



"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler." – Albert Einstein

Taking the Long View

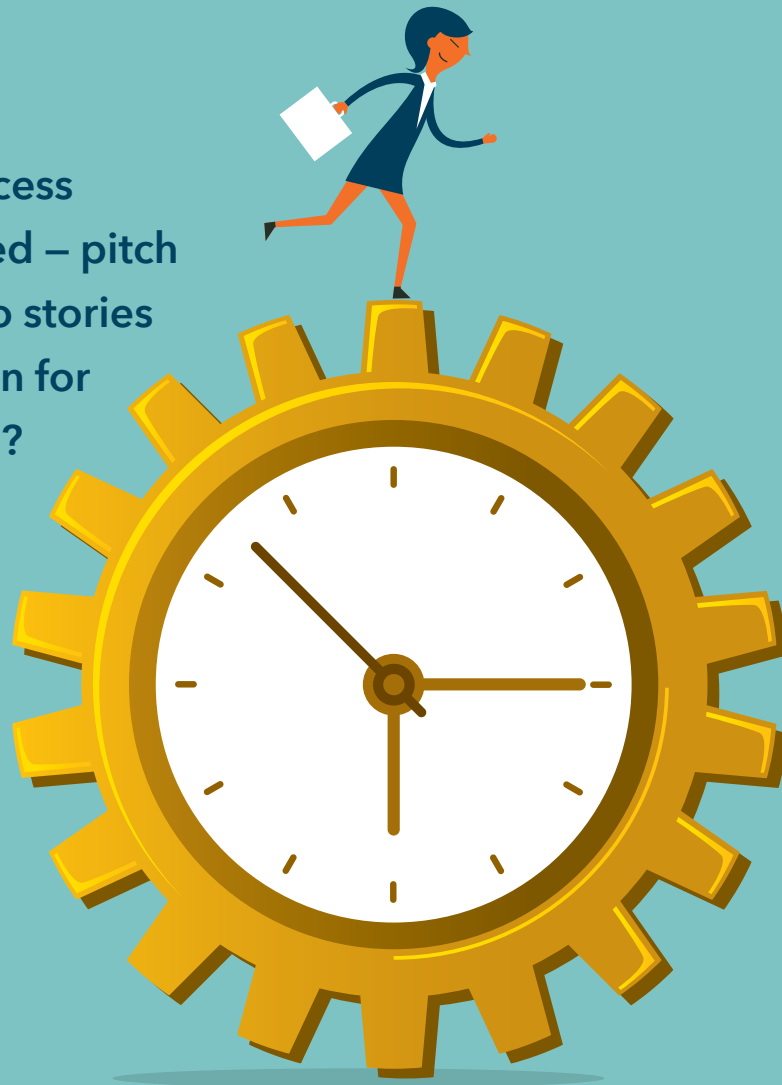
The amazing result
of planning a
whole year

By Anna Seip

I couldn't wait to work at a quarterly alumni magazine. As I became the editor of *The Bridge* at Messiah College in 2009, I looked forward to the slower, methodical pace of academia. The campus is idyllic, complete with a red covered bridge and a fly-fishing creek. No more cubicles for me. In my previous role, I'd worked as the editor of a monthly parenting magazine. Before that, I was a reporter at daily newspapers, cranking out stories as fast as possible. But now I'd arrived. I was joining the world of higher education. Goodbye to late nights



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and early mornings pulling together a back-to-school issue or baby guide. Goodbye to working on Christmas Eve. I was going to craft my stories and take my time, all while tucked away in a cozy office on the third floor of a stately building named Old Main. And then reality set in.

The pace is indeed slower on campus. And I soon discovered why: layers. Layers of people need to approve my work, and that takes time. The process starts with the selection of stories for our feature well (where we run two stories, one institutional-based and one broad-based). A full three months before the press date of each issue, I was pitching feature ideas — such as Messiah’s excellence in athletics (institutional) and online etiquette (broad-based) — to my supervisor. She would weigh in, and then we’d meet with senior administration, including the college president and vice president. If senior admin approved the proposed features, I could begin the process of finding sources for the stories and assigning them to freelance writers (or writing them myself). Only then could the rest of the work — scheduling photography and designing the layout — begin.

This process I inherited — pitch two stories, get two stories approved — went on for years. The problem? I was at the mercy of everyone else’s schedule. What if my boss was on vacation when it came time to pitch the features? I waited. What if the VP had a conference, a wedding, or the flu? What if the president needed to cancel our meeting to travel or prepare for a board of trustees meeting? I waited. I couldn’t bypass this group and move forward without their blessing (I’d tried that — once). So, I’d reschedule. When, subsequently, the production schedule went off track, I’d have to rush through my writing to get the articles to design on time. So much for carefully crafting a story.

Once the layout was in place, the “finished product” was routed back through the chain of command for multiple reviews: an initial read by my supervisor, another by senior administration, and a final one by my supervisor. Each contributor — every person who either wrote an article or was quoted in an article — also got a chance to review his or her portion of the magazine before it went to press. For extra assurance, an outside proofreader would give it a final once-over. Finally, the magazine would go to press, and lo and behold, it was

Planning further ahead allows more time for creative art treatments, like the custom illustrations for this feature on midwifery.



MODERN MOMS TURN
TO AGE-OLD PRACTICE

MIDWIFERY

BY ROBYN PASSANTE

Certified nurse-midwife Sarah Webster '05 has a special place in her heart for all the women she has helped become mothers. But she will never forget the one who labored with her second son in a truly unique way.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GRACIA LAM

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time to pitch the next two features. I wasn't being creative. I was waiting. And waiting. Then I was churning out content as fast as I could.

Enlisting Minions!

In 2014, we saw an opportunity to make a change. I had a new boss, who supported a redesign — an idea that I and the creative director had championed for years. We hired a consultant for the project — new layouts, new paper, better photography, and an overall revamped look. Everything was on the table. So while we were spending significant resources revamping the visuals, why not revamp the editorial, too? No one ever mentions that side of a redesign. Our writing and the process around it needed to improve.

To start, I looked to improve the way we find and vet story ideas. My office — while nice and cozy — had kept me isolated from the rest of campus. Professors and deans knew me solely through email. The only students I saw were the two work studies who wrote for me. As much as my introverted self tried to deny it, The Bridge was a group project. I needed some backup, some kind of

squad of editorial minions who could connect me with every corner of the college.

So, in the midst of the redesign, I convened The Bridge Advisory Board and invited a cross section of campus experts: The Bridge design team, the deans, and representatives from campus ministries, the career center, admissions, student affairs, graduate programs, public relations, the multicultural office, development, the alumni office, and athletics. *Here's the new design we're rolling out*, I said, *and I want you to be a part of it. Your feedback and ideas are important.* To my surprise, they were into it. They wanted to be involved, to get a look behind the scenes.

To keep us on track — because large groups can devolve into a few voices that talk the loudest — my request was focused: *Tell me how I did on the last issue of The Bridge and give me some story ideas for the next issue.* This way, everyone would feel comfortable, I hoped, to contribute — whether it was an alum who had worked here for 30 years or a new employee. It was really that simple. I included an official mission statement at the bottom of each meeting agenda:



The Bridge Advisory Board's purpose is to:

1. Provide feedback on past issues of The Bridge.
2. Generate story ideas for upcoming issues of the magazine.
3. Identify alumni as sources for future magazine profiles.

Breakthrough

We met quarterly, after the publication of each issue. The first few meetings were quiet. We smiled at each other a lot. Some said the magazine was very pretty (not the feedback I needed). Then, a couple members gave me great story ideas afterward, as I was walking back to my office. Others followed up with emails. This was progress, even if it was slow. Finally, inspiration struck, and I asked my advisory board for some major assistance: a year's worth of feature ideas. I gathered the few story ideas I'd been sitting on — ones I'd never felt confident enough to pitch or had never fully fleshed out — and brought them to the group for a brainstorming session.

With my list in front of me, I went through each idea, starting with “Moonlighting,” a potential article about faculty members who — in addition to their gifts as educators — pursue unique talents, hobbies,

or interests. The group was silent. That idea had been on my list for years, but I'd never found sources for it. (And I still haven't.)

I moved on to the next one: “Responding to Disasters.” Sure, the headline needed work, but the group perked up. Someone mentioned an alum who had survived a bombing in Uganda while studying abroad. Another alum, a professional photographer, had flown to his home country of Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, shooting haunting images of destruction. The alumni relations director sent me their contacts. The group was getting warmed up, and now we were getting somewhere. They had sources!

We forged ahead to the next feature topic: chronic illness. A professor promised to put me in touch with faculty experts who could weigh in. A department chair knew an alum who was being treated for Lyme disease. Our design team suggested ways they could illustrate the story, with maps of the human body and enlarged microscopic cells.

By the end of the meeting, we had planned out two years' worth of features — along with sources for each. While we liked all of the

With adequate time for planning, themes emerge. Our Spring 2016 theme: life and life-changing. This story about the prosthetic hand our engineering students built for a 5-year-old girl fit in perfectly.

CAMPUS

BRAIN WAVES



Messiah engineering students Jason Yoder '17, Jessica Raboic '17 and Tim Gover '17 test a prosthetic hand, which was printed on the campus 3-D printer, to aid 5-year-old Emmy, who was born missing the fingers on her right hand.

Raptor Hand project helps little girl

MESSIAH ENGINEERING STUDENTS VENTURE INTO PROSTHETICS

A 5-year-old girl gets ready to play outside. She slips on her sneakers, grabs her helmet and fastens on her hand. Yes, her hand.

Messiah's engineering students have ventured into prosthetics, the design and construction of artificial limbs. Tim Gover '17, Jessica Raboic '17 and Jason Yoder '17, under the direction of Biomedical Engineering Professor Emily Farrar '16,

created a prosthetic hand from the campus 3-D printer. Using an open-source design called Raptor Hand, the students downloaded the plans and began adapting it specifically for Emily "Emmy" Hoffman, who was born missing the fingers on her right hand.

First learning about the Raptor Hand design at a 2015 prosthetics conference, Farrar contacted a local prosthetist, Eric Shoemaker from Ability Prosthetics Orthotics in Mechanicsburg. She told him she had some key ingredients available: a 3-D printer and some engineering students looking for a project.

"Students going into biomedical engineering love the idea of prosthetics, because it sounds like engineering of the human body," said Farrar, "recruiting a

functional limb based on engineering principles to help someone. It fully encapsulates what biomedical engineering is." While Emmy had mastered many activities—catching a ball, unwrapping a cupcake, brushing her teeth—she needed both hands to hold the handlebars of a bicycle.

"STUDENTS GOING INTO BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING LOVE THE IDEA OF PROSTHETICS, BECAUSE IT SOUNDS LIKE ENGINEERING OF THE HUMAN BODY."

— Emily Farrar '10, professor of biomedical engineering at Messiah College

Shoemaker, providing medical guidance and expertise, connected the Collab team with Emmy's parents, who happen to be family friends of his, in Cheltenham, Pa.

The Raptor Hand Project is just one of many organized through the Collaboratory, an internal non-profit organization of Messiah College that engineering

students must participate in during the course of five semesters for class credit. The Collab provides the funding, mentorship and administrative oversight for the project, but the work is done by the students.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity that Messiah gives us," said Raboic of the project, "to have a hands-on experience in an area of our field of engineering with others who have similar aspirations."

The team, whose members received internship credit for the project, gathered anthropomorphic measurements and began the initial design. They visited the anatomy lab at Messiah to examine a cadaver's ligament function and wrist movement, so they could mimic it in their structure. The prosthetic fingers move through motion detection in the gauntlet, located on the wrist portion of the prosthetic. Also, if Emmy outgrows or breaks the prosthetic, it's inexpensive and easy to print a new one.

"Doing this project has really shown me how to connect what I am learning in engineering and apply it to a real-world application," said Gover.

Once the prototype was ready, the team presented it to Emmy at Ability's Exton office for an initial fitting by Shoemaker March 25. After some tweaks, the students printed the final version pink—at Emmy's request—and gave it to her April 22. Yoder even added her name with some hearts on the hand.

"I could see her eyes light up," said Emmy's mom Jocelyn Hoffman. "It made me smile. I felt like, 'Oh she likes it! She's not going to be embarrassed about it.' When she had the option of choosing pink, that made her very happy."

Now Emmy will be able to reach the childhood milestones of riding a bike, thanks to Messiah's



Students downloaded the plans for Raptor Hand, an open-source design online, and adapted it specifically for Emmy.

engineering students.

"The encounter with Emily reinforced the career path in engineering I am headed on," said Yoder. "Seeing a creation that I helped bring into fruition have an impact on another life was moving and humbling."

Coincidentally, Emmy's father Tom Hoffman '96 graduated from Messiah with a degree in psychology and a minor in criminology, which led him to a career in federal law enforcement.

"Twenty years later," he said, "my alma mater is still giving back—not just to me but to my daughter. I am very excited that the Collab students have adopted this project, and I hope they know they are truly making a difference in Emily's quality of life."

— Gabrielle Kurtz '18

EMMY'S AMAZING HAND



Finding no picture books about children with limb deficiencies, Jocelyn Hoffman wrote one—Emmy's Amazing Hand—for her daughter. The book shows all the things Emmy can do with her special hand—pulling a zipper, picking up cereal—and a few things she shouldn't (such as picking her nose).

"Anyone can read this book," said Hoffman. "It's for children, but it encourages adults. When Emmy was born, there was nothing like this on the market."

THE BOOK CAN BE PURCHASED AT MESSIAH.EDU/EMMYSHANDBOOK AND A PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS BENEFIT CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT MESSIAH.EDU/COLLABORATORY

ideas, we talked through which six to pitch to senior administration for the year. It came down to which stories had generated the most discussion — and the most sources — among the group. For the calendar year 2016, we narrowed it down to these:

WINTER 2016

Theme: nostalgia versus moving forward

- Scraps of Time — a photo-driven piece that takes a look back at the college's archives.
- Leaps of Faith — following your heart, following your calling.

SPRING 2016

Theme: life and life-changing

- The Class That Changed My Life — alums discuss a course that made a difference in their lives.
- Midwifery — an age-old practice gains popularity.

SUMMER 2016

Theme: undergraduate and graduate

- Commencement — profiling outstanding seniors from the Class of 2016.
- Graduate Programs — tremendous growth in programs, new campus, new School of Graduate Studies.

(Yes, we're a quarterly, so you're probably thinking there should be eight. To clarify, the feature well of our fall issue includes our annual report. I like to think the columns of numbers in that issue make the other three possible.)

Some of our great ideas didn't make it into the 2016 lineup, so we banked them for 2017. The "Responding to Disasters" article (retitled "Faith Amid Crisis") held until our Spring 2017 issue. The second feature in that issue is "10,000 Hours," which details the time, dedication, and passion required to master a skill (such as solving a Rubik's cube or composing a symphony). The underlying theme of the issue is time — time being of the essence (in the event of a



disaster), time invested (in mastering a skill), and even racing against the clock (as evidenced by our champion swimmer featured in the sports section).

Forward Momentum

Mapping out our features a year (or two) in advance has changed my role as editor dramatically. For one, I work more efficiently with our creative director. She can glance at my features list, schedule a professional photographer for a half-day shoot, and knock out the images for multiple stories, potentially across multiple issues. And we collaborate far in advance, including identifying which stories would be better depicted through sketches and drawing — midwifery, anyone? — over photography.

I also have time to sidestep editorial land mines. For example, our upcoming 2017 summer feature was originally titled “Couples and Money.” One of our advisory board members brought it to my attention that unmarried people — which could include everyone from recent alums to widows — should be included in the story. This was something I hadn’t considered. The article could have advanced through all the proper channels and been printed, after which I would’ve no doubt been chastised by someone happily single with a lot to say financially.

“The board as a whole remains important and invested – we still meet quarterly – but the individual relationships I’ve developed outside of the meetings have proven invaluable.”

I am able to be more intentional about the four issues as a package. Themes emerge. Our midwifery story was originally slated for winter, but then it occurred to me: Why not move it to spring, a time of birth, rebirth, and new life? All the sudden, “The Class That Changed My Life” seemed like a natural fit to serve as the second feature of that issue. Maybe that’s a small thing no one noticed, but the theme of “life and life-changing” stayed in my mind as I put the spring issue together, and I was able to weave it into the smaller sections of the magazine. Our engineering students built a prosthetic hand for a 5-year-old girl (life-changing). A wildlife biologist spent her days protecting monarch butterfly eggs (life). A nurse traveled overseas to adopt a baby (life and life-changing). The stories — all different — went together.

And because I can see our feature stories so far in advance, I feel more informed (and, frankly, can speak more intelligently) when the Messiah community comes to me with story ideas. A student recently contacted me about an art program she’d implemented for children in hospitals. Would I be interested in writing a story? Instead of giving the usual “We’ll be in touch ...” (which always sounds like the brushoff), I was able to tell her, “Yes! We’re writing a story about the college’s permanent art collection in the Winter 2017 issue, and your story could make a great sidebar.” When an alum wrote to me asking why I didn’t include more stories about women, careers, and family, I wrote back that, in fact, I would be writing about that very topic in a feature titled “Seasons of Life” (formerly known as “Couples and Money”), which will publish in the Summer 2017 issue.

Those meetings with senior administration? They’ve become much more streamlined and effective. We still meet every quarter, but

The two features in our Spring 2016 issue provided the foundation for our theme: midwifery (life) and alumni's favorite, impactful college classes (life-changing).

FEATURE STORY

The Class That CHANGED my LIFE

BY JEFF VRABEL

NOTE: DESPITE THE HEADLINE, THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE NOT ALL ABOUT CLASSES. WHEN WE ASKED ALUMNI ABOUT WHAT COURSES MADE THEIR MESSIAH EXPERIENCES TRANSFORMATIONAL, MANY DREW IN PROFESSORS, EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND, IN SOME CASES, ENTIRE MAJORS. A LIFE-CHANGING CLASS, AFTER ALL, ISN'T CONFINED TO ONE ROOM TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK. IT PLAYS OUT AFTER HOURS, ON WEEKENDS, SOMETIMES FOR YEARS AFTER IT ENDS. IN SOME CASES, IT GOES TO A HAWAIIAN RAINFOREST.

THAT SAID, MESSIAH HAS SOME GREAT CLASSES.

Tegan Brozyna '07 pinpoints a specific Messiah course that changed her life: **Textiles Surface Design, taught by Professor of Art Christine Forysthe. Brozyna, now a painter and mixed media artist, says the class opened up her definition of "materials."**

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instead of pitching two stories at a time, I give them the whole year's worth — complete with sources, themes, and cover options — in one meeting. The best part is that these features have already been vetted through a 20-person board, so it's easy for the group to give them the green light. Plus, our president, who writes an essay for each issue that ties into the features, can now prepare these in advance because she knows the themes and stories in development.

I still keep the remaining three meetings on the calendar. Why? Because the president has veto power. Because the annual editorial calendar — while great — is not written in stone. I have to be flexible if a more important story emerges. When the college created our School of Graduate Studies last year, it made good editorial sense to highlight each of the many successful grad programs in a comprehensive article. So at one of those senior admin meetings, we discussed where that new feature would fit in the existing calendar, and the Summer 2016 issue made the most sense. With the year at a glance, it was easy to see — and talk about — how to shuffle the stories around.

The board as a whole remains important and invested — we still meet quarterly — but the individual relationships I've developed

outside of the meetings have proven invaluable. Sometimes, it's just a quick email from a colleague across campus: "Hey, there's a student on the swim team who's creating a renewable fuel source in the lab. Interested?" Or a department chair who wants to meet for coffee. Or a dean who knocks on my office door to drop off his department's event calendar. The important thing is that this cross-section of campus now knows to funnel their story ideas to me. I have eyes and ears everywhere in the college community.

Eight years into my job, I now have the time and resources to craft the features — and the rest of the stories — in *The Bridge*. I can call one more source. I can go back and rewrite sections, tighten them up and make them better. I can scrap an idea completely instead of forcing it to work. Who knew that looking ahead to a year's worth of articles — which sounds so daunting — would actually simplify the work I do day to day? We've streamlined those layers that I thought were so entrenched — and that has made all the difference.

Anna Seip is editor of *The Bridge*, Messiah College's quarterly alumni magazine. When she's not writing and editing, she sews costumes for high school musicals. Connect at tinyurl.com/linkedin-seip.