

Class Notes—Mar/Apr 2005 issue of *DAM*

1962 "Gentlemen don't read other people's mail," said Secretary of War Henry Stimson in 1929 and President Woodrow Wilson some years before. Gentlemen don't, perhaps, but then there are the rest of us. It seems that important people at Dartmouth College have had the misfortune to have their mail read by others. And what a commotion can ensue! On December 10, 2004, Donald Mahler wrote an article in *The Valley News* drawing upon a December 20, 2000, letter written by Dartmouth Dean of Admissions Karl Furstenberg. Mahler wrote, "In the letter to Swarthmore College President Alfred Bloom, a copy of which was provided to *The Valley News* last month, Furstenberg praised Bloom's decision to drop football from the Swarthmore athletic program." In a nanosecond the shock waves hit Parkhurst and Blunt Alumni Halls. Soon the class listserv was smokin'. **Jay Moyers, Gordy Aydelott, Don Samuelson, David Pritchard** and countless others weighed in on the brouhaha. Co-webmaster **Dan Tompkins** added caution and scholarly references to the dialogue. This is a multi-dimensional controversy about athletics, admissions, SAT scores, financial aid and more. It exceeds the scope of this column, but the privacy issue intrigues me.

It emerges that the December 2000 letter from Furstenberg to Bloom had quickly come to the attention of President James Wright! We wonder how that could be. What back channels are there in higher education? Are there moles at Swarthmore? Moles at Parkhurst Hall? Telephonic intercepts? Spy satellites? Where is Richard Clarke when we need him? Wright wrote to Swarthmore President Alfred Bloom in January 2001 disassociating himself and Dartmouth officialdom from the sentiments expressed in the letter. He also spoke sternly (and privately) with Furstenberg. The matter simmered in an (unsecured) undisclosed location until November 2004 when somehow it found its way to *The Valley News*. The story came to a boil and burst into print in December. The controversy reverberates well past the usual 24-hour news cycle.

What are we to learn from this? Well I, for one, plan to shred all mail and ask my recipients to do the same. I have developed an e-mail software application utilizing disappearing electrons that will thwart attribution. In fact, the paper you are holding right now will self-destruct in five minutes. But keep your mail coming, anyway!

Bob Sprafkin writes, "I retired from the Syracuse VA in April '01 as Senior (Chief) Psychologist and Director of Psychology Training. Since then I've been working full-time in private practice, consulting and doing some professional writing. Maybe it's a sign of aging, but what I most want to talk about is my family." Bob goes on to describe the considerable energy and work of wife Barbara with her gourmet pet treat business and his Dartmouth '87 son Jeff's work in China. Bob's explains that his Dartmouth '92 son, Noah, works in India and son Neal (Trinity '92) works in Washington, D.C. "Needless to say, I'm very proud of them all!" Well said, Bob. *Valley News*, please copy.

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