

# THE SWARTHMOREAN

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## Imagining a New Life: FPS Shares Art Among Friends



Layla Al Hussein imagines a world of peace as part of Mark Strandquist and Courtney Bowles' "Where the Lines of Our Hands Meet" workshops. English translation: "These are my words and my poetry, and I hope they reach the people: I release the doves of love and peace."

Under way for more than a year at Swarthmore College, the Friends, Peace and Sanctuary project is about to roll out to a wider world with three public events.

The seed of the program was sown in the Swarthmore's libraries. College Librarian Peggy Seiden was thinking about the Swarthmore Peace Library's Trocmé Collection, and perceived connections between the international refugee crisis of the past decades and the Jewish diaspora chronicled in the papers of Christian minister Andre Trocmé and his wife Magda (who protected French Jews during World War II).

"The original thought," Seiden said, "was to bring the collections to bear upon these projects around books. But the project has gone beyond what I had hoped." Seiden approached Katie Price of Swarthmore's Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility. Appropriately given its library beginnings, books and printing became both a medium and a metaphor for the creative endeavors of the project that would soon be constituted as Friends, Peace and Sanctuary.

Katie Price said, "We wanted to connect to the living population of refugees in Philadelphia. Together we came up with this idea to bring in book artists — who hand-make books — to work with Syrian and Iraqi refugees to co-make new works, works that were meant to get the community to think about the relationship between history and lived experience."

"We brought in five book artists and commissioned them to create new works. They led workshops with about 15 refugees and families. They've been making art, talking and learning about each other for about the last year and a half. The exhibitions that open Friday will be the culmination of all that work. In the summer, there will be three exhibition sites in Philadelphia, then it will travel to New York."

Gratifyingly to the organizers, many of the new Philadelphians (who yearn to transcend the word refugee) are continuing to make art at The Clay Studio and other spaces in the city, carrying forward their practice. Their American FPS collaborators, too, have broken through boundaries, Seiden said.

"We looked to engage artists in a social practice — art in activism and social justice — but it's gone further. We are creating community and increasing our circle of friends."

FPS events this coming week include:

- Thursday, March 28, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at Lang Performing Arts Center Cinema, four panelists will discuss "Art, History, Displacement." Moderated by Nora Elmarzouky, the panel includes Erik Ruin, Artist with Friends, Peace & Sanctuary; Osman Balkan, Visiting Assistant Professor at Swarthmore College; Rona Buchalter, Director of Refugee Programming and Planning from HIAS Pennsylvania, and Yaroub Al-Obaidi, Community Liaison Friends, Peace & Sanctuary. A reception follows at LPAC.

- Friday, March 29, from 4 to 8 p.m.: McCabe Library atrium will host the opening of an exhibition

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So close! At a standing room only watch party in Science Center 101, the crowd rose as Swarthmore closed to within six points near halftime of Saturday's NCAA Division III basketball championship game. After a cold start, the Garnet kept the game close, but ultimately fell short against Wisconsin-Oshkosh, ending the season and a school record 15 game win streak. The Garnet's run through the Centennial Conference tournament and then the 64-team NCAA field capped a superb 29-4 season.

## Open the Door for a New Swarthmorean Reader

Got a new neighbor who needs to get the lay of the land? A friend who stared blankly when everyone else was discussing that story in last week's *Swarthmorean*? Here's your chance to help these people open the door to what's going on in Swarthmore, Wallingford, Rose Valley, and Rutledge.

For a limited time, we are offering a trial subscription of eight issues for \$10, bringing the news weekly in the mail to your friends and neighbors. Get out your address book and give as many as you want, through the website at [swarthmorean.com](http://swarthmorean.com), where you can also give a full year subscription, and start or renew your own. Call the office at 610-543-0900 if you'd like to pay another way.



Asmaa Diab shows the silkscreen accordion book she made in Erik Ruin's "Journeys" workshops. Photo credit: Hussam Al-Obaidi.

## Swarthmore Business News



Megan Gaardsmoe at her Allstate Insurance agency at 11 Park Avenue.

You're in good hands: Megan Gaardsmoe just opened a new agency for Allstate Insurance at 11 Park Avenue, where she works with daughter Sarah Kennedy and staff member Sarah Caramanico.

Before opening her independent agency, Megan was previously a regional representative for Allstate, supporting up to 100 agents. In a long career with Allstate she has worked in claims, underwriting, technology training, product training, then became a sales leader. Her territory included Pennsylvania and all the New England states. She spent a lot of time on the road.

"But now," she said recently, "I can walk to the office, if the weather would cooperate." She lives with husband Cary Gaardsmoe on Haverford Place in Swarthmore.

No kids are at home — "I'm on to grandchildren now" — but they are nearby. Son David Gaardsmoe lives in Philadelphia, daughter Sarah in Wallingford, and daughter Kelly Cetroni in Thornton.

Megan is eager for *Swarthmorean* readers and neighbors to stop into the office for free document shredding and free notary services. "I want to get the name out. Allstate is a great company, with one of the best claims departments in the industry, offering things no one else does, like a claims satisfaction guarantee."

Hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday. "And we will do appointments in the evening and on Saturdays."



# Growing Up Only in Swarthmore

A review by Jennifer Reynolds



Emily Pritchard Cary

Is it possible to time travel back to the Swarthmore of yesteryear, when British children were shipped here to attend school, when a dog named after Wendell Wilkie acknowledged every passerby at Shirer's pharmacy, when you paid a nickel to have your shoes shined at a Park Avenue shop?

The answer is yes. You will learn all manner of fascinating and fun facts about the borough from the charming autobiography of Emily Pritchard Cary called *Growing Up Only*, available on Amazon.

The title refers to the phenomenon of one-child families that populated the United States after reliable birth control methods were developed in the early 20th century.

Born in Pittsburgh in 1931, Cary relays razor-sharp memories of life there in the Depression. Though her own father held a secure job at AT&T, she was well aware of the despair suffered by others. "Our doorbell rang often each day. More often than not, Mother opened the door to discover a sad-eyed, ragged soul selling crude pot holders, crocheted doilies or some other homemade item. Some who visited were so down on their luck they had nothing to offer... Mother always shared something with them, even though our cupboards were lean. And she always took time to engage them in conversation."

One day Cary's mother answered the phone, hanging up in tears to say, "The most awful thing has happened. The company is transferring us to Philadelphia." Her father went on ahead, staying

in a Center City hotel; Emily and her mother later joined him during their search for a new home.

They were advised by other AT&T families to consider settling in Upper Darby or Havertown. A grand tour with a real estate agent "was sufficient to convince Mother that she did not wish to settle in a double house, not even for a year."

After more fruitless searches in Delaware County, another friend highly recommended Swarthmore schools. "Heeding that advance, we set out the next morning for the Pennsylvania Suburban Train Station, clutching the name of Baird Realtors... the towns along the way did not strike Mother's fancy, but as we approached Swarthmore station, she said 'This town makes a nice impression.'"

Please indulge me as I share Emily's first impression of the town where she would "grow up only," and many of the hundreds of other observations and recollections that fill this 550+ page book.

"Alighting from the train, we had a direct view of Swarthmore College... across the tracks were a cluster of stores that might have been appropriated from a typical English village... the corner drug store, Michael's, was the hub."

A Colonial rental on Cornell Avenue with mature trees was appealing, but the price of \$65 per month was "a bit steep for Mother." The only other rental in town was 206 Dickinson Avenue. Though a "double house," the family ended up agreeing to rent it for a year. The amenities of the town were a great asset that Cary's father brought up "again and again" on the train ride back to Philadelphia.

The family quickly settled into life in Swarthmore. Cary describes Michael's Drug Store and its "bountiful supply of cosmetics, magazines, music, and mouth-watering flavors of Jane Logan and Dolly Madison ice cream scooped into pint and quart containers, and Shirer's, a real pharmacy a half block away, to dispense prescriptions... Next door was the Swarthmore National Bank, and around the corner was the U.S. Post Office. Father had his hair cut at the (local) barbershop.

"On the other side of the path-

way was Marie Donnelly's Dress Shop... she lived upstairs, as did shop keepers in her native France... The ladies leaving her shop wore stylish outfits, contrasting with the casual dungarees, men's shirts and Bobby socks favored by the Swarthmore College co-eds and high school seniors who whiled away afternoons over milk shakes and sodas at Michael's."

From the very first day in Swarthmore, Cary reports, "Father was thunderstruck by the sight of matronly women riding English bicycles to the village. He had never seen women riding bicycles in Pittsburgh. Many of the Swarthmore women on bicycles... were wives of the college professors. We soon deduced from their plain attire and hair styled in tight braids against their scalp that many were Quakers."

Cary vividly describes the moment she and her parents switched on the car radio to hear of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Because her father's job at AT&T was classified as essential for the war effort, he was in no danger of being drafted. Her mother enrolled in a Red Cross first aid class, and was shocked to learn that she would have to wear slacks. "But she steeled herself. This was war. She found a rack of slacks... in the basement of John Wanamaker's... and wore them with two-inch heels, the shortest she owned."

To help the war effort, oleomargarine, Spam, Vienna sausages and deviled ham were in. So were black curtains. "We quickly became accustomed to hearing the air raid sirens day and night. These were practice runs that came from the fire house, the *Swarthmorean* editor informed his readers. Frank Getz had been best known in Swarthmore as the tax collector, but with the advent of the war came a far more critical title, that of Dickinson Avenue Air Raid Warden."

Life went on, as did school. One day, gym class was cancelled. "The sound of slaps on bare skin and a man's gruff voice saying 'Stay awake!' were impossible to ignore. (A classmate) had taken sleeping pills that eventually reacted while she was running up and down the hockey field. ...the vivid sight of a girl we knew who was not wearing any clothes while our staid superintendent slapped her remained with many of us for quite some time."

Along with her best friend Teel, Emily was a leader in the Methodist Youth Fellowship. "Teel and I ...were at a loss to think up interesting activities for our hodge-podge group. Dr. Kaiser (the minister), not being youth-oriented, had no idea how to entertain teenagers. The only activity he suggested was for one of us to read a Bible passage and ask the others to identify where it could be found. That was the first and last time we ventured into Biblical knowledge."

"One of our best programs was an evening about Armenia. We knew... that the Paulsons, members of the church, had fled that country. Mr. Paulson had an Oriental rug shop across from the church and his daughter had recently arrived with a young man whose parents he and his wife had known before coming to the United States... Teel and I were relieved that we had survived our roles as MYF leaders. Without eager participants the next year, Dr. Kaiser quietly disbanded the group."

During WWII, "The war brought newcomers to Swarthmore. One of them, Robin Colquhoun, was in all my classes... he had arrived at our school from Great Britain, along with at least a dozen other British children whose parents shipped them out of London to escape the bombs. Instead of joining their friends and classmates in rural areas of Great Britain, they spent the war years with us. I loved listening



Friends (l. to r.): Teel Dunn, Gloria Quick and Emily Pritchard.

to their accent and observing their lovely manners. They addressed our teachers as Sir or Madam."

"In addition to those children housed in homes belonging to members of the Friends Service Committee, several other British visitors made themselves at home in town. One was the poet W. H. Auden. He roomed in the upstairs of a house on Lafayette Avenue, slightly more than a block from our house. Each morning, dressed in his bathrobe and slippers, he shuffled up to Michael's Drug Store to enjoy breakfast and a newspaper at his leisure. I had never heard of him until word spread of his arrival. After seeing him in Michael's and responding shyly to his clipped, British overture of a "Good Morning," I devoured all his works."

"The entire school was ecstatic to learn that Gene Kelly, the dancer and movie star raised in Pittsburgh, had joined the U.S. Navy and was stationed right in Swarthmore at Mary Lyon School. The exclusive girls' finishing school on Yale Avenue had been taken over for the duration to train servicemen... After some of the older boys who hung out on the corner of Chester Road and Park Avenue across from the train station reported that they had actually seen him and his buddies order milk shakes at Michael's, clusters of students began hanging around the sidewalk."

Emily's high school graduation was held in the hall of Clothier Memorial at Swarthmore College. "Those of us headed for college (all but five among the 72 of us) stood as Mr. Thompson told the audience where we had been accepted. The largest group would attend Swarthmore College because their parents, in most cases, were on the faculty. Several girls had chosen Mt. Holyoke or Smith, George Stork had been accepted by West Point, Hatsy was going to Colorado College to escape her regular bouts of asthma, and Teel would go to the University of Delaware. I had been accepted by the University of Pennsylvania, along with four others... I was thrilled to receive the John Kline Memorial Prize. In addition to the certificate, the envelope held a check for \$100. This was truly music to my ears because it would cover one-third of my first semester tuition and lessen my parents' financial worries."

The book concludes with "What Ever Happened To ...?", a helpful index summarizing the later lives of many of Emily's classmates. If one of them was your ancestor; if your parents or grandparents grew up in Swarthmore, "only" or otherwise, during the past 80 years; or if you appreciate the brand of history made up of extraordinary memories of ordinary life, this book will likely resonate with you as it did with me.

## First 'Brave You' Womxn's Summit Is This Saturday

"Brave You," the first The Swarthmore Womxn's Leadership Summit, aims to reflect, embrace, and instill bravery in womxn-centric communities. The summit will pack nearly two dozen addresses, workshops, activities, discussions, meals and social events into one robust day, Saturday, March 23 at various locations on the Swarthmore College campus.

According to curators and 2018 Swarthmore alumnae Jasmine Rashid, Meghan Kelly, Niyah Dantzer, and Samira Saunders, the summit "aims to reflect, embrace, and instill bravery in womxn-centric communities. Our desire is for summit attendees to gain perspective, receive encouragement, and learn tools for fostering bravery in themselves and in others. We hope attendees will leave feeling

empowered, inspired, and prepared to translate the weekend's discussions, workshops, and panels into further conversation and action at Swarthmore and beyond."

Registration/check-in and breakfast begin at 8 a.m. at the Parrish Hall Parlors and Shane Lounge. A panoply of subject-focused panel and discussion sessions begin at 9:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m., and 2:45 p.m. Pilates and a mixer will take place between 4 and 6 p.m., at which time featured speaker and Swarthmore College President Dr. Valerie Smith welcomes all to dinner at the Inn at Swarthmore. A reception at Kitao Art Gallery and a performance by Cecily Bumbray (Swarthmore Class of 2012) round out the summit.

The event is free. Register and find out more at <https://wls2019.squarespace.com>.

## Imagining a New Life: FPS Shares Art Among Friends

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featuring commissioned works by book artists Islam Aly, Maureen Cummins, Erik Ruin, Courtney Bowles and Mark Strandquist. These will be shown alongside works by the project's Syrian and Iraqi collaborators and archival material from Swarthmore's Friends Historical Library and Peace Collections. After the opening, all are invited to celebrate the FPS collaborations at a communal dinner at Upper Table of Clothier

Hall, catered by Aria Mediterranean Cuisine. Reserve at <https://bit.ly/FPSDinner>.

• Saturday, March 30, from noon to 6 p.m., Swarthmore College's Science Center hosts an all-ages exploration of the people, food, and art at the heart of the FPS. Sample Syrian and Iraqi treats, make art and learn techniques, talk with artists and collaborators, and experience the premiere of a musical work by Julius al-Masry and Erik Ruin.

OPEN SUNDAY • 1-3 PM



217 N. PRINCETON AVENUE

SWARTHMORE

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This charming home is situated just blocks from the center of Swarthmore on a deep lot with a meandering stream. The living room has a gas fireplace and is open to the dining room which has arched French doors to the side patio. A lovely glass door has been installed to allow light from the side entry and mudroom into the kitchen. The second floor has 3 bedrooms with a spacious hall bath and vaulted ceilings. The third floor has been renovated into a large bright master bedroom with skylights and a large master bath with a luxurious stall shower and fantastic tile work. The extra-large detached two car garage has a complete second floor which could be used for endless possibilities.



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