

N Alumni News

Alumni Authors

Please let us know when you have (or plan to have) your work published. Please consider donating a copy or two to our school library. Contact Alison Frye at 802-387-6273 or afrye@putneyschool.org.

We wish these and other present and future alumni authors well in their literary and scholarly endeavors.



THE POLITICS OF HAPPINESS: WHAT GOVERNMENT CAN LEARN FROM THE NEW RESEARCH ON WELL-BEING

Derek Bok '46

(Princeton University Press, 2010)

During the past forty years, thousands of studies have been carried out on the subject of happiness. The Gallup organization has begun conducting global surveys of happiness. One nation, tiny Bhutan, has actually made

“Gross National Happiness” the central aim of its domestic policy. In *The Politics of Happiness*, former Harvard president Derek Bok examines how governments could use happiness research in a variety of policy areas to increase well-being and improve the quality of life for all their citizens. Recognizing both the strengths and weaknesses of happiness research, Bok looks at the policy implications for economic growth, equality, retirement, unemployment, health care, mental illness, family programs, education, and government quality, among other subjects. Timely and incisive, *The Politics of Happiness* sheds light on what makes people happy and the vital role government policy could play in fostering satisfaction and well-being.



REALISM, TOLERANCE & LIBERALISM IN THE CZECH NATIONAL AWAKENING: LEGACIES OF THE BOHEMIAN REFORMATION

Zdenek V. David '48

(Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010)

This book reevaluates the formation of modern Czech intellectual and political culture. In this meticulous intellectual history, Zdenek V. David traces the roots of the eighteenth-century Czech National Awakening, not to the Counter

Reformation but to the Utraquist church (often called “Hussite”), which arose in pre-Protestant Bohemia. Utraquist ideas advancing realism, liberalism, and tolerance were, he shows, rediscovered, republished, and rearticulated by the Awakeners. David’s thesis directly challenges the notion that the Czech National Awakening promoted a folkloric, linguistic, Romantic culture. Ultimately, he argues, the Utraquist legacy and its transmission by the Awakeners contributed to democratic vigor in twentieth-century Czechoslovakia.



A SWINGER'S GUIDE TO LONDON

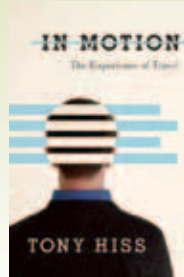
Piri Halasz '51

(iUniverse.com, 2010)

Here's the go-go mini-guide that told the sophisticated traveler where to go and what to do in Swinging London of the '60s, the fun capital of the world in that decade: groovy boutiques, casinos, discos, pubs, restaurants, art galleries, hotels, theatres, and also how to get in on the action at such places and elsewhere—how to be a jet-setter, in other words, not just a tourist.

The editor of *Arctical* describes the guide as a “period-piece rot . . . savvy in its hip heyday, (and) surprisingly valid half a century hence as many of the attractions are still ‘swinging.’”

This book, originally published in hardcover in 1967 by Coward McCann as a spin-off from Halasz's 1966 *Time* magazine cover story “Swinging London,” has been reprinted in paperback as part of the Authors Guild Back-in-Print program.



IN MOTION: THE EXPERIENCE OF TRAVEL

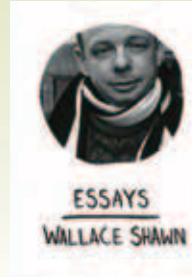
Tony Hiss '59

(Knopf, 2010)

In this extraordinarily wide-ranging, insightful, and revelatory book, Tony Hiss delves into a unique and instantly recognizable (though previously undescribed) experience that can happen to us when we travel, a special understanding and ability that can leave us feeling exhilarated. He illustrates how throughout human history—from our ancestors walking upright for the first time to astronauts walking on the moon—we have repeatedly availed ourselves of this seemingly elusive quality, which he calls “Deep Travel.”

The sensation of Deep Travel can overtake us whenever we tap into a sophisticated, wide-awake awareness we all possess. With a wealth of examples—from evocative accounts of his own journeys to celebrated travel writing across the centuries—Hiss identifies and rescues this powerful capacity and sets out simple techniques for accessing it no matter where we are.

A comprehensive, engaging introduction to Deep Travel, *In Motion* is a book for everyone who's spent time in motion, either commuting or as a seeker of the world's far corners.



ESSAYS

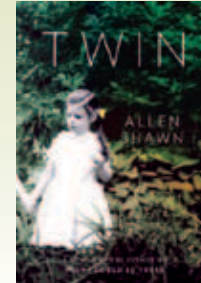
Wallace Shawn '61

(Haymarket Books, 2010)

In these essays, acclaimed playwright and beloved actor Wallace Shawn takes readers on a revelatory journey through high art, war, politics, culture, and privilege.

Whether writing about the genesis of his plays, such as *Aunt Dan and Lemon*, discussing how the privileged world of arts and letters takes for granted the work of the “unobtrusives” (the people who serve our food and deliver our mail), or describing his upbringing in the sheltered world of Manhattan's cultural elite, Shawn reveals a unique ability to step back from the appearance of things to explore their deeper social meanings. He grasps contradictions, even when unpleasant, and challenges us to look, as he does, at our own behavior in a more honest light. He also finds the pathos in the political and personal challenges of everyday life.

With his distinctive humor and insight, Shawn invites us to look at the world with new eyes, the better to understand and change it. *Essays* was named one of the best books of 2009 by *GQ Magazine*, and Toni Morrison hailed the book as “lovely, hilarious, and seriously thought-provoking.”



TWIN: A MEMOIR

Allen Shawn '66

(Viking, 2010)

Twin is a heartbreaking yet hopeful memoir about life as a twin in the face of autism. When Allen Shawn and his twin sister, Mary, were two, Mary began exhibiting signs of what would be diagnosed many years later as autism. Understanding Mary and making her life a happy one appeared to be impossible for the Shawns. At the age of eight, with almost no warning, her parents sent Mary to a residential treatment center. She never lived at home again. Fifty years later, as he probed the sources of his anxieties in his book *Wish I Could Be There*, Shawn realized that his fate was inextricably linked to his sister's, and that their natures were far from being different.

Twin highlights the difficulties American families coping with autism faced in the 1950s. Shawn also examines the secrets and family dramas as his father, William, became editor of *The New Yorker*. *Twin* reconstructs a parallel narrative for the two siblings, who experienced such divergent fates, yet shared talents and proclivities. Wrenching, honest, understated, and poetic, *Twin* is at heart about the mystery of being inextricably bonded to someone who can never truly be understood.



BONGO FISHING

Thacher Hurd '67

(Henry Holt and Co., 2011)

Jason has a pretty normal life: he lives with his mom, he goes to school, he does his homework. But when he meets a short, bluish alien named Sam, his life begins to seem much less normal and a lot more . . . well, alien. Sam takes Jason bongo fishing in space, and a whole new world opens up.

But when Jason's cat, Sputnik, disappears, things start to get a little weird. Interstellar travel isn't just fun and games, after all! Is the evil Dr. Zimburger involved? Or are there even more sinister forces at work?

Bongo Fishing is Hurd's first middle grade novel. He has written and illustrated many books for children, including *Mama Don't Allow* and *Art Dog*.



THE FOODISTA BEST OF FOOD BLOGS

Barnaby Dorfman '86, Editor

(Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2010)

Barnaby Dorfman '86 is the founder and CEO of Foodista.com, "the cooking encyclopedia that everyone can edit." This cookbook, which features competition-tested recipes from the Web's premier source for collaborative cooking, is the first grassroots cookbook to emerge from social media.

For the book, Foodista.com bloggers worldwide were invited to submit their favorite blog posts, recipes, and photos to compete for a spot inside this cookbook. *Bon Appétit* executive editor Victoria von Biel noted that the cookbook features "recipe after recipe that shows the (blogging) community's diversity—dishes from Russia, Israel, Spain, and Japan, as well as from across the United States." The book is a celebration of food, culture, and good living.



ONLY THE SOUND ITSELF

Ben Mitchell '86

(Codhill Press, 2010)

Ben Mitchell's *Only the Sound Itself* reminds us to think about the experiences that made us who we are. This poetry acts as a wake-up call to make us realize how hectic and crazy our lives have become. The theme of nature throughout the collection allows one to see the peace and serenity that used to exist and how the simplicity of life is lost as we take on responsibilities, fall in love, and eventually grow into adulthood.

In the words of Vince Cioffi, winner of the 1999 Stenger Fellowship in Poetry, "these poems require us to approach with an uncorrupted humanity. The poems insist on dignifying us. They have an almost theological ambition in that they love us, not in spite of our imperfections, but because of them and in so doing they shock us into our better selves and guarantee us salvation. This is a book to be grateful for. Its generosity elevates us."

Ben is currently working on his second book of poetry for Codhill Press.



Putney Reunion Wrap-Up

We missed a few photos in our last issue and apologize to the classes who were left out.

CLASSES OF 1974 AND 1975 AT REUNION 2010 <left to right> **TIM DALY, PHOEBE RENSCHLER COLE, ABBY RIESER, EMILY BRAMHALL, PAULA RODERICK, TAKO RAYNOLDS, STEWART WECHSLER, TIM DWIGHT (KNEELING), ELIZABETH ST. JOHN (RECLINING), DONALD CHONG, SHIU FENG, ELIZABETH STEVENS, DAVID MOORE, JONATHAN TRUMPER, STEVE BLACKMER, BECKY BORDEN BUNNELL, NICOLE FAUTEUX, BETSY HEISMAN TINKHAM, JAMES THOMPSON, PETER MEDVIN, CHARLIE YOUNG. NOT PICTURED: LINDSAY BORDEN, PAUL SMART, AND PAUL'S SON MILO.**

Alumni Events

Washington, DC

On an early spring afternoon, Putney alumni, parents and friends from the Washington, DC, area gathered to meet each other and Emily Jones on her first official trip to the capital area since becoming Putney's director in 2007. Penny Du Bois '57 and her husband, Drew Oliver, hosted the event in their lovely home. Emily fielded questions on the state of the school, the vitality of the music program, the health of the farm program, students' technology use, and much more, and everyone enjoyed seeing old Putney friends, sharing their Putney stories, and meeting new Putney people. Our thanks to all who joined us for this fun event.



THE PUTNEY SCHOOL WASHINGTON, DC EVENT <left to right> **NICOLE FAUTEUX '74, EMILY JONES, ALISON FRYE, FRAN MACLEAN, PENNY DU BOIS '57, JOHN MACLEAN, CHRISTO ROWLAND '80, PHIL KOPPER '55, GORDON JONES, ANN-MARIE WHITE**

Chicago

In December, David Plowden '51 spoke on his new book, *Requiem for Steam: The Railroad Photographs of David Plowden*, at the Columbia College Library in Chicago's South Loop. Putney School alumni, parents, and friends attended David's talk, and many retired afterward to a delicious, intimate dinner at a nearby restaurant. Attending the event were Charlie Staples '47, Peter Pereira '52, Joan Brooks '53 and John McLane, Susie MacGregor Stephenson '65, Stuart Michaels '69, David Tulipan '74, Dana Hokin '84, Jenni Francis '99, Chris Quinn '99, and Andrea Stein P'10, who made a trip from Madison, Wisconsin, to attend. We regret not getting a photo from the event, but encourage you to look at David's website, www.davidplowden.com.

New York City Weekend in September

Mark your calendars for the weekend of September 23-25, a special Putney School weekend in New York City. The weekend will pull together the elements of The Putney School—arts, culture, critical thought, working, singing, and exploration—within the world of the Big Apple. From Friday night Sing to Sunday brunch, and a full plate of activities on Saturday, the weekend will offer something for everyone. Stay tuned for more details.

Wilfredo Benitez '81 at the NJ SEEDS program

The Putney School has been working in recent years with New Jersey SEEDS, a program that prepares motivated, high-achieving, low-income students for admission to private schools and colleges across the country. Wilfredo Benitez '81, a current Putney School trustee who practices law in Montclair, New Jersey, spent some time recently talking to the SEEDS kids about his Putney experience. Wilfredo got to the essence of the Putney experience in his talk, and left the kids buzzing and raving about what Putney has to offer. Thanks, Wilfredo!



**WILFREDO BENITEZ '81 TALKS
TO KIDS FROM THE NEW
JERSEY SEEDS PROGRAM.**