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Prof. Peter Baumann
Department of Philosophy
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Dear Prof. Baumann,

Our walk on the Swarthmore Campus a week ago last Monday was indeed a pleasure. Despite many new and lovely buildings - Lang, Kohlberg, new Science Buildings, Dorms and Athletics - Swarthmore does not seem to have changed that much. As I stood and overlooked the the Scott outdoor auditorium, I was deeply moved by how tall and stately the trees had grown. When I graduated in 1940 this amphitheater did not exist - we marched in under the gothic vaulted ceiling of Clothier (before it was partitioned into a social center, bookstore and campus lounge).

In 1936 I thrilled to find myself at this beautiful place where students and faculty were as interested in music and philosophy and the sciences as I was. Long before Sharples dining hall existed we ate on white linen table clothes served by pretty local maids in the dining hall in Parrish Hall. This was the locus of college life. In the hall outside the dining room, confronting those who entered, was a stern portrait of Quaker Isaac Hopper. Often some talented student was playing the piano with tunes from the Big Bands or from Chopin in a side room. Though women's sororities had been abolished three years earlier, five men's fraternities still flourished moderately and happily and we had a undefeated football team.

On the other hand, these were the years of Roosevelt's second term with all the excitement of the New Deal and great debates over Fascism, Communism, the Spanish Civil War. Quaker proclivity for peace was battling with "Collective Security"-against-Fascist-aggression - before Pearl Harbor decided the issue in 1942. There was the American Student Union, and some of us were just beginning to feel it was wrong that Swarthmore had no African-American students, and to recognize that Womens' rights did not end with the suffrage. Walking in front of Parrish last month I was glad to see student's T-shirts with graffiti against gender and sexual abuse.

1936 to 1940 were the last years of President Aydelotte's 19-year presidency. I did not then recognize the greatness of his role though I participated in, enjoyed thoroughly, and was kicked out of, the Honors System that was his signature. We loved him - in part because of the way his ears stuck out. More remarkably I absorbed the love of learning and respect for careful scholarship steeped in a strong sense of social responsibility that he brought to Swarthmore and that I carried away. In seminars we typed our papers on little typewriters, making carbon copies for colleagues. (I worked with my first computer, using IBM cards, twenty years later.) Television - transporting live pictures instantaneously over the air - came as a surprise several years after we graduated. The internet, cell phones, Blackberries and I-pods along with nuclear bombs, were unheard of then.

Despite changes in facilities, technologies and persons, the Swarthmore Campus and the Crum Woods has only become more beautiful. Integral with this (so far as I can see) the students and faculty are only more intelligent and more dedicated to a spirit and vision that has evolved despite the wars, technological innovations, bubbles and busts of the last 75 years.

Warm Regards,

Brad Angell
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P.S. When we met September 28th you suggested that I might write a "paragraph" about my reflections on revisiting Swarthmore after 70 years. I have no idea what dubious end you had in mind, but whatever it was I hope the above may help. I enjoyed meeting you.

P.S. I am sending you a copy of my A-LOGIC under separate cover.