A of A Event Favorites

Family Night at the Palestra - Women's Basketball v. Dartmouth, February 24, 2012
- Meagan C. McGowan Rubino, C'04, GEd '05

Walking onto the hardwood of the Palestra on Friday evening, it was easy to remember being 18, wearing a fresh-from-the-bookstore Penn T-shirt, hearing the trumpets of the band in my ears as I sat on the bleachers to take in my first collegiate basketball game. The squeal of delight from my one-year-old son quickly brought me back to the present day, still on the hardwood, but more than a decade later. Now, the fresh faces were of the women's basketball team, eyes glowing as they smiled at little boys and girls trying to throw a basketball twice the size of their heads more than 5 feet in the air. As I watched my own little boy gnaw on a soft pretzel during the game, reaching out to make friends with a cute 7 year-old with pigtails and hopes of playing for the Penn team in a little over a decade herself, I knew that this night was larger than what we had planned it to be; we were creating a family tradition, and we will be lucky to share it with other Penn alumni families in the years to come.

Philabundance Hunger Relief Center
The Alumni work night at Philabundance was like a scene out "The Amazing Race." The ease of the instant PENN teamwork and speed in our tasks was enjoyable, and it was uplifting to be helping those in need in our communities. - Anonymous

At the Ballet
-Julie Diana Hench, CGS'08
Every Association of Alumnae event sparkles with energy, humor, and elegance. But for me, last year's fundraiser really shined! Nearly 100 Penn alumnae, family, and friends met at the Academy of Music to experience Pennsylvania Ballet's "La Fille Mal Gardee". We met for a backstage tour, watched the company warm-up before the show, and spoke with dancers and the artistic director at our post-performance reception.

As a principal dancer with Pennsylvania Ballet and First Vice President of the A of A, I watched my two worlds align that afternoon: My colleagues at the ballet were introduced to my fellow Penn alumnae, and these fantastic Penn women got a glimpse of what it takes to be a professional ballet dancer. And how could I not mention the Bad Boys of Dance? We swooned through their amped-up show at Annenberg and then collected ourselves at Sweeten Alumni House to hear their leader, Rasta Thomas, talk about his work. It's an understatement to say that he charmed us both onstage and off.

**Garden Party Auction**

-Susan Croll, CW'68, GPU'94

I could write about many of the more recent Association Alumnae events -- especially some of our fundraisers that involved theater or dance, or which focused on special people (e.g. Bruce Montgomery), or books (e.g., "Historic Sacred Places of Philadelphia"). But a particularly special event for me was my very first involvement with the Association, back in the 1980's. I was asked to serve on the committee for a garden party auction, which I did.

The event took place at the Wharton-Sinkler Estate in Wyndmoor -- a lovely setting on a beautiful day. I bought some raffle tickets but my husband (then my fiance) and I had to leave
early so I handed my tickets to my Penn classmate, Mia Argentieri. My thought was that I was giving them to Mia to boost her chances of winning something. She subsequently contacted me to tell me that "I" had won the wonderful old-fashioned picnic basket that had caught my eye. I tried to convince her that the basket was hers, but she insisted that it was mine. I still own that basket, with its checkered table cloth and napkins, wine glasses, etc. (the bottle of wine is long gone!) -- and think of Mia and the Association of Alumnae whenever I see it.

Afternoon Tea
- Deborah H. Wolff, CW’62, GED’66

Jenny Chung, W’97, a member of our Board, is the owner of JC Melrose Country Club. A of A held a high tea for our members and friends, and a wonderful time was had by all! I came all dressed up and wore a hat and gloves. Everyone looked beautiful. The food was fabulous and very authentic. There were scones, tea sandwiches, and all kinds of sweets. The tables were constantly replenished. The service as great with hospitable servers constantly bringing different types of tea to each table. It was such fun sitting at large tables and meeting so many lovely new people and reconnecting with old friends. The atmosphere was so beautiful and it really felt as if we were at a real formal tea. Jenny was a lovely hostess. She also helps create other social events for our board and we appreciate her contributions.

Can’t pick just one!
- Didi Adshead Owens, CW’63

Penn memories… now, that's a challenge. There are so many! I was President of the Association of Alumnae from 1993-1996 and had been involved with that group for about fifteen years before that. I have vivid recollections of so many of our programs and events, such as the wonderful fundraisers - theater shows, musical productions, lectures, including my favorites: the
colloquia where fabulous professors and Penn people informed and enchanted us, one beautiful afternoon on the Battleship New Jersey, etc.

Our Fiftieth Reunion Coffee Hours at Alumni Weekend always brought tears to my eyes as we heard stories from "way back" (now "way back" isn't so far after all!). I remember once that some of the women from the ‘40s were telling us about how the men had all gone away to war. They were pretty alone on campus. They painted lines down their legs to make it look like they had stockings on, because silk was in short supply!

The Association of Alumnae has provided me with the chance to meet and become friends with women from every decade and every profession. Each and every one of them inspires us with their accomplishments, stories and energy. It's a great team to work with and learn from! We also have the opportunity to meet the ever-impressive students at our scholars meeting and at the Awards Dinner. We all sit open-mouthed listening to their plans of how to use the scholarship money we provide.

The A. of A. is a real melting pot of diverse women and a fabulous opportunity to stay involved with the current goings-on of the University! We are a real Red and Blue support system.

**Can’t pick just one!**
- Janice Kimenhour, GED’75

Determining a favorite A of A event is like asking a chocoholic to select only one morsel from a boxful of opportunities--after all, each morsel with its unique shape and size offers up its own, likewise unique, taste sensation. Special evenings recognizing the truly outstanding academic research accomplishments of young Penn women are perennial favorites. Fundraising special events like an afternoon drooling (probably not a good choice of word!) over the "Bad Boys of Dance" or captivated by the graceful moves of a ballet performance are as pleasing as any chocolate-covered cherry. But, perhaps my most favorite event is every one which reminds Penn women--past and present--how satisfying it is to reconnect through the Association of Alumnae with what at Penn is important, relevant, inspiring, enjoyable, and memorable. You know, that one chocolate morsel that makes the whole box special!