, Jeanne devoted herself to the observation and care of these girls. She noted with interest the developmental impact on Cody, with his sudden role as big brother. In the early fall, she accompanied Keara and Sierra on their return trip to Colorado, where she witnessed the joyous reunion with their mother. She looks forward with anticipation to future similar child development projects. -- John

Unconquerable, Cody Continues to Achieve
Always up for a challenge, this fall Cody enrolled in Coastline Christian Academy and tried football for the first time. Football proved no match for Cody’s natural athletic abilities, but the new school was another matter: they require tricky things like cursive and geometry! But this too has been ultimately positive; Cody revels in knowing all the students in his school by name and starting each day with chapel. This summer Cody affirmed his faith in baptism; next up, piano lessons with Adelle! Each of these events raises the inevitable question: could Cody be growing up? But the Rodkey clan is in no hurry to answer this philosophical question, preferring to savor their youngest’s puns and jokes while anticipating his future athletic, academic, and musical feats. -- Elissa

Bunny Excavations
Soames & Irene, Esquire, will uncover pipes, create tunnels, and replace your landscaping with tastefully arranged piles of dirt, all free of charge.

Toronto (Cont. from pg. 1)
inspiration, and income – all of which have been stolen by the strike.” She added, however, that she had been awed by the union rhetoric, the strike bunny, and the union fight songs (i.e. The Battle Hymn of the Republic rendered as: “Glory, glory, hallelujah! The union marches on…”).

Despite these trials, Elissa perseveres, consoling herself with the memory of the award she won this summer at the American Psychology Association convention for her presentation on early psychologist James McCosh. The lecture, which contested the common view of pre-1880 American psychology as a psychological Dark Age, carried the Society for the History of Psychology’s prize for best student paper. This being Elissa’s first academic conference, the win proved welcome confirmation of her vocation and an encouraging start to her second year of graduate studies.
New Heights in Humility

After years of successfully singing her own Songs of Self-Congratulation, Krista has decided to contribute to the good of mankind by joining her church choir in Bloomington, IN. When asked if this would conflict with her graduate studies at Indiana University, Krista replied, “Oh, no. I’m quite brilliant enough to study Frege, work out logic problems, and compose new songs to myself without missing a beat. I even invented a new game to play by myself, since no one else is amazing enough to play it with me. Did I mention my new book?” Sadly, Krista’s attempts to have her latest paper peer-reviewed proved fruitless, as she was unable to find any peers. She was last seen at a local bookstore, signing copies of her book while simultaneously handing out subscriptions to her new magazine, “Society for the Advancement of Children’s Literature.” When asked why she had started the Society, Krista answered with a smile, “Because I care. People nowadays need reminders of the important things in life... and I’m only too happy to show them what a full life looks like.” With the author’s generous permission, we are reprinting a poem from her new book, “To Myself, O Glorious Thou...”

Song of Self-Congratulation, No. 27

And I decree huzzahs for me;
My splendor celebrate.
I never fail to loudly hail
Myself—the truly great! — Erik

Beached Whale Sighted on Big Sur

Local authorities, contacted by a concerned citizen, investigated reports of a beach whale in the Ellwood area on the outskirts of Goleta. Upon closer examination, the white fish-shaped object proved to have its origins in air rather than in the sea. The authorities interviewed John Rodkey, a paint-bespeckled man who seemed to take responsibility for the grounded bird. “After years of battling forceful winds, Tacky took refuge in my garage. He’s spent the last few years resting his wings and doing a bit of all-around recuperating.” Rodkey takes Tacky out onto the driveway for weekly therapeutic sessions, but voiced his concern over the abnormally large number of turkey vultures that circle overhead. “One swoop, and Tacky would be a goner!” Despite the occasional difficulty, Rodkey feels hopeful for Tacky’s future. “We’ve made great progress together, and I’m looking forward to returning him to his natural habitat. Tacky is an odd bird, but a nice bird to have around.” — Adelle

Wheaton Alum Returns Triumphant

Adelle’s secret plan to infiltrate the Santa Barbara musical community has proved an unqualified success, confounding her dismal pre-graduation predictions but confirming the theories of Type-A personality experts worldwide. Preliminary steps included a stellar Senior Recital on the oboe (celebrated with fudge, friends and family), and a triumphant graduation from Wheaton (using the same as the recital, minus the fudge). After the obligatory Rodkey road trip which took the family through Yellowstone and a Nostalgia Tour of Spokane, WA, Adelle returned to Santa Barbara intent on setting up a music studio in the Rodkey abode. Step two of Adelle’s scheme required creating business cards, lesson plans, and rearranging the living room, including the purchase of a desk from which to preside over oboe-reed making and other such pedagogical activities. Luckily Adelle excels anything entrepreneurial and organizational, and had plenty of time left over to get a job at Starbucks, where she finds special pleasure in efficiently splashing mocha sauce and whipped cream on exotic coffee drinks. Not only has Adelle attracted a number of loyal piano and oboe students, but this fall she became affiliated with a homeschooling arts group, Artios Academies, where she teaches music history, choir, and drama club. At the end of fall semester, the performance of Adelle’s choir and the (sometimes unintentionally) humorous production of the Light Princess, by George MacDonald (adapted by Adelle herself) enthralled their audience. As a result of these efforts, Adelle now has name and face recognition rivaling her mother’s Christian Celebrity status, and she finds she can hardly walk down the street without being mobbed by adoring students and Starbucks’ regulars. — Elissa
New suite opens in Big Sur B & B
The internationally acclaimed hospitality establishment, Rodkey Bed & Breakfast, is pleased to announce the opening of a newly renovated suite. The charming guest bedroom creates a cheery atmosphere with its yellow walls and prominently featured Audobon bird prints. This suite is but the latest triumph of Rodkey B & B, which is, of course, already renowned for its idyllic location: five minutes walk from beautiful beaches, a short drive from picturesque downtown Santa Barbara, and just seconds from the fascinating Ellwood Monarch Grove. Payment may be waived for members of the prestigious ‘Friends of Rodkey’ club. Call now for reservations!

Casenotes: a Noteworthy Release
Jolliburton Pictures released 'The Casenotes of Charles Blackson, P.I.' to its adoring public in December 2008. Written and directed by Erik Rodkey, the film follows private detective Charles Blackson (Jason Hubbard) investigates the mysterious disappearance of a Westmont student (Mike Bennett). Despite deception by Femme Fatale Blanche Cartwright (Tahlia Merrill), he unearthed a conspiracy involving cult leaders, endowed chairs, kidnappings, and secret tunnels. The film noir style makes effective use of pre-fire Westmont campus vegetation and architecture. Technical difficulties detract somewhat from unqualified enjoyment, but a sparkling performance by Dr. Michael Shasberger as the cult-leader maestro makes this gem a must-see. The film-within-a-film which reveals secret plans for Westmont expansion is itself worth the ticket price. Running time: 40 minutes.

Rodkeys Recommend
Reading...
The Animal Family The Light Princess
Three Cups of Tea The Willoughbys
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down. The Seven Story Mountain

Watching ...
Modern Times Deskset
Days of Heaven* Once
Band of Brothers It Happened One Night

*Not for the faint of heart

Reasonably priced Quotes for every occasion!
(match between quote and current occasion not guaranteed)
See Erik.
This agency not responsible for any resulting annoyance, irritation, or death threats.

One Misty, Moisty Morning...
As I peeked out my window at 3:55 am, I was instantly reminded of the nursery rhyme:
"One misty, moisty morning, when cloudy was the weather,
I chanced to meet an old man, dressed all in leather."
Thick fog blanketed my backyard, bestowing it with a new mysterious look. I wouldn't have been at all surprised to meet an old man in leather; in this weather, anything could happen. Stepping outside, I found the fog wasn't just moist, it was wet! Before I'd biked a block, my glasses were so wet I couldn't see through them. I perched them at the tip of my nose, librarian-style, and looked over them for the rest of the ride, risking a police citation, since I need glasses to drive, and presumably to bike. Thankfully the roads were empty.
In addition to the fog's wetness, its density took me by surprise. Hollister Avenue, the main road in my commute, is straight with high visibility; on a normal sunshiny day, you can see at least a mile. This morning, visibility was less than 1/16th of a mile: once I passed one streetlight, I could barely see the fuzzy glow of the next. It was as if I was riding through a misty tunnel with all residences and businesses temporarily removed. However, Starbucks was still there. Throughout my early morning shift, I watched the fog thin gradually and disperse. I rode home under blue skies, but continued to hear fog horns through the day, reminding me of my misty, moisty morning. -- an excerpt from arodkeylife.blogspot.com

For more Rodkey Musings throughout the year, read...
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