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JEFF WETCH

Alumni notes

CMCAA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS from CMC have asked me why I spend so much time volunteering for the College.

It's because Claremont McKenna College saved me...in three ways.

When I came home at Christmas my junior year, my parents told me they could not afford for me to return. I am sure I was in tears when I called Fritz Weis '65 P'94, then CMC's treasurer, to tell him I was not returning. Before I got too far, he said, "Carol, give me 24 hours. I will call you tomorrow."

The next day, Fritz called and told me "everything was taken care of." I needed to call Georgette DeVeres—now associate vice president of admission and financial aid—in the financial aid office. Part of the solution was student loans (we did not have a no-loan policy then). Part of the solution was a scholarship, funded by generous alumni. And part of the solution was an on-campus job. I was the student manager for CMC's Phonenite efforts during the first capital campaign. I often tease Steve Siegel '87, associate vice president for development, that I was his first boss at CMC. That campaign raised \$50 million. What a long time ago that was. The generosity of CMC's financial aid and the accessibility of the administration still are pretty amazing.

Every professional undertaking I have ever done is easily tied back to CMC. Understanding pricing and marketing (Thank you, Professor Eyrich!), seeing boundaries and green space (Rossum and Eckert), understanding cash flow and accounting (Dad Massoud), and research skills (Oh, that thesis!).

CMC even helped me after my mother died. Her illness was long, almost two years longer than it was supposed to be. As hard as that was, I still wish she had lasted longer. Completely coincidentally, CMC reached out just after she passed. I had a huge void, not only missing the feeling of coming home to a familiar place with lots of unconditional support, but also the time her care had taken. CMC needed me and I had new found capacity.

We all have the fantastic opportunity to give and take from each other through our CMC family. Look back and remember those golden days on Green Beach...or look forward to your reunion and the Pirate Party in the same spot. I hear too often, "I couldn't get in today." Probably not true, but what a tremendous investment decision we all made. The College is where it is today because of all of our collective support and continued investment.

CMC still needs you! More precisely, there are young students embarking on their CMC careers who need our help. Alumni contributions are a major source of support. Unrestricted annual gifts and established scholarship funds allow us to maintain need-blind admission and no-loan financial aid policies. This means that we can admit anyone we want. We can say yes to those exceptional leaders who will change the world. Trustee Tom Leppert '77, former CMCAA President Laura Grisolano '86, me, and so many others can tell stories of CMC stepping up to make sure that they could remain (or even start) at CMC.

A culture among alumni that promotes networking and shamelessly connecting each other to wonderful opportunities is growing daily! Get active in your chapter, hire an intern or graduate, and choose to do business with other CMCers!

All the best,

Carol Hartman '86

http://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=3056137&trk=tab_pro



Can't Find a Better Fan

Claremont McKenna College alumni who are fans of grunge supreme rock band Pearl Jam are in for a treat when they purchase the DVD of Cameron Crowe's documentary film, "Pearl Jam Twenty," which celebrates the Seattle-based band's 20th anniversary. Along with rare and never-before-seen footage of the band, the DVD includes a 40-minute segment devoted entirely to Greger Larson '96. By Nick Owchar '90

Long before receiving his doctorate in zoology from the University of Oxford, Greger Larson '96, an assistant professor in the archaeology department at Durham University, spent his undergraduate years pursuing an Environment, Economics and Politics major. Often, the music playing in the background was by Pearl Jam. "A lot of my classmates were from Seattle, and I remember everybody walking around in their flannel shirts. Grunge was just taking off when I was a student," he recalls. "In some ways, Pearl Jam was CMC for me."

Larson's unexpected, sudden movement to the center of the Pearl Jam universe started last summer when, applying statistical analysis to the Pearl Jam songbook, he studied a six-year-old online tournament called Pearl Jam March Madness, which, like college basketball, uses rankings and bracketed match-ups based on fan votes.

Larson analyzed the song tournament results, along with how the band's live performances and albums have fared over the years. He was interested in seeing how closely the band's tastes align with the tastes of fans. The result was a 17-page, chart-and-bar-graph-filled study, "Ten to the Avocado: A Statistical Measure of the Best Pearl Jam Albums and a Comparison of Favorite Songs across Differing Levels of Fandom."

When Larson posted his paper on Two Feet Thick, one of the band's larger fansites, he immediately grabbed the attention of both fans and Cameron Crowe's production company, Vinyl Films, which saw his work as bringing a vital, unexpected aspect to the Pearl Jam story.

"Greger was able to come at the band from the intellectual *and* the emotional angles," explains Vinyl Films' Andy Fischer. "I liked how he could be as passionate as a Pearl Jam fan gets, but step back and look at it from an academic view."

On the day after fellow CMCer Ivan Zinn's '96 bachelor party, Larson received an email from an L.A. production company and thought it was somebody from the party playing a joke on him.

"I didn't believe it until somebody in their office invited me to fly to L.A. and talk to Crowe," he says. "They didn't know how it was all going to fit together yet, but they had band interviews and raw footage, and they wanted interviews with Neil Young, Chris Cornell...and me. Me! It was just crazy."

Larson's interview with Crowe was originally intended as part of the full-length film, but with Crowe juggling so much material—hours upon hours of recent interviews and live footage covering the band's earliest years and meteoric climb to fame—some things had to go. But being included in the DVD package suits Larson just fine. Fischer agrees, adding that, "Quite honestly, I think it does him more justice."

During his segment (go to Youtube, search for "Greger Larson" and you can watch a three-minute sample clip), Larson stands in a classroom, charting the rise and fall of songs like "Alive" from the band's live performances. He discusses t-tests and p-values, and he makes distinctions between fans, breaking them into the "hard core" and "casual" categories.



For the song "Deep," for instance, Larson provides an "erosion profile" that illustrates how live performances have dropped off as competing material from new albums have entered the band's setlists. That's understandable, but other "erosions" are more surprising. Take the hit "Jeremy," which has been relatively low in fan rankings. Why?

Simple, Larson points out: overexposure. "[A]t least amongst the hard core Pearl Jam fans," he writes, that song "has been more prone to suffer from heavy rotation fatigue."

While the cameras rolled, Larson talked with Crowe for more than three hours. In September, the two talked again—this time on the red carpet during the documentary's premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival. While these experiences were heady and exciting, Larson returns to a point about this experience that is far humbler: the simple pleasure of sitting down with someone and comparing notes.

"It was fantastic to meet Crowe and to have the Hollywood experience," he says, "but it was also an amazing chance to just sit down and talk with another fan. How often does an opportunity like that come along?"