



## DR. PETER FRENCH: FROM LEGON HILL

To good friends of the Yale Club of the Suncoast,

Your President has insisted that I share thoughts occasionally from here in Ghana. Here are some of those thoughts that describe this very unique academic community, the challenges it faces and refers ever so briefly to my day-to-day work.

The University of Ghana sits on Legon Hill, about thirteen miles from downtown Accra and one of the highest points in the capitol region. Designed in the mid-fifties, the campus has classic white buildings with an oriental design to roofs of the main buildings. A long tree lined drive with two lanes each way stretches from the main gate towards the Great Hall at the top of the hill. It is a classic university campus. It is also a place of learning for more than 25,000 students from Ghana, Africa and around the world.

The challenges that the University faces are common to virtually all African universities: too many students and not enough qualified faculty as academics who finish the PhD. are drawn to higher paying positions and better research facilities in Europe, Asia or North America. Classes at the

University can range from several hundred to a thousand which means grades are dependent on a single final examination and the likelihood of meaningful interaction between student and teacher is remote.



**Kofi Annan and Peter French**

Unlike most African universities, the University of Ghana is committed to recapturing the standards that prevailed in the seventies and early eighties when enrollments were far lower and communication between teacher and student abundant. The approach is a comprehensive review of the course credit semester system which replaced a British-style three-year degree program in the early 1990's. The focus is to

reduce class size to no more than 150 in the largest classes and to have a meaningful process of "continuous assessment" during the semester in terms of exams and other means of measuring competence so that grades do not all rest on a single exam. Paralleling this commitment is a new "Academic quality assurance initiative" that seeks to insure the faculty are teaching effectively. In combination, the University has put in place a program that will regain the luster of the motto "Integri Procedamus" – to proceed with integrity.

What provides hope that real change will occur and quality will be enhanced is the commitment of the faculty to this place they love. Many if not most were undergraduates here. They hold strong memories of earlier times and want to recapture that sense of engaged learning that was a hallmark of their student days. They work harder under more trying conditions than so many academic communities in other places. But they continue to focus on how to make things work for the students and how to improve the conditions of learning and teaching.

Perhaps the most troubling feature of this dedicated academic community is the number of faculty who are not young. They must retire at 60 and many then accept post-retirement contracts. But that is not a means for securing the long term future. A new generation of scholars must emerge and be persuaded to take up residence and train the next generations of students, putting aside temptations to abandon their country for life abroad.

It is just possible that if life for undergraduate learning can be made more viable with smaller classes, the next generation of academics will be discovered earlier in their undergraduate careers and nurtured from an early stage to think about the profession of teaching here on Legon Hill.

This is the focus of my energies these days, here on Legon Hill, with its intent to find means for reducing the size of classes, use faculty talents more effectively and space in a more optimal way. With the good will of all, the collaboration of many, and the leadership in place, we begin to see our way to a next and more positive stage for the University.

**Peter L. French**

## VISIT OF AYA REPRESENTATIVE

On the afternoon of March 12, President Brian Kelly and his wife Susan hosted a reception in their elegant home on Little Sarasota Bay to introduce Ms. Gloria Wang to the members of the Board of Directors of the Yale Club of the Suncoast. Ms. Wang, an Association of Yale Alumni Assistant Director for Club and Association Relations, has recently become responsible for the ongoing ties between our Club and the AYA. Her duties are part of AYA's responsibility to maintain and strengthen the bonds between the University and the alumni.

The formal purpose of the AYA is to fulfill the mutual needs of the University and its



**Brian Kelly and Gloria Wang**

numerous and far-flung alumni. It acts as a channel of communication through which both parties can express their concerns and as a working organization to provide programs and services to Old Blues. A key objective is to affiliate alumni more closely to each other as well as to the University. Many of us are familiar with AYA's role in arranging class reunions and faculty-escorted travel programs.

As far as our Club is concerned, over the years the AYA has arranged for distinguished Yale professors to speak at luncheons and for booking University singing groups to entertain at special events. The AYA is also responsible for the annual

cont'd on page 9

# RECORD YEAR FOR LOCAL YALE APPLICANTS

Within the area of the Suncoast Yale Club, a record 53 students have applied for places in the Yale Class of 2013. The interview reports indicate that the quality of the local pool is excellent. Remarkably, all local students who applied had an interview with a local alumni representative.

We have two students who have been admitted through the single choice early action process. One has decided to go to Yale; the other will wait until she hears from other colleges in the Spring. They are both seniors at Saint Stephen's Episcopal School. The students who applied as part of the regular process will hear in early April about the decisions. Accepted students have until May 1 for their final decisions.

53 applicants from Charlotte, Sarasota and Manatee Counties (a record year)

12 single choice early action applicants (2 accepted, 1 waitlisted, 9 denied)

41 regular action applicants (decisions will come in early April)

15 local high schools have applicants, 10 high schools with multiple applicants

Pine View School has the most applicants with 15, Manatee High School is next with 7

At least 4 applicants were Yale Book Award winners in 2008

The huge and unexpected increase in applicants stretched our alumni resources. We had thirteen people on the Alumni School Committee to conduct interviews and submit reports.

Dan Conway, Betty Griggs, Lew Hamilton, Ken Hardy, Oliver Janney, Sean Lynch, Mark Magenheim, Liz Pitts, George Prince, Zaid Smith, Ed Williams, Jay Wilson, Patrick Whelan

If any Yale Club member would like to join this illustrious group, our recruiting is on-going for next year.



**Patrick Whelan speaks to an interested group of college prospects**

## WHY I INTERVIEW STUDENTS FOR YALE

Her handshake is firm as she stands up to introduce herself in the café section of a local bookstore. A few moments before when I entered the crowded room, I could tell immediately who my Yale Interview subject was. She was slightly overdressed for a trip to the bookstore, with anxious eyes darting around the room. We exchange some introductory pleasantries. I smile to try to put her at ease then ask my first question. "So, why do you want to go to Yale?"

During each interview season, which runs from November to February, I conduct about a half dozen such interviews. The applicants are impressive. Most have achievements that are dazzling: musical virtuosi, academic superstars, teenage philosophers, and every other kind of achievement imaginable—often in combination.

Conducting these interviews provides me with a view of the best of the best of the rising generation. Although I have conducted these interviews for over fifteen years for our local Alumni Schools Committee, I often come away

amazed by these 45-minute conversations. I don't remember being so accomplished, so well spoken, so sure of myself, when I applied to Yale.

These interviews are my way of giving back to Yale. Through interviews and other forums, such as Yale Book Award presentations and college fairs, we alumni become Yale to others.

My interview subjects do not have a great chance of admission. Last year the percentage of acceptance was 8.6%. Even the most talented applicants have a steep climb to become Elis. Hearing of the rejections was at first disheartening to me. But as much as I could envision a certain

she gave a good impression. I tell her how much of a pleasure and honor it was to talk with her. I mean it.



**Ed and Patrick talk with small groups at a time taking a strong personal approach to information**

applicant thriving at Yale, I also know that the same person would thrive at another university.

At the end of our interview, we stand up and shake hands again. We have had a wide ranging conversation that touched on topics I had not thought about in years. She smiles, knowing that

book award presenters Please choose to do for today's scholars what someone did for you, help give another eager student the chance to attend Yale.

**Patrick Whelan**

**above**

**Ed Williams and Patrick Whelan answer questions at the College Fair**

To volunteer for the Alumni School Committee, please contact Patrick Whelan at [notableoak@msn.com](mailto:notableoak@msn.com) or Brian Kelly, Yale Club President. We always have a great need for

interviewers, college fair representatives, and

# THE PREZ SEZ:



**President Brian T. Kelly, Yale '61**

**I**t is with no small twinge of nostalgia that your Prez writes his final column for our beloved bluELines. On April 14 I will pass the torch to Oliver Janney, who is superbly qualified to be your new President. Actually this will be the Class of '61 (The Undefeated Class) handing the reins to Oliver as President and young Nick Gladding as Vice President – both of the Class of '67. Youth is well served in the transition!

**I** have enjoyed almost every moment of my two years as Vice President under Peter French (now serving under Kofi Annan in Ghana) and my two years as your leader. I have performed every imaginable task from being a receptionist and moneychanger at luncheons to stuffing envelopes for mailings to hanging banners from various edifices and being a cruise director. It has all been immensely fun and that fun is derived from my friendship with each and every one of you Yalies! I have gone from a mogul-of-sorts with a worldwide petro behemoth to a first retirement volunteer post as a board member and then president of a 900 member country club where we spent 6.5 million dollars to expand and modernize the facilities. I also volunteer my Thursdays at Mote Marine Laboratory where I enhance my childhood love of the sea founded on Long Island Sound. All of these activities bear great satisfaction, but never reach the joy of camaraderie with fellow Yale people and their loved ones! The fellowship that I found within The Yale Club of the Suncoast recalls the raison d'être for a Yale education and the subsequent immense rewards. Sure we are playing the back nine of this game of life, but to be able to play it with you is a treasure I am not quite able to express other than to say – Thank you for the honor of entrusting this Yalie with two years as your leader.



**Susan Kelly, Brian's ever helpful, talented wife**

**M**y shoulders have now healed from the four rotator cuff surgeries of the past 22 months. I should state that the YCS activities were marvelous therapy during the recovery. I am now ready to take my beloved fishing boat "Ciao, Ciao" out into our gorgeous Gulf, now ready to pick up my gardening tools (golf clubs) and prepare for those challenges of chasing the little white ball, and I have recently tested my old shooting skills.

**T**here are many people I wish to thank for assistance in my tour of duty for YCS but I do not enumerate them for fear of leaving a single person off the list. I do wish to tell you that my beloved Susan has been a tireless and creative supporter throughout the YCS years. Under the regret column I have but one which is the continued need for additional YCS volunteers to interview our exceptional area students who are applying for admission to Yale. Some of my most rewarding moments include meeting these students and hearing about their accomplishments and dreams. Please let Patrick Whelan our Alumni Schools Committee Chair or Oliver or any Board member know of your interest in helping this most deserving cause.

**T**his old salt has no intention of being absent from our Yale Club activities. But I say for the last time: Sons and Daughters and Loved Ones of Eli Yale, thank you and arrivaderci!

**Brian Thomas Kelly Y'61**



**Dyer Wadsworth and Brian Kelly place Yale's banner high and "in plain sight" at the Yale / Harvard / Princeton Luncheon**

**Suzanne Janney and President elect Oliver Janney enjoy the YHP February luncheon at Michael's on East**



**Dr. Douglas Powell, author of *Nine Myths of Aging* and Clinical Instructor in Psychology at Harvard Medical School, addresses an attentive audience at YHP luncheon**

# FEBRUARY LUNCHEON OFFERS SALVATION FOR AGING INTELLECT

On the tenth anniversary of his popular book *The Nine Myths of Aging*, Dr. Douglas Powell addressed the annual Yale-Harvard Princeton luncheon on “Strategies for Maintaining the Aging Intellect.” The material for the talk was drawn from twenty years of research in Florida, some of it in Sarasota, for his book-in-progress, which is scheduled to be published next year. If you can’t wait to see the prescription for optimal aging, skip to the end of this article and then return to the beginning to read the findings of Dr. Powell’s studies, which are useful for an understanding of his recommendations.

Dr. Powell served on the professional staff of the Harvard University Health Services for 40 years as Chief of the Psychology Services, Coordinator of the Behavior Therapy Program and Director of Training and Research. While there, he developed programs for analyzing and dealing with adolescents. He currently serves as a Clinical Instructor in Psychology at Harvard Medical School and is on the Board of Honors Tutors in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University.

The shift in his focus from youth to elders was fortuitous. About twenty years ago, Harvard Medical Services commissioned him to study the effect of aging on physicians. HMS wanted to understand the effect of changes in federal restrictions on mandatory retirement in on their risks of liability from malpractice claims. Dr. Powell and his colleagues spent 18 months interviewing 1,000 doctors between the ages of 28 and 92. They devised the Assessment of Cognitive Skills (ACS) test, a computerized test designed to give researchers insight into the aging brain. The scores of the 1,000 physicians confirmed that mental capacity diminishes with age. The decline was first noticeable at about age 45 and increased dramatically after age 65.

Dr. Powell addressed factors that support optimal aging. He first provided examples of persons

who have aged optimally, as shown by their achievements in old age. These include Michelangelo, Monet, Picasso, Grandma Moses Tony Bennett, Stephen Hawking and Stump (the 10-year-old Sussex Spaniel who placed first in show at the Westminster Kennel Club dog show earlier that week). He noted that, as we age, worries about cognitive ability are widespread and rank second only to concerns about persistent vegetative state. Studies have found that we can control about 50% of the effects of aging on the intellect. The other 50% comes from heredity.

Avoiding risky lifestyles is especially important for preserving the intellect. Risky lifestyles include:

- smoking
- drinking
- sedentary lifestyle and
- obesity.

The last two of these lead to deterioration of the intellect in a very high percentage of cases. He noted that noncompliance with taking prescribed medications is very common and is also a seriously risky lifestyle. He then shared results of studies that indicate that obese persons who couldn’t lose weight but became fit had almost as much preservation of the intellect as persons who were thin and fit. The message is that exercise is vital to intellectual preservation.

Certain trends of old age require compensating measures. We have to compensate for the decline in our processing speed, the shrinkage of our working memory and, especially in men, the reduction in our visual acuity. We need to anticipate decline and prepare to handle it. While these signs of aging are all too familiar in the world of computers, with appropriate measures we can avoid pressures for replacement or at least installation of a new operating system every few years

Dr. Powell concluded his remarks with a prescription for nurturing of the intellect as we age, which includes the following components:

- 1. Exercise: Studies find that people who exercise regularly (3 times per week for 30-60 minutes) have huge success in retaining their intellectual faculties. Studies have found that nearly everything we do for ourselves physically helps the intellect.**
- 2. Social networking: Comfort with social networking has a direct correlation to the intellect. The number of persons in our lives affects whether we get sick and, if we get sick, whether we survive. People with fewer people in their lives have higher mortality rates. Each of us needs two or more friends we can count on. This is particularly important after age 75, especially for men.**
- 3. Concentrate on fewer things: However, breadth of interests also seems to be relevant. For example, physicians who were interested in art tended to experience lower levels of intellectual deterioration than others. Or this might be a function of the rejuvenating effect of art. Note that most of Dr. Powell's examples of high achievers in their elder years were painters.**
- 4. Work hard to improve and maintain skills: Artur Rubinstein continued playing well into his 80's. The secret of his success was that he had to practice far longer than he did as a younger musician and played fewer pieces, all of them more slowly.**
- 5. Use support, technology and tricks.**

While most of the audience understood Dr. Powell's message, it was useful to be reminded of the need to take care of ourselves and prepare for the future and especially to understand the clinical bases for what we all face.

Oliver J. Janney, '67

## **A Member's Note**

At our Club's March 15th Gala, I had the opportunity to toast Brian Kelly and to thank him on behalf of our membership for an outstanding two years as president. While I managed to do that, I neglected to also recognize Susan Kelly, as I had intended. I am therefore writing this to apologize for my lapse of memory and, more importantly, to thank Susan for her exemplary role as First Lady. I think all members will agree that our club has been most fortunate to have had Brian and Susan at the helm for the past two years. Thanks again to the Kelly's.

**R Kopp**

### **AYA cont'd from page 2**

pilgrimage of our Club's representative to a meeting in New Haven, with counterparts from throughout the world, to be brought up-to-date on the latest happenings at Yale of interest to alumni.

The visit of Miss Wang to Sarasota not only provided Club officers and Board members the chance to get to know the person who will act as liaison between the AYA and our Club. It also gave her the chance to learn more about the particular needs and interests of the members of the Yale Club of the Suncoast as they relate to Yale and the AYA. There is every reason to anticipate that a mutually cordial and beneficial relationship that has existed for many years will continue under Ms. Wang's stewardship.

**Frank Samponaro'62**

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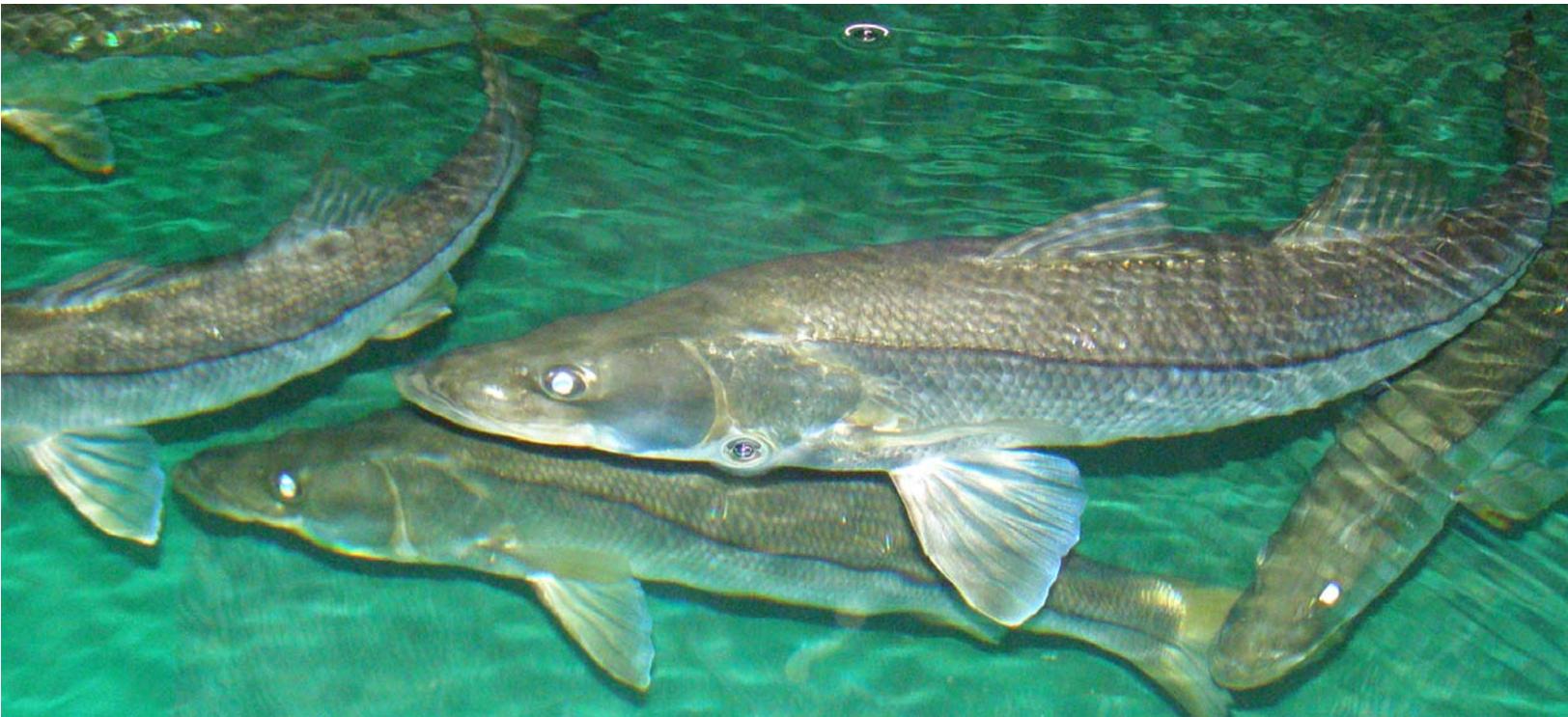
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## **YCS Tours Mote Marine Laboratory's Aquaculture Park**

On a bright, crisp morning of Friday, February 20, a band of YCS members was treated to an extraordinarily informative tour of Mote Marine Laboratory's Aquaculture Park. The group was immediately impressed with the vast layout of 15 buildings covering portions of a 200 acre tract of land Mote obtained from the Turner Ranch. It is located approximately 7 miles west of I-75 on Fruitville Road.

Our tour guide John Pether explained this unique facility is dedicated to the development and design of systems that will provide widespread commercial aquaculture production with the goal of elimination of released waste and minimal water usage. These are extremely important goals in order to assure the USA and the world a viable, sustainable aquaculture future.

Pether provided a most comprehensive lecture of the world's need for cost efficient, low or no waste aquaculture, since over 50% of the world's fish consumption is now produced in some form of aquaculture. Traditional methods of aquaculture have used a "flow-through system to flush tanks, expel excreted solids and ammonia, and remove off-flavor compounds. These methods use excessive amounts of water and release waste. He felt that the Mote system was approaching the point where farmers in any part of the country could establish fish farming with minimal land requirements. Mote has developed processes that reduce or eliminate waste and limit water usage, with a nitrification process followed by de-nitrification process. Mote is just at the point of proving the economics of their technologies, demonstrating to farmers and potential capital investors the economic viability of closed-circuit, large-scale, inland aquaculture.

Pether led the tour from sturgeon hatchlings through a seemingly endless array of 6,700 and 14,000 gallon tanks holding thousands of sturgeon at various growth stages. He explained that each system has independent light and temperature controls to simulate specific seasonal conditions. By manipulating these conditions, the fish broodstock can potentially be acclimated to spawn for longer periods of time

and during periods that wild fish do not normally spawn. The tour concluded in the spotless, bacteria-free processing facility where sturgeon eggs are accumulated. These eggs are then graded by experts and packed for resale to the world's largest packer/distributor Petrossian. Mote's caviar is ranked among the most prized quality due

to its aquaculture accomplishments. Fresh sturgeon is also distributed and is usually available at Sarasota's own Captain Brian's Restaurant located near the Sarasota/Bradenton Airport. We who had the privilege of viewing Mote's aquaculture systems were most impressed with the success that has been achieved in this most

important mission of aquaculture and fish sustainability. YCS members would be well advised to register interest to view this awesome facility located right in our back yard!

**Brian T. Kelly**

**Yalies examine "Bacteria motels" used in the process of aquaculture**



**The group ends a fascinating and enlightening tour of a facility and process that is something of a scientific wonder.**



# GALA DINNER

On Sunday, March 15, our Club gathered in Marina Jack's "Bayfront Room" for an early evening of hearty companionship and delicious food. More than five dozen Club members and their guests attended, including several who have been unable to attend our usual midday luncheons. Vocal entertainment was provided in two half-hour sets by "Yale University's first women's organization of any kind", founded in 1969, "The New Blue". They have appeared in many elegant settings, including White House performances for three presidents (in both political parties). Their 12-person travel team was on tour over Spring Break. Ours was the largest audience among several Yale clubs where they have appeared this season, eclipsing even Boston. At dinner, one or two of them sat with us at each table, and they say they are still sharing stories of our conversations.

The menu offered tasty filet mignon, grouper or chicken. Marina Jack's service was excellent. Susan Kelly had arranged for a vegan dinner for one attendee, and Marina Jack also, on the spot, accommodated one of our visitors so as to prevent a potentially mortal encounter with any

nuts. We began with a generous salad and concluded with key lime pie. A Lohr chardonnay and a nice St. Michelle (Washington) red served at the tables were included in the \$30 cost to members, which also covered the tab for our singers. The attractive formal invitation to the event was designed by Betty Griggs, Y '50 M.F.A., and Susan Kelly.

The "Prez," Brian Kelly, began the announcements at five o'clock. He welcomed our guests and introduced The New Blue as a group. They then took the floor, performing one of their two sets at the north end of the room and the other at the south, to help everyone hear them better.

After a couple of numbers, they introduced themselves in turn. They came from many states, one as near as Tampa, and one from the Samponaros' former university posting in Midland, Texas, and they dazzled us when they named their majors or double-majors: Cognitive Science, Political Science, Sociology, Music &

## FEATURES

Computer Science, Art History, Environmental Studies, Music & Ethnicity, Race and Religion, English & Classics, Anthropology

& Latin American Studies, Mathematics & Philosophy, Music, and Astronomy & Physics.

Their costume was black cocktail dresses, a couple of them strapless, and about knee length. The songs included selections from Simon & Garfunkel, James Taylor, Carole King, and (your reporter has had to go by hearsay on some of this) Bert Bacharach.

Most of the songs were pop numbers from around the

## YALE'S

1980s about women's life and loves won and lost. There was also an adaptation of a spiritual, with a rock chorus. But the song in which they took the greatest delight was a re-write of the old Cole

## "WOMEN OF NOTE"

Porter/Whiffenpoof warhorse, "Your Daddy was a Yale Man, We're Getting Married Soon". The protagonist is still a young lady taking the train because, "I've got a cravin' for dear old New Haven" where "a fountain of knowledge will leave me from college," but she has skirted the family issues that engulfed her male-authored predecessor.

As noted by our Ed Williams, Y '66 M.A., '68 Ph.D. and a professor of music, "Each selection began with the group's vocal vamp, whose rhythms and harmonies continued beneath the solo vocal line throughout the song." The singers shifted positions and formations, including



**The talented young women mixed among their enthusiastic audience adding sparkle as they answered countless questions**

another singing group recently needed a twelve-hour meeting to choose a music director.

The evening concluded with the entire assembly, led by The New Blue, singing “Bright College Years”, and we departed in high spirits.

some duets and a quartet, which added interest. Every member got a solo opportunity.

Membership in the Yale Glee Club is not a requirement for The New Blue, and only two are currently members. All members are at least sophomores, however, and another few were Glee Club members as freshmen. New “New Blue” have to wait their turn to get to be soloists for the favorite pieces, with simpler numbers for those just starting out. Yale provides no financial support for the group. They cover costs through appearance fees and sales of their CD recordings. The officers include the music director and the business manager. All group decisions are unanimous, but The New Blue have been suave in attaining consensus;

**Dyer S. Wadsworth**



**A rapt gathering of Yale Club members and their guests pay close attention to the music floating among the blue balloons.**

**Smiles and laughter are everywhere as the New Blue arrives at Marina Jack to perform their magic.**



**Member Jack Kahn talks with two of the students seated at his table. The women divide their group to grace each table with their cheerful presence**

**Fingers softly snapping and voices blending in songs -- some familiar some new -- the singers are entertainers, heart and soul.**

