

## 1968 for June 2009 *Vassar Quarterly*

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Our classmate, Professor **Josephine Allen**, the first black woman to earn tenure at Cornell University, retired from Cornell at the end of 2008. The good news: she has not retired from her dedicated work for political and social change, or her teaching. In March, Jo returned from an extended Fulbright, teaching and consulting at two Universities in South Africa. She will continue to teach at SUNY's Binghamton University. Another Allen project has been editing *Letters to President Obama; Americans Share Our Thoughts and Dreams with the First African-American President*, published in April, 2009.

Jo attended President Obama's Inauguration, which brings us to my swing around our classmates in different parts of the country. From the Capitol Region, **Noris Sturman Friedman** wrote that her school set up a big screen television and speakers in the multi-purpose room so that all students, Grades 1-10, could watch the inaugural proceedings. She writes of "the sense of excitement and wonder and happiness in the room," as the children quietly and attentively watched." **Karen Joy Lewis** also wrote of the good feeling that permeated the atmosphere of Inauguration Week. Her workload at the Congressional Research Service's American Law Division, which she heads, has become truly frenetic, yet exciting and fun. Karen spoke with former Vassar History Professor Clyde Griffen at a restaurant in DC, and reports that he's well, living near his children in the Maryland area.

Another sighting was **Janet Binder Houts'** of **Eileen (Patti) Gallagher Vining** in Baltimore. Janet, Patti, her husband, her son, Jack and Janet's son had brunch at the Baltimore Art Museum. Janet's son is a third year resident at Johns Hopkins, and where Patti is much revered. Janet and **Marie Wormell** also attended **Claudia Marks Barnhill's** step-daughter's wedding in Tucson, AZ.

More far flung travelers: **Cynthia Benton-Groner** writes that she and Paul traveled around the world last fall, teaching on the Seminar at Sea, with stops in Brazil, Namibia, Cape Town and Chennai. Also on the ship was **Carolyn Stupka Tawari**, our classmate for two years. On my winter travels to Australia, we spent a delightful day visiting **Ladye Montgomery**. Ladye and her husband Kevin Berry run Pyramid Organic Produce. Pyramid works to bring organic produce from growers to the wholesale market. Ladye and Kevin live in the country near the Gawler River, north of Adelaide. This is very near the Barossa Valley, the Napa of Australia, or possibly it's the other way around.

Be in touch with more of our class! **Candy Dern Johnston** has created our own class website, <<http://vassar1968.com/>>. Full of information from our Reunion and survey, it will grow even richer with your participation. Another venue for contact:

Facebook. As of March, 2009, 33 of our class are “on” Facebook, myself included. It’s easy to stay in touch; my children took a while to get used to my presence! Classmates participating include: **Katherine Allen, Nancy Dante Bennison, Cynthia Benton Groner, Christina Bjornstad, Colleen Burke, Ginger da Silva, Joyce Thomas Daniel, Eve LaBan Drew, Katrena Kerst Engstrom, Elizabeth Oswald Evans, Mayhill Anderson Fowler, Deborah Young Hawthorn, Laura Holt, Janet Binder Houts, Roberta Marchisio Kaitz, Carol Leavy Karp, Henrietta Lintz Keller, Tamara Kaye Kraig, Susan Maguire, Jane Moody, Cathryn Blaine Muzzy, Anne Ogden, Cornelia Pratt, Sara Scribner, Laurie Stein Bigley, Abigail Tipton, Elizabeth Walton, Dorothy Webb, Marjorie White and Marie Wormell.** Join them!

Judy Frithsen Lee, '69 wrote that our classmate, **Ellen Weigandt**, died in February, from complications following treatment for colon cancer. She was in Switzerland where she lived with her husband, Urs Luterbacher and sons Jeremy and Samuel. You will recall that she participated in our seminar on climate and the environment at our June 2008 Reunion. Her many accomplishments were summarized in the biography which accompanied that event. We are grateful that she was with us then.

A note followed from **Colleen Burke**, asking to communicate this to the class: Colleen had a heart attack in March. With a new stent in her artery, she feels great, but wishes everyone to know that women’s heart attack symptoms are different from men’s, and can include pain in the left shoulder, jaw and teeth. Attending to these symptoms promptly can save your life.

Back at our Hudson Valley home, I hope many of you are participating, as I am, in the 400th Hudson/Fulton/Champlain Celebrations. **Phyllis Atwater**, who served on the board of Scenic Hudson, wrote this of the River: “It was love at first sight, driving the thruway of the mid-Hudson Valley one hot, dry, August day in 1964. Miles and miles of deciduous trees showing off in the yellow, orange, red, purple hues of late summer. And then suddenly, the Hudson River in cooling, calming greens and blues and aqua. A far cry from the sparseness along the muddy Mississippi, soon abandoned for life among historic villages, town squares of American legend, facades standing for over a century, and so many olden spires of peace.” Indeed.