

PROFILE

Jordan Van Voast '81 Cynthia Neipris '79 Diana Fried '79

By *Alix Roy '07*

In the wake of one of the most devastating natural disasters since the December 2004 tsunami, thousands of generous individuals nationwide have offered time, money, and supplies to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Deviating slightly from the traditional forms of aid, acupuncture has emerged as a popular method of treatment for disaster victims, and Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) is a program attempting to bring this healing practice to those in need. Organized by Diana Fried '79 in response to the Gulf area hurricanes, AWB has since expanded to include hundreds of volunteers, among them Bowdoin grads Jordan Van Voast '81 and Fried's college roommate and best friend, Cynthia Neipris '79.

Fried's decision to introduce acupuncture as a form of therapy for victims of Hurricane Katrina was not entirely unprecedented. Treatment was offered to those affected by 9/11 and has since been enthusiastically utilized by many American soldiers and members of the National Guard. Fried found that, wherever she went, people were interested in learning more about the technique. "After Hurricane Katrina, the time was really right to bring acupuncture into the public eye," she said. Run entirely by volunteers and funded by donations, members of AWB traveled to New Orleans and set up tents outside bus stations, in parking lots, and in local community centres. Survivors being transported to these locations from devastated areas such as the Ninth Ward were greeted with the opportunity to let go of their emotions, at a time when stress was at its highest (the purpose of the needles and their placement is to release emotions that would otherwise remain within the body).

For these three Bowdoin volunteers, working with victims of Hurricane Katrina has been a rewarding step on the pathway to achieving larger goals. Jordan Van Voast speaks for many when he described his mission of developing a network of trained acupuncturists ready to respond to disasters and help improve health care in third world communities. Fried adds that part of AWB's mission is to change the country's current policies toward acupuncture, which he suggests fail to recognize it as a legitimate form of healthcare. "What people don't realize is that we can do [things] that are beyond modern medicine—the spiritual as well as the physical."

For the time being however, all three alumni are grateful for their ability to help those in need in a way that might otherwise not be available. VanVoast describes AWB's work as "our answer to a world which seems defined in the mainstream media by negatives—war, crime, violence, corruption, apathy, and a long list of similar attributes." Their work has been both inspiring and challenging, and all volunteers must carefully monitor their own health for signs of secondary trauma and fatigue. Fried acknowledges that because of the sense of urgency attached to their work, volunteers often neglect their own needs.

For herself, Fried cites Van Voast and Neipris as her "constant source[s] of moral support," and they, in turn, have nothing but good things to say about their leader. "[Diana] is a visionary, with the strength of purpose and integrity to move mountains" says Neipris. The three will continue to work together in hopes of bringing their program to the international level. www.acuwithoutborders.org.



75

Class Secretary: *Barbara Tarmy Fradin*,
101 Central Park West, New York, NY 10023
Class Agent: *Leo J. Dunn III*
Planned Giving Agent: *Paul W. Dennett*

For news of *Paul Liistro*, see *College & Maine* section this issue

76



Reunion Planning Chair: *Nancy E. Collins*
Reunion Giving Chairs: *Ellen Shuman*, and
William Jones
Class Secretary: *Glenn A. Brodie*, P.O. Box
1618, Duxbury, MA 02331
Class Agents: *Anne M. Ireland* and
Stephen P. Maidman
Planned Giving Agent: *Ellen D. Shuman*

Linda Durfee e-mailed: "I was delighted to have a reunion last year in Morgantown, West Virginia, with Franklin Burroughs. As the 2004 Virginia Butts Sturm Writer-in-Residence at West Virginia University, he spent several days here working with 12 creative-writing students. Frank and I met one morning for breakfast and a walk on the rail trail that parallels the Monongahela River. It was a pleasure to see him again after nearly 30 years, and to talk about writing, libraries, politics, our families, being a parent, and Bowdoin friends!"

77

Class Secretary: *David M. Garratt*,
7800 Chagrin Road, Chagrin Falls, OH 44023
Class Agents: *Gail M. Malitas* and
James S. Small
Planned Giving Agent: *Keith D. Halloran*

"**Chip and Denise Griffin** are actively involved in supporting **Hanley Denning '92** and **Safe Passage**. Chip and daughter, Betsy '09, traveled to Guatemala this past June."

Robert Owens e-mailed: "Rode my bike to the Twin Cities marathon with my Bowdoin sweatshirt and Bowdoin hockey hat to cheer on **Joan Benoit Samuelson '79**, but she's still too fast—I missed her at three locations!"

78

Class Secretary: *Jonathan E. Walter*, 3900
Holland St., Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
Class Agent: *Bradford A. Hunter*
Planned Giving Agent: *Geoffrey A. Gordon*