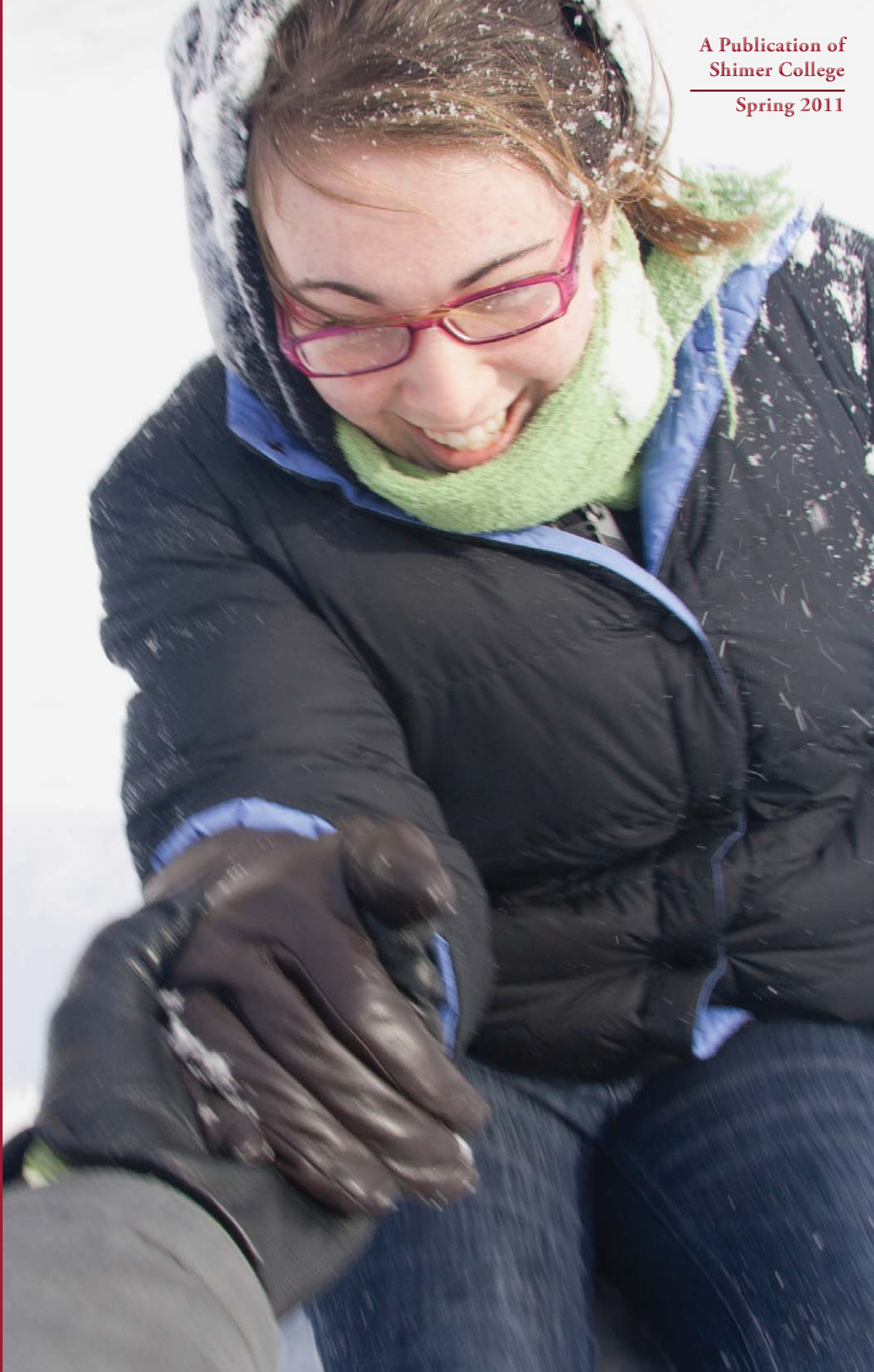


A Publication of
Shimer College

Spring 2011

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Shimer College

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*On Cover: SaraLouise Dawson ('14)
enjoying the Chicago winter.
Photo by Miles Stepto ('14).*

*Right: President Edward Noonan
with student Jill Leslie ('12)*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Last summer, as the new college president, I went to see a good friend of Shimer. After lunch, he told me why he donates to Shimer: "today's students face enormous financial costs," he said, "I just feel sorry for them."

I've been thinking about that day ever since, and am growing to appreciate all that you – Shimer's friends and alumni – do for today's students. You are visiting Shimer to help students navigate the world of careers and graduate schools. You are speaking with prospective parents to help them through the admission process. And you are making financial gifts that make it possible for students to attend Shimer.

Robert Maynard Hutchins wrote that "the object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves through their lives." And you are doing that too: alumni reading groups in Chicago and California continue that great conversation even after years outside of the Shimer classroom.

I believe that Shimer best prepares students for the learning that takes place throughout their lives. We encourage and teach students to be active thinkers and participants in their communities. A

Shimer education is not just an education for a career, but also an education for life.

Students do not learn alone. Students learn with some of the world's greatest minds. They learn with each other. They learn with committed and supportive faculty members who are there to guide and question them. And students are supported by you. You are helping them along with your generous support, financial and otherwise.

Students are learning at Shimer because of the hundreds of alumni and friends who support them. The donor I met last summer knows how tough it is for students to pay for a college education. You and he know how important a Shimer education is, and you are helping today's students learn for life here at Shimer.

As spring begins, I want to remind you that each season is the time to support Shimer. Every season your gifts welcome Shimer students into our life-long education.



Edward Noonan
President



THE HOSTETTER SOCIETY: LEAVE A LEGACY

The Hostetter Society is named after mother-daughter alumnae Elizabeth and A. Beth Hostetter, and honors those who have remembered Shimer College in their estate plans.

Both women were graduates of Shimer. Elizabeth was an original member of the Board of Trustees, and A. Beth was a longtime Dean of the College. They committed their time, love, and care to Shimer and its students for nearly a century.

Join them and help welcome more students into the Great Conversation. Make Shimer part of your legacy!

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For information about becoming a member:
alumni.shimer.edu/hostettersociety.

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CONNECTING GENERATIONS

Student volunteers are really enjoying their phone calls with Shimer's alumni and friends from across the country.

The phone calls are an opportunity for students to thank those who have supported Shimer financially, share news of Shimer events, and – most importantly – have a conversation.

Students enjoy speaking with alumni and friends about their experience at Shimer. "It's surprising how similar our stories are," says student caller SaraLouise Dawson. "Even across generations, the Shimer experience is a unique bond. It's great to share our classroom experience with someone who understands and supports Shimer."

Students continue to call to chat; make sure your contact information is up-to-date for your chance to connect with today's students!

Update your information online: <http://alumni.shimer.edu/editinfo>.

If need help logging into the alumni website or have any questions, please contact alumni@shimer.edu.

EXTREME MAKEOVER

by: Allison Savage ('12)
Photos: Miles Stepto ('14)

SHIMER-STYLE

Over winter break, while many of us were experiencing a sleepy, quiet time of respite, the Shimer floor was abuzz with activity. B David Galt, the Associate Dean for Student Life, was overseeing the transformation of the computer lab into our new Student Life Center right on the Shimer floor.

Formerly the computer lab, the Center is still a space for technological activity. The computer carrels remain and the last-minute-protocol-printing continues, but that is where the similarities end. The Center and its hard-working staff have transformed the "room that housed the computers" into a multi-purpose and student-focused space.

In the new Student Life Center, a Shimer student can find out about news and events; connect to graduate school, careers, and internship resources; connect to community and campus resources; get their mail; check their e-mail; and just relax between classes. According to student KC Stresak ('12), the Center office manager, the Student Life Center aims to provide a network and structure of support to Shimer students.

Before the Center, many of these functions were not in a central location and could be difficult to seek out. Now, the Center centralizes many aspects of student life and organizes them in a way that is more readily available to students. Shimer is still a small place and information circulates quickly, but we are growing. As we expand it will be

essential for students to have a space that serves as a hub of resources to aid them in their Shimer careers. The Center fills this role.

Like many new things, the Center was initially met with some hesitancy on the part of the students. New mail procedures and talk of a semester-page-limit for the printer were received with some resistance, but overall the response has been highly positive. The carrels, couch, and desk are always crammed with students; the energy and volume level are generally high. It has become a comfortable space and is especially successful at attracting a crowd of students (the oft-present bowl of cookies seems to help).

The Student Life Staff's brainstorming and endless effort have succeeded in revamping a previously underutilized room on the Shimer floor into a lively and encouraging space in the community. However, this has been just one more step in providing more support for students.

The Shimer classroom has always been a supportive environment for learning. This year, Shimer has also



made strides in ensuring that students are also supported as we grow outside of the classroom.

If you haven't yet seen the Center for yourself, I highly recommend popping by, if only for a cookie.



MOVES & MOBILES

by: Dinah Gumms ('14)

at blog.shimer.edu

Photos: Miles Stepto ('14)

A unique feature of Shimer since the late 70s has been Semester Projects, which students undertake at the end of every semester, unless they are taking Comprehensive Examinations or writing their Senior Thesis. Some projects are strictly academic, while others accent students' artistic abilities and interests. Last semester Dinah completed the latter type of project. She accompanied it with the following brief essay, chronicling her journey to Shimer and her first semester at the college.

I left Indiana as a beginning graffiti artist and activist. I moved to New Jersey for a day, then realized I did not want to live in New Jersey. I got rid of 2/3 of my possessions. I came to Chicago with 3 bags of laundry, 4 milk crates of books, a mattress, a job, a couple boxes of odds and ends, and a rented room. My craft supplies and spray paint were lost to my mother's attic, and my creativity was lost to my confusion. The first four months or so moved like a blur: wake up, bike to work, bike home, sit in room alone and read, go to bed, repeat. I read over 20 books that fall. I read about labor movement and organization. I read a lot of Hesse. I still had no idea what I was doing or wanted to do; I just knew that this was not it. I had spent the previous year working with community organizations, activism, and radical politics. There wasn't a shortage of information to stop me from doing anything, just an inability to use it properly.

I have always had trouble formulating ideas and thoughts into coherent sentences or art forms. This was not helped by a year of instability and confusion. The block on my creativity was possibly the most painful experience I've encountered. I realized I did not have the ability to express myself, because I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to say. Ideas were constantly swirling around my head: statistics and figures, radical theories, beautiful and horrifying historical documents. They all hung over me. I could not decipher them. The year I had spent trying to learn, and the



following year spent trying to effectively apply it, were fruitless. These were ideas I did not fully grasp. I couldn't bend them to fit, I couldn't shape them and view them from every angle, I lacked the true understanding to really make anything out of my own thoughts. Philosophers and historians dangled over my head, intangible. I became more uninspired; I hid my paints under my bed, and the dogs eventually chewed up all of my art pencils. I drank more tea and picked up a third job.

The decision to go back to school [at Shimer] had more intense consequences than quitting a job or two and racking up more student loans; I was engulfed with creative energy. As this year pushed on, it has only become stronger. I have introverted greatly. I have found that I am in my head 80% of the time. As I bike to work I try to wrap my mind around the previous day's Social Science reading. I laugh at the similarity of drivers throwing temper tantrums to the tantrums of chimpanzees. My people-watching skills are now verging on creepy. I do math problems in my head for fun; this is the most surprising, really. I am astounding myself daily.

This mobile took me an obscene amount of time to make. I started working on it early, and sacrificed a lot of sleep. I gathered all of my focus statements, written papers, handouts, homework, notes, and more than a few journal entries. I attempted to cut them all into perfect squares. I drew a scaled design of a mobile, calculated how many paper birds I would need to really make this happen, and tried to figure out the paper crane size in relation to how big I wanted the mobile to be. I hand-cut then hand-painted each piece of paper with water colors, then

ironed and folded each bird. The folding and stringing process are what took the longest; the most intricate steps are rarely seen. I skimmed each paper as I painted and folded it, and it was mind-blowing to see just how much I came across this semester, even in the course I dropped after four weeks.

This mobile represents a lot to me. On the most superficial level, it is a reminder to all the first-year Shimer students as to just how much we have accumulated thus far. This project, for me, is the manifestation of my last year. I have taken the things that I wanted so badly to know and have conceived my own ideas from them. I can take ideas apart, I can reshape them, I can combine and reduce them to my liking. They are no longer foreign, unreachable ideas floating above me. I have found a new creative medium for understanding. In Natural Science we discussed the opposition to science due to the idea that knowledge takes away from the "magic" of nature and the beauty in the unknown. This concept has never made sense to me, especially now. The only thing ignorance does is keep one in the passive position. I've found more than empowerment in knowledge, though. I have found comfort, and I have found immense beauty.



THANK YOU

Thank you for your outstanding generosity. The following individuals and organizations gave to Shimer between January 1, 2010 & December 31, 2010.

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SEE YOU THERE...

Friday, May 6th

CELEBRATION OF SHIMER & THE RETIREMENT OF DON MOON

Alumni and friends of Shimer will be celebrating the renewal of Shimer College and the retirement of longtime faculty member and President Emeritus Don Moon.

Saturday, May 7th

COMMENCEMENT

Come celebrate with the class of 2011 as they finish their Shimer careers and join the ranks of Shimer alumni.

Monday, October 10th - Sunday, October 16th SHIMER DAYS 2011

Join us in Chicago for the 2nd annual homecoming of students, families, alumni, and friends of Shimer College. As the date gets closer, look for a schedule of events.



For a listing of all events: alumni.shimer.edu/events