



THE AYA “STATE OF THE UNION”

THE LXVIII AYA ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2008

An open letter to Yale alumni on the impact of the AYA Strategic Plan
Mark R. Dollbopf '77, Executive Director

AMBASSADORS FOR YALE: A VISION REALIZED

You - alumni of all ages and affiliations – are making a difference.

For Yale, on *behalf* of Yale, in traditional classes and clubs, in not-so-traditional affinity groups, you are changing the face of alumni relations for the next generation.

This past year was the first year of changes implemented as a result of the AYA Strategic Plan, and the changes have been at once sweeping, inspiring, and engaging - a dramatic increase in new programs and staffing; scores, if not hundreds of volunteers creating new alumni communities and taking action in new initiatives; and a renewed sense of energy and excitement about the possibilities for what you, as alumni, can do as Ambassadors for Yale.

The momentum is palpable - nearly 5,000 alumni are now engaged as advisors or board members in a cornucopia of alumni organizations at Yale, whether they be the 187 Yale Clubs, more than 75 classes, the 14 graduate and professional schools, or the over 100 “shared interest groups” ranging from athletics to singing, from debate to politics, from real estate to entrepreneurship, from community service to service abroad.

And through the emergence of these shared interest groups, hundreds of “new” alumni - new faces - have been inspired to become involved and lead, from new alumni associations for Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans to emerging new alumni associations for the Political Union, the Debate Association, the Yale Theater Initiative, the Yale Five Year BA Plan, and singing and performing groups too numerous to mention.

In the following pages I start to describe the depth and breadth of new opportunities for alumni. But I merely start the stories. You write the endings, individually and collectively. You add your own chapter to the book that is Yale. In the words of Walt Whitman, *the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse.*

What is the verse that you would choose to contribute?

At the founding of the AYA in 1971, the mission, or as it was then called, the “major objective,” of the AYA was to “develop more meaningful participation by Yale alumni in her affairs.”

The mission is alive and well.

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The AYA pioneered a number of new initiatives this past year, many of them breaking new ground in alumni relations:

SHARED IDENTITY, SHARED INTERESTS, SHARED COMMUNITY

Signaling this transformational shift in alumni relations, the AYA last year launched initiatives to better support and encourage alumni leaders seeking to establish more formal alumni organizations for SIGs – both Shared *Identity* Groups (gender, race) and Shared *Interest* Groups (which address passions like singing to professional interests like real estate).

Historically Yale had grouped alumni according to age (class year), geography (Yale Clubs), or degree (G&P). Our support and organizational structure had been geared to those groupings, centered principally on reunions and Yale Club activities. But as alumni came together in networks and associations unbounded by age or geography, the AYA had only been able to observe encouragingly, but not directly support, their activities.

That has changed.

This past year Black, Latino, Asian/Asian American, and Native American leaders convened, with the support and encouragement of the AYA, to begin, and in some instances complete, the process of forming alumni associations addressing their specific needs and aspirations. Under the leadership of **Kunduck Moon '76**, and founding board officers and committee chairs **Harry Chang '84**, **Rocky Chin '71 MCP**, **Grant Din '79**, **Michael Frenz '80**, **Mark Lee '04**, **My Luu, '96**, and **Homayra Ziad, 07 PhD**, the Association of Asian American Yale Alumni (AAAYA) was formally incorporated in November of 2007.

Just one short month later, in December of 2007, the Yale Latino Alumni Association was announced by the founding interim board leaders - **Daniel Acosta '97**, **Melvyn Colon '77**, **Roy Cosme '77**, **Marco Davis '93**, **Yalina Disla '07**, **Felicia Escobar '99**, **Manuel Escobar '76**, **Billie Gastic '98**, **Catherine Kisse-Sandoval '84**, **Mark Reyes '98**, **Eve Rojas '94**, and **Sara Salvide '76**.

Black and Native American alumni will announce associations in the coming year - Black alumni having staged their first planning retreat this past February.

While their priorities and activities will vary, these SIG alumni associations have much in common – among their many goals they seek to support diversity and equal opportunity at Yale, encourage support for the undergraduate cultural centers, sponsor alumni conferences and reunions, foster ties with other Yale alumni groups, strengthen the leadership role and contributions of students and alumni at Yale and in society, and raise funds for scholarships and internships.

The coming year and following will see the planning and implementation of major reunions for these groups, as well as the emergence of active boards to carry on the vision of the founding alumni leaders.

Concurrently there has been an explosion in activity among *interest* groups! From singing to athletic, from debate to politics, in the next 14 months the AYA will support (as of this writing) 17 reunions outside the traditional class reunions. We expect to see more than 4,000 alumni, family, and friends return to campus,

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more than the number that attend one weekend of the class reunions! These reuniting groups include the soon to be formed Black Alumni Association (40th anniversary of the Afro American Cultural Center), the Yale Latino Alumni Association (first reunion!), the Association of Asian American Yale Alumni (also a first), GALA (25th Anniversary), the Yale Political Union (75th), Yale Debate Association (100th), the Physics Department (Graduate School), History of Art (Graduate School), Yale Alumni Chorus (10th), Yale Five Year BA Plan (35th), Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies (30th), Women at Yale College (40th), Duke’s Men (55th), Shades (20th), Spizzwinks (95th), Whiffenpoofs (100th), and the Yale Glee Club (150th). And there are more coming online....

The level of AYA support for each of these organizations varies considerably, from full time management and administration to episodic strategic and technical advice. Whatever level of support, the evidence is overwhelming: alumni are seeking to engage in nontraditional as well as traditional ways, in numbers far greater than we would have anticipated even two short years ago.

YALE ALUMNI IN SERVICE: CHANGING THE WORLD ONE WEEK AT A TIME

Yale alumni have an unparalleled tradition of service to others. Generations of students have gone forth “For God, for country, and for Yale,” and while we may quibble about the nuances of our motto, the intent and sentiment is clear: a selfless dedication to helping others. From Dwight Hall’s student-led programs to the highest levels of government service, Yalies have given of themselves to change the world.

Observing this student passion for Dwight Hall volunteer programs in New Haven, President Levin remarked,

“What you have done for this city you must now do for your country and the wider world. I want to encourage you to redirect at least some of your admirable energy for social betterment and service. I want to urge you to take more interest in public issues at the national and global level.”

We did! In November of 2006 the AYA and Dwight Hall announced a new partnership to combine the best of volunteer opportunities and alumni services.

So was born Yale’s own alumni “peace corps.” On Sunday, March 9, 107 members of the first Yale Alumni Service Tour departed the US bound for the San Juan Province of the Dominican Republic. They ranged in age from 18 to 78, from the Class of ’51 to ’11; they came from 26 states. They represented not only Yale College, but also the graduate and seven professional schools. Among them: doctors, students, teachers, diplomats, nurses, architects, actors, management consultants, city planners, journalists, and investment bankers. They went to change lives in the Dominican Republic - what they didn’t realize was that the lives they would change would be their own.

Working side by side with the villagers of the small town of Vallejuelo, they applied stucco to 20 houses. They wired four houses for electricity and built kitchen shelving for 20 others. In four other villages our team of 25 doctors, assisted by student translators, cared for over 1,500 people. Some, including the medical team in the village of Derrumbadero, traveled up to four hours *each day* to reach remote village clinics, arriving to find hundreds waiting in line.

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In what would prove to be another emotional high, a team of 24 Yalies found their way to the mountain village of La Cucarita, near the Haitian border, to live in the village, and share their talents with the village’s children in activities as diverse as creative writing, music, drama, crafts, and dance.

We were accompanied by 18 current Yale students, most of whom shared their skills of translating for the medical and instructional teams. Their participation was made possible through the innovative and out-of-the-box thinking of the Yale Club of New Haven, who contributed \$25,000 in scholarship funds to this pioneering effort.

A service tour task force, led and inspired by **Carl Lindskog ’58**, worked throughout the fall semester leading up to the tour in March. After this life changing trip a larger task force evolved - including **LiYun Alvarado ’02**, **Tannis Arnett ’06MAR**, **Crystal Castaneda ’08**, **Mally Cox-Chapman ’73**, **Donna Culley**, **Josh Egan ’08**, **Nicole Emmons ’98**, **Maya Greer ’87** **Selby Jacobs ’61**, **Carl Lindquist ’61**, **Carl Lindskog ’58**, **Tracey Ober ’85**, **Donna Richman ’80** **Carlos Riobo ’98 PhD**, **Connie Spencer ’82** **MArch**, **Andrew Steinberg ’08**, **Bill Stubenvord ’58**, **Tara Sussman-Pena ’90**, **MSN**, **Tom Urmston ’60**, and **Sheila Urmston**.

All are planning for next year’s week-long service opportunity in Monterrey, Mexico where, in a unique partnership with the University Tecnológico de Monterrey and the local government social service agencies, we will be venturing into the poorest of Mexican communities – people living in extreme poverty – to bring medical care, student mentoring, adult education, and house building assistance.

Innovative additions to this coming year’s program will include an opportunity for alumni of the Yale Band, under the direction of maestro **Tom Duffy**, to work with indigenous peoples whose traditions and livelihood include the playing of wind instruments, and Yale alumni athletes, who with the support and guidance of former Yale soccer and tennis coach **Steve Griggs** will be asked to lead sports camps for children who have no such opportunities for instruction or organized sports.

If you have a week of time to contribute in service with other Elis, help us change lives in Monterrey this coming March 7-15, 2009 – a spring break you will never forget.

FEB CLUB EMERITUS

It started innocently enough in a Class of 1987 email last November. **Tim Harkness**, Class Secretary, mused, “Maybe we should bring back a Feb club for *old people*...” Former partner in crime **Jordan Warshaw** replied, “...I am more than pleased to hear you are attempting to revive the tradition. How about this for an idea? 28 nights, 28 cities. 28 parties.”

Thus it was done. But not, of course, without the determination and unbridled enthusiasm of a score of other volunteers. Initial organizers **Tim Harkness ’87**, **Julie Heller ’88**, **Kara Unterberg ’87**, and **Jordan Warshaw ’87** were dubbed “The Ministry of Feb Club.” And minister they did - over 3,165 alumni (spanning the Classes of ’45 and ’45W all the way through ’07), family and friends eventually attended 33 parties in the US and cities as far flung as London, Paris, Tokyo, Shanghai, Aruba, Johannesburg, and Calgary!

Many of you might be asking, what is “Feb Club?” Started in the ‘70s, ending briefly in the late ‘90s only to be resurrected in 2006, Feb Club is a nightly party – movable *bacchanalia*, really - held during the dreariest and

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darkest of those New Haven winter months, February. Each year, a student, group of students, or campus organization accept the challenge of organizing 28 (29 in some years...) parties in different locations around the Yale campus. In the early days, there was no e-mail, no Web pages, no Facebook.... so word of the parties, their locations, hosts and themes were spread by word of mouth, each new party meant to outdo the previous – and the location was often a surprise. Feb Club parties ranged from simple get-togethers in dorm rooms to elaborate choreographed affairs involving multiple hosts and locations – from highfalutin’ affairs at the Yale Yacht Club, to Valentine's Day red “special” jello parties at Zeta Psi, to the annual upside-down kamikaze tradition at Morse College.

The New York Times did a story on Feb Club in February (of course) 1989¹. From the 1980's to recent years, the Yale Daily News and the Yale Herald have written numerous stories about Feb Club's traditions and history – check them out online.

There is, of course, method to this madness; rhyme with good reason. The Feb Club Emeritus reengaged and reunited alumni who may not have participated in traditional Yale Club activities. It connected young and old(er) alike. In so doing, it served to revitalize certain Yale Clubs. Organized initially by classes, the planning soon involved Clubs, cutting across historic silos and forming great new partnerships!

So get out of the house this winter, even if it is not cold and dreary where you are, and join thousands of other alumni in celebrating Yale in New Haven in February! Check out the party nearest you at <http://febclub.webs.com>.

GALE: THE GLOBAL ALUMNI LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE

Last August 2, sixty-four members of the AYA’s first Global Alumni Leadership Exchange embarked on a mission to the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, Australia – a mission to bridge cultures, share best practices in alumni relations, and provide reciprocal educational opportunities. Members of this first delegation were Yale alumni with a proven track record and passion for working with their classes, clubs, shared interest groups, alumni schools committees, and alumni fund efforts. They represented the best of Yale volunteers in action.

Why is this leadership exchange important? Because we are on a mission. Universities in the rest of the world do not have the culture of alumni stewardship prevalent among universities in the US; they receive the bulk of their operating revenues from federal and local governments, and tuition and fees - not from alumni donations or the resulting endowments. With no tangible reason to be engaged, alumni are not compelled to provide for the next generation. With no underlying mission or reason to reconnect, alumni of foreign universities have not had reason to organize into class, club or school affiliations, much less the rich variety of shared interest groups now forming among alumni of American universities.

As one prominent foreign university president remarked, “I feel no sense of stewardship for my university, no compelling reason that I should be giving my time or money to the institution. That is the problem. In order for us to remain competitive, in order for us to be counted among the world’s leading academic institutions, we must change our alumni culture.”

¹ See CAMPUS LIFE:Yale University, Cure for February: Just One Party After Another, February 26, 1989.

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Yale alumni are in a position to help, to be true ambassadors throughout the world in advancing the cause of higher education. We can share our expertise in reconnecting alumni to their universities, inspiring them to create the alumni networks and communities that will provide and ensure adequate resources for the next generation, both in financial contributions and alumni involvement.

As leaders in alumni relations, you have much to share. At the Australian National University our alumni – leaders such as **Marv Berenblum '56, Ilona Emmerth '98, Ed Greenberg '59, Susie Krentz '80, Glenn Murphy '71, John Scales '54, and Barbara Wagner '73** – gave workshop presentations on alumni governance, alumni schools interviewing, club activities, class reunions, Bulldog programs, and alumni community service projects to the staff, faculty and alumni of ANU.

Our delegation also learned much from ANU’s world class faculty with lectures and presentations on climate change, the Australian government, the local environment, and US and Pacific Rim relations. And we had fun: tours of Parliament hosted by Labor Senator Kate Lundy, hot air balloon rides over Parliament, a private party hosted by US Ambassador to Australia Rob McCallum '68 at his residence, and a gala Yale reception thrown by ANU at the Sydney Opera House – not to mention an inspiring visit to Kioloa, ANU’s environmental retreat center on the beach in southeast Australia. There we were ceremoniously “cleansed” and welcomed to the land by aboriginals – a greeting and embrace of friendship never to be forgotten.

In this groundbreaking opportunity the AYA and representatives of the ANU have created an alumni exchange program – an opportunity for you, as Yale alumni leaders, to share your wealth of leadership experience and knowledge with the alumni of other universities around the world, eager to learn about alumni engagement.

The seminal idea for this exchange came from **Gordy Meyers '49**. Also remarkable is the fact that this effort was largely produced by volunteers – spearheaded by “Executive Producer” **Kathy Edersheim '87**, and assisted by task force members **Sherry Agar '82, Marv Berenblum '56, Jean Blanning '54 MRE, Ed Greenberg '59, Gordy Meyers '49, Glenn Murphy '71, and Tracey Ober '85**.

Summer of 2009: Japan and the University of Tokyo!

AYA LEADERSHIP FORUM

As articulated in the strategic plan, the AYA’s mission is to enable alumni to be ambassadors for Yale and effective contributors (of *time* and *talent*, not only treasure). “Enabling” infers action. We cannot wait for alumni to raise their hands to volunteer, and then expect that they would be prepared to lead within a nonprofit organization as sophisticated and complex as Yale. Volunteer leaders must have the confidence to inspire and motivate other volunteers; to do so they must understand the challenges and opportunities inherent in an organization with 5,000 other volunteer leaders who are also vying for time, attention and resources.

In February we launched the AYA Program for Alumni Volunteer Leadership, a two-day intensive training session for key volunteers serving in class, club, SIGs, and Graduate and Professional school leadership roles. We challenged the notion of what it means to be a volunteer for Yale, challenged the notion of what Yale has historically done to inspire and motivate volunteers, and challenged the notion of the mission of the AYA and its constituent organizations.

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Our first program was designed to address the needs of the board officers of our seven largest Yale Clubs in which nearly 50% of Yale’s alumni reside². Lectures and workshops included 1) a review of Yale’s overall mission, vision, and priorities; 2) updates on major initiatives and current affairs; 3) *Yale Tomorrow* campaign goals and strategies; 4) endowment, finance, and budget practices and policies; 5) volunteer management skills; 6) best practices from other Clubs, both at Yale and other universities; 7) appropriate governance models (constitution, by-laws, etc.); 8) developing a case for support; 9) event planning; and 10) metrics for success.

Plans for 2009 include two leadership forums, both in January, for SIG leaders and the board officers of our next twelve largest Yale Clubs³.

DAY OF SERVICE: LAST YEAR LOCAL; THIS YEAR GLOBAL

For God, for Country, and for Yale. The sentiment is 19th century, the values are now - there are few traditions as important to Yale alumni as service to others. Alumni want to give back, not only to Yale, but also to their community.

Many alumni have risen to the challenge to serve, indeed many are - in their public lives as professionals in the nonprofit world, on boards of foundations, as elected officials, or by giving their intellect and creative energy to local community and school projects.

We know that alumni want to serve, and the AYA wants to give voice to this impulse. We want to channel this incredible drive and energy by launching an annual Day of Service for Clubs around the globe, enabling alumni to come together to draw inspiration and strength from the Yale family - a larger community united in action.

In this spirit of giving, the Yale Clubs of Connecticut pioneered the Yale Day of Service last April - a day when local clubs worked on projects in their own communities. As we would soon learn, the day brought out alumni of all ages and their families and friends. We did not anticipate the relatively large number of alumni who do not normally attend Yale Club events.

Spearheaded by Yale Club of Greenwich President **Robin Zorthian '76**, and supported by the AYA Club group staff, the AYA piloted this program intending to roll it out as a model for an international event in 2009.

This is now the opportunity for Yale Clubs everywhere to be pioneers in this global day of action. This international effort is being chaired by **David Sanchez '84 MA, M.Phil.**, President of the Yale Club of Miami. He is recruiting an able leadership group of 24 regional directors to work with three to five Clubs each to ensure that appropriate local leaders and plans are in place.

² Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Haven, New York, San Francisco, and Washington DC.

³ Eighth largest Clubs to twentieth – Philadelphia, Seattle, Silicon Valley, Westchester, Colorado, Central New Jersey, Maryland, Georgia, Hartford, Minneapolis, Long Island, Oregon/Southwest Washington, and the Triangle (Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill)

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You will be hearing more about this exciting program in the coming weeks, but please save the date for the Yale Day of Service, May 16, 2009.

Where will *you* be on May 16th?

TOWARD A GREATER FOCUS ON MAJOR YALE POPULATION CENTERS

A major thrust of the new Strategic Plan is the focus to be given to the work of the seven Yale Club regions where nearly half of all Yale alumni reside: Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Haven, New York, San Francisco, and Washington DC. Before the launch of the Strategic Plan, essentially all Yale Clubs received the same level of support from New Haven - a club trying to manage the affairs of a potential alumni population of 10,000 did not receive substantially more support than a club with 100. Volunteers in the largest Yale Clubs need considerably more assistance and staff support to be able to deliver programming to thousands of alumni demanding more frequent and larger events than to those Clubs serving many fewer alumni.

To ensure that all Yale alumni have ample opportunities to take advantage of Yale programming, the AYA has now tiered its administrative support proportional to the number of alumni served.

The Yale Club of Boston, under the leadership of President **Murray Wheeler’62** and officers **Margaret Chen ’90**, **Don Hancock ’84**, **John Pattillo ’73**, **Greg Rutan ’89**, and **Elizabeth Sargent ’01**, pioneered major cities club planning with a strategic planning retreat conducted in Salem, MA in February. In developing its plan, the Boston board is surveying its members, conducting personal interviews with alumni leaders in the Boston area, and benchmarking other university clubs to identify best practices. From this research and engagement the board will be setting goals for the next three to five years, and determining what actions and resources will be needed to reach them.

In the late 1980’s a group of concerned alumni in New York formed YAAMNY, the Yale Alumni Association of Metropolitan New York, to address the needs and aspirations of alumni in the New York area who were not members of the Yale Club of New York City. Of the 15,000 alumni living in New York, roughly 12,000 do not belong to the Club, making it the largest regional population not directly served by a Yale Club⁴.

After several years of programming, YAAMNY fell dormant with the notable exception of the active and engaging Web presence designed and maintained by President **Alberto Molina ’92**. With direction and counsel from AYA staff Director Jenny Chavira ’89, the AYA hosted an open forum for all alumni in the New York area interested in renewing this strategically important association. Over 125 alumni attended the forum at Club Quarters in New York on March 31, and from that session nearly 50 attended a strategic planning retreat held in Tarrytown, NY April 11-12. Similar to Boston, the Association is vigorously pursuing a strategic plan of revitalization and renewal under the leadership of officers **Alberto Molina ’92**, **My Luu ’96**, **Rosa Balestrino ’92**, and **Tracey Ober ’85**.

In the coming year the AYA will be supporting the efforts of the Clubs in New Haven, Washington DC, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco as they seek to similarly bolster alumni activities.

⁴ Only alumni who are members of the Yale Club of New York City are invited to Club events.

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VOLUNTEER DRIVEN; STAFF MANAGED

While volunteers – you- are a precious commodity, in today’s nonprofit environment it is also true that volunteers cannot realize their greatest potential without the nurturing, guidance, and administrative support of professional staff. Many alumni have already come to know, and partnered with, the able staff of the AYA. This past year has seen remarkable growth including a nearly 50% changeover in the AYA staff because of recruitment to new positions, promotions, retirements, or reassignments to new opportunities.

Because of the resources made available to the AYA through the Strategic Plan, we have been able to enhance our top notch team of professionals, many with experience in the Yale community as volunteers.

New to the management and professional team last year, in alphabetical order:

Margaret Carnright, Assistant Director for Education. Margaret brings a wealth of experience and travel industry knowledge from the National Audubon Society. At the society, she ran the Audubon Nature Odysseys travel program and worked closely with Development, Audubon Magazine, and Licensing and Membership.

Kameka Dempsey ’99, Director for Shared Interest Groups and Assistant Secretary for Europe, Office of International Affairs. Kameka comes to the AYA from Duke Corporate Education, where she was a corporate trainer for Fortune 500 companies. Kameka will be leading initiatives with Latino, Asian/Asian American, women and other non-identity groups.

Vincent DiGioia, Assistant Director for Online Service. Vin’s superior information technology (IT) project management and online marketing skills position him well to advance many of the ambitious IT initiatives the AYA has planned.

Iлона Emmerth ’98, Director for Major Cities (Chicago, New Haven, Washington DC). A key volunteer who co-founded the Bulldogs program in Cleveland, Iлона was co-owner of DMI Manufacturing, where Crain’s Business had named her one of Cleveland’s 40 Business Leaders under 40 to watch.

Johnson Flucker ’80, Director for Yale College Classes. Johnson comes to the AYA from the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York where he was Director of Liturgical Music, responsible for the often complex and multifaceted events at the world’s largest cathedral.

Randi McCray, Assistant Director for Online Services. Randi brings ten years of Yale IT experience to the new position created as a result of the strategic plan to increase the availability and quality of customer service and training support available to assist volunteers with the new online tools that the AYA is developing.

Nicholas Roman Lewis ’93, Director for Shared Interest Groups. Nicholas came to us as an entertainment lawyer, representing many of Yale’s emerging writers and playwrights. At Yale he is leading initiatives for Black, LGBTQ, and Native American groups, in addition to developing SIGs in theater and the arts.

Remy Shaber ’98, Yale Service Tour Coordinator. Remy is a dance educator, one of the founders of A Different Drum at Yale, and formerly founder/director of a service learning outreach initiative in Athens, Georgia.

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Gloria Wang '07 MBA, Assistant Director for Yale Club and Association Relations. Gloria is a recent graduate of the Yale School of Management following her undergraduate work at the University of California, San Diego.

On the administrative support side, **Tricia Dillon** and **Cherie Gargano** are welcome additions to the AYA team.

New assignments last year included:

Jenny Chavira '89, from Director for Yale College Classes to Director for Major Cities (Boston, New York). Jenny and the reunion team spearheaded the dramatic rise in reunion attendance from 1999 to 2006

Carolyn Claflin, who, in the very first piece of the AYA staff reorganization, moved from Director for Administration to the newly created position of Deputy Executive Director, chief operations officer for the AYA. With 24 years of experience at Yale, Carolyn oversees about two-thirds of the AYA staff.

Debby Jagieleow, was Assistant Director for Yale College Classes and moved into a new reunion-focused position. She brings a wealth of reunion experience to this new post.

Rhoda Lea, from Assistant Director for Club and Association Relations to Assistant Director for Education. We are fortunate to be able to draw on Rhoda's many years of AYA experience in her new role with our educational travel group.

Alisa Masterson, from Assistant Director for Yale College Classes to Assistant Director for Alumni Relations. Alisa is the inaugural coordinator for the Yale Day of Service

Colleen Whelan, from Assistant Director for Online Services to Director for Information Technology. We are poised to expand and enhance our online services with Colleen at the helm.

The AYA is not a group of administrators working to produce programs for you; it is a cadre of dedicated professionals working to partner with you in your quest to serve. We look forward to expanding on the tradition of staff and alumni volunteers working together to continue traditional programs and explore exciting new initiatives.

YALE CLASSES: AND THE BEAT GOES ON

Our Class group, encompassing all class activities including reunions, mini-reunions, lunches, dinners, and everything in between, enjoyed another year of sustained growth. Our class reunions remain strong, mini's are expanding, and in addition to aiding and abetting the Feb Club old people(!), the group launched an “AYA Alumni Village” last year at the Harvard game, to be repeated this year at the Princeton game. Replacing the Coxe Cage indoor tailgates of recent years, the Alumni Village is offered to all alumni free of charge (we used to charge at the Cage). Over 1,200 alumni family and friends stopped by the AYA tent last year to enjoy good food, great fellowship, and rousing game spirit. Oh, and did I mention it is free! Please be sure to stop by this year!

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With the new fiscal year and the hiring of a new Director, **Johnson Flucker '80**, the reunion team and its prodigious team of volunteer leaders will undertake a strategic plan specifically for class reunions. As reunion attendance peaks at many of our peer institutions, and at Yale, we are in the hunt for new ways to inspire alumni to return for reunions. There is ample challenge and opportunity here, in fact we have exceedingly high aspirations given the results achieved under former Executive Director **Jeff Brenzel's** extraordinary leadership – during his AYA tenure reunion attendance increased from 21% of classmates attending, to 30%, an increase of nearly 50%! The bar has been set.

Our class leaders also continue to experiment with new programs. There has been a threefold increase in the number of classes now offering monthly lunches at the Yale Club of New York City, and many classes are piloting cluster, or multi class, gatherings, - the “Got Wine” reunion in the Napa Valley for classes of the late 70's and early 80's, spearheaded by **Margaret Desjardin '79**, is a notable example.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS: TOOLS FOR THE WEB

One of the most significant hurdles that many of you face in your roles as volunteer leaders is communicating effectively with your fellow alumni. The business of inspiration is difficult without concise, constant, and creative communications.

To this end, the AYA has launched a major effort to revitalize and expand our online tools and electronic communications offerings for volunteers. We are in the process of developing Web-based tools to enable volunteer leaders and professional staff alike to engage alumni online and build community virtually, to better communicate, and manage events. Since last year's Assembly, the first phase of the Web Templates Web site creation and management project has helped alumni groups create and maintain attractive Web sites without requiring a highly technical volunteer or professional Web development firm. A broadcast e-mail tool has been selected and initial implementation activities are underway.

The strategic planning process brought with it a recognition that improving the information technology infrastructure to support alumni relations and alumni volunteer activities is critically important to the success of the majority of the AYA's strategic initiatives. Over the last year, the AYA Information Technology group, in cooperation with other university departments, began the process to enhance, improve, and replace systems and tools that grew organically out of necessity over the last decade with robust, integrated systems that will better support the increasingly sophisticated technology needs of staff and volunteers in their marketing, communications, and metrics tracking efforts.

In the next year look for updates on new technologies coming to a Web site near you.

AMBASSADORS FOR YALE: THE AYA LEADERSHIP AWARD FOR VOLUNTEER INNOVATION AND SERVICE

Our most important job as the professional staff of a nonprofit organization is to enable *you* - as volunteers - to make a difference in the lives of your fellow alumni, in the lives of students - the next generation of alumni – and in the lives of those of the larger world community invested in the common good.

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To this end, and in the spirit of the new AYA Strategic Plan, the AYA staff would like to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of the following Ambassadors for Yale, outstanding volunteers who have demonstrated passion for their willingness to give back, a penchant for innovation and out-of-box thinking, and selfless service to Yale.

Kathy Edersheim '87 for pioneering – and “Executive Producing” - Yale’s first Global Alumni Leadership Exchange to Australia and the Australian National University.

Ed Greenberg '59 for creating the successful new Yale Club of Lower Fairfield County – a phoenix from the ashes of previous Yale Clubs.

Timothy Harkness '87 and **Jordan Warshaw '87** for the inspiration of creating, and the perspiration of implementing, the first Feb Club Emeritus.

Mickey Dobbs '92 for his accomplishment at organizing and advancing the mission of Yale GALA, a pioneer among SIG groups at Yale.

THE YALE MEDAL

Finally, but most important, the AYA Board of Governors honors a few individuals every year for a lifetime of service or commensurate accomplishment. Inaugurated in 1952, the Yale Medal is the highest award presented by the Association of Yale Alumni, conferred solely to honor outstanding individual service to the University. Each year's recipients reflect the range of service and leadership the AYA strives to recognize with this award.

This year we honor **Edward A. Dennis '63**, **Linda Koch Lorimer '77 J.D.**, **Roslyn Millstein Meyer '71, '73 M.S., '77 PH.D.**, **Don T. Nakanishi '71**, and **William H. Wright II '82**. for their remarkable contributions, and we recognize that they do honor to Yale and to all of us in the alumni community by the ways in which they have chosen to render service back to our treasured community of scholars and friends.

The following citations were read at the Yale Medal Dinner on Friday, November 14, 2008.

Edward A. Dennis '63

Your service to Yale epitomizes leadership and dedication. You have been selfless in serving your alma mater in so many capacities—from the Yale Club of San Diego, to years of effective service as an AYA delegate and outstanding leadership as chair of the Board of Governors. No chair has been more conscientious in advancing the AYA, and your patience and poise helped to position the Association for new directions. Your expertise in science and medicine has made you an important contributor to the discussions of the University Council. You are the model volunteer: simultaneously working to make the University better and to make Yale better for its alumni. The Association of Yale Alumni is grateful for your innumerable contributions and honored to recognize your extraordinary service to the University with its highest honor, the Yale Medal.

Linda Koch Lorimer '77 J.D.

Many have heeded the call “For God, for Country, and for Yale,” few have honored it so profoundly. With courage, passion, and grace, first as volunteer and then as Vice President and Secretary of the University, you have contributed more to strengthen and transform Yale than any woman in its history. Wherever you have been asked to lead, you have made Yale a leader—as a local citizen and as a global presence. With boundless

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energy and steadfast integrity you have revitalized alumni relations and boldly championed a new vision of the possibilities for Yale alumni in the 21st century. You are that rare and dangerous dreamer of the day, acting with eyes open to make the dream a reality. For this, the Association of Yale Alumni is inspired, indeed moved, to recognize your dreams and accomplishments with its highest award, the Yale Medal.

Roslyn Millstein Meyer '71, '73 M.S., '77 PH.D.

No resident in New Haven is a better ambassador for Yale, and no graduate of the University offers a better example of citizenship. At a time when it has been a priority for Yale to be engaged in creatively advancing the City of New Haven, you showed the University the way. You were a founder of the city's International Festival of Arts and Ideas, and you were one of the creators – and tenacious leaders - of LEAP, a model program that has improved the lives of thousands of young people in this community. Countless other civic organizations have benefited from your graceful and persistent attention. You have also made time to serve your alma mater directly – as a catalyst for Women's Health Research at Yale, a member of the Yale University Art Gallery Governing Board, and a trustee of the Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale. For exemplifying Yale's mission to educate for service to society and for leadership, and for your time, energy, and devotion to town and gown, the Association of Yale Alumni is proud to present you with its highest honor, the Yale Medal.

Don T. Nakanishi '71

With dedication, enthusiasm, and graciousness, you have set high standards for service to Yale. In addition to being an AYA delegate and Board member, you have provided stellar leadership for nearly three decades to the Alumni Schools Committee of Los Angeles County. For countless applicants, you are Yale. Your highly acclaimed newsletter greatly helps incoming Southern California freshmen and their parents make the transition to campus life. You have been a strong advocate for Yale's diversity efforts in student and faculty recruitment and in academic programs, and we are stronger because of your advocacy. In recognition of your tireless efforts to welcome all into the university community, to bring the best and the brightest to Yale, the Association of Yale Alumni is proud to award you this Yale Medal, its highest honor.

William H. Wright II '82

Although you graduated just over twenty-five years ago, you never really left. Your remarkable record of service tells us that your heart and mind and soul remain here – and the University is the great beneficiary. The list of accomplishments cannot do justice to the imprint you have left on so many parts of the campus. You have been chair of three reunion gift committees, as well as the University Librarian's Development Council, and no one has been more successful as the national chair of the Alumni Fund. Your service is university-wide, from membership on the University Council and the Campaign Gift Committee to the Board of Trustees of the Berkeley Divinity School. You have been a selfless contributor in so many ways, and your gifts of leadership and resources inspire us all. Today the Association of Yale Alumni celebrates those accomplishments and proudly awards you the Yale Medal, its highest honor.

IN CONCLUSION

The needs and expectations of alumni, as witnessed in this open letter, are changing at a dramatic pace. As I hope you have been able to glean, the overarching goal of the new AYA strategic plan is not just to keep pace with changing needs and expectations, but to be in the lead in anticipating your needs as volunteers to better serve Yale.

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We remain dedicated at the AYA to consolidating the gains of this last year to produce more change, and to anchor these new approaches in the culture of the AYA.

If you are reading this letter as one of the thousands of alumni who volunteer for Yale, congratulations. You are to be commended for your innovation and steadfast service.

If you are reading this letter as one who is not yet engaged in the life of this remarkable institution, there is no reason to wait. Volunteer opportunities abound. Jump in now.

Be an Ambassador for Yale.

In grateful appreciation for all that you do,

Mark R. Dollhopf '77

Executive Director

Association of Yale Alumni

November 14, 2008