

OpeningREMARKS

IN THE FLOW

WHEN MY 7-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER BEGAN HER SUMMER SWIMMING LESSONS several weeks ago, I flashed back to my not-so-fond recollections of learning to swim. While my daughter takes to water like a bird dog, I trembled at the thought of plunging into the chilly early morning waters of Cayuga Lake. Standing there on the village dock, I was often adamant to the swimming instructor about not entering the water, but soon enough I'd go, either coaxed or coerced. With a handful of other kids, I'd cling to the dock, shivering, and splash away, working on keeping my head above water.

These days I'm glad to say I have a vastly improved relationship with water. I enjoy swimming—at least in hospitable temperatures—and I spend a great deal of time fishing, which includes standing in 33-degree river water in the middle of winter to catch steelhead trout. No matter the season, I am especially attracted to trout waters, with their meandering paths, ever-changing conditions, and ever-present sounds of movement—water gliding through pools, chugging through riffles, rumbling around boulders.

While all of us are bound to water to varying extents, in this issue you'll find a couple folks whose professional lives are intimately tied to water. Maxwell geography professor Farhana Sultana is deeply committed to ensuring the universal right to water, knowing the devastating impact that contaminated water or a lack of potable water has on the world's poor. For Brigadier General John R. McMahon '77 of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, dealing with the flow of water is the chief challenge as he oversees operations to control unprecedented river levels in the Northwest.

Like any force of Mother Nature, water is capable of both nurturing life and destroying it and must be treated with the utmost respect. How water moves about our world, where it ends up, and how it gets used is inextricably a part of all our lives. We know the importance of conserving and protecting this most precious of our natural resources. And, time and time again, we learn that as much as we try to control water and use it to our advantage, we remain at its mercy.



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SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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