

THE MAGAZINE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

COLUMBIA

WINTER 2009-10



Big Bang Theory

Hurt Locker director
Kathryn Bigelow goes for
the gut — and the head.

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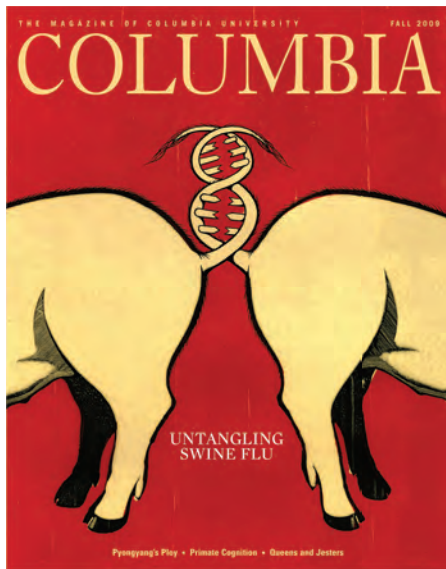
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letters

GRAPHIC BY DESIGN

I've been meaning to write to you for decades. New York is home to some of the best magazine designers in the world: Milton Glaser. Walter Bernard. Will Hopkins. And those are just some of the senior designers. There is plenty of young talent, too. So why is your magazine so poorly designed? It's incredible that it looks so amateurish.

Columbia surely could afford to hire decent publication designers. Columbia is a world-class university, and *Columbia* should reflect that.

Elliott Negin '83JRN
Washington, DC

Congratulations on the Fall cover of *Columbia* ("Untangling Swine Flu"). It is truly inspired.

Dr. H. Peter Metzger '65GSAS
Boulder, CO

I loved the Fall cover. It reminds me of the swine flu cover of the October 5 *New Yorker*.

Hugo Beit '61BUS
New York, NY

CHIMP CHAT

To attempt to teach any organism language, which is the sole property of humans, is a waste of time ("Hanging from

the Language Tree," Fall 2009). Language depends upon what Kurt Goldstein called the abstract attitude. This is the basis of language function, which is the precursor to intellectual function. The transition from the concrete to the abstract occurs in young children. There is then a transition from "the flower" (concrete) to "a flower" (a general, thus an abstract). The abstract attitude is necessary to build a bridge, to clothe oneself, or to farm. No chimpanzee has ever done this, and never will.

Gerald H. Klingon '42CC
New York, NY

UNHEALTHY DEBATE?

I was very disappointed to read *Columbia's* kid-glove treatment of health-care polemicist Betsy McCaughey ("Care Tactics," Fall 2009). While many people working in health-care policy deserve even-handed profiles, McCaughey is not one of them. Her tendency to select a viewpoint and manipulate or distort facts to justify that viewpoint makes her one of the most unproductive and unhelpful participants in the current debate.

As a Columbia graduate working at a health-care nonprofit, I'm embarrassed by her shoot-first, ask-questions-later approach to the truth. This has been a banner year for her distortions, starting with her spring

attacks on comparative effectiveness research and health information technology, and running straight on to her now-infamous efforts to raise fears about the so-called death panels. Her habit of citing legislation from a thick binder would be more credible if she showed even the slightest inclination to interpret the legislation correctly. Health reform needs its critics, but it does not need more of Betsy McCaughey.

While I certainly understand why she would be considered an alumna of note, *Columbia* owes a duty to its readers — all of whom are consumers of a health-care system in need of repair — to avoid glamorizing a woman who is as reckless with the facts as McCaughey.

Brian Wagner '06CC
Washington, DC

I wonder why you published an article focusing on the former lieutenant governor of New York, Betsy McCaughey. Are we to take pride in an alumna who helped sink the Clinton health-care bill and thus trapped the public in a health system deteriorating relentlessly year after year, one who inspires demagogues and extremists by employing fear and deception to attack the pending bills? I would have thought she would have the wisdom of "Harry and

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Louise,” if not to reverse position, at least to acknowledge that the present system is inadequate and must be reformed. More frightening than what she calls “frightening scenarios” will be a failure to effect fundamental reform. Her devotion to infection prevention is laudable, but she ought to refrain from infecting the public mind.

Frederick M. Schweitzer '72GSAS
New York, NY

Frederick M. Schweitzer is professor emeritus of history at Manhattan College.

I am certain that I join hundreds of others in writing to express dismay at your pandering article on Betsy McCaughey. Did you need to postpone any explicit statements that McCaughey is perpetuating misinformation until the next to last paragraph? Would any reader benefit from knowing how much money McCaughey donates to the school and its potential impact on such an affirmative profile? Would notifying your readership of such a tie be in keeping with accepted journalistic practices of disclosure?

I am appalled that this article, no matter how slyly written, stands for balance at your publication.

David Blaustein '83CC
New York, NY

POETIC LICENSE

As a neighbor of Queens poet laureate Julio Marzán, I question his use of metaphor in the comment, “In Queens, no one is displaced. People, languages, cultures just pile up on top of one another” (“Utopia Parkway,” Fall 2009). In such a heap, those on bottom are apt to experience a certain amount of discomfort. I hope that’s not what Marzán meant to say.

Abby Belson '56BC, '59GSAS
Jamaica, NY

FIRST RESPONSE

It is good to learn that Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons will begin exposing students to patient contacts earlier in the dry first two years of the four-year curriculum (“Learning to Listen,”

Fall 2009). I very much enjoyed teaching the doctor-patient relationship course at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine over the past decade, including the years after my retirement from active practice. It is such a wonderful experience helping and watching students begin to use their capabilities in ferreting out the story of a patient’s health history in a compassionate way, performing a thoughtful and caring physical examination, and then being able to develop a plan for action based on an intelligent, informed response to the findings.

Learning to listen, react, and respond when appropriate and necessary during a patient encounter is one of the most critical faculties the student physician must develop and perfect. The lectures and writings of my inspiring teachers at Columbia, such as Drs. Dana Atchley, Robert Loeb, and Yale Kneeland, were wonderful in themselves. For the PS students to be able now to apply that teaching and those principles through involvement with patients early in their medical-education years will help enable PS to graduate even better physicians now.

Richard A. Dickey, M.D. '63PS
Hickory, NC

SIGNIFICANTLY SMALL

The story in your Science, Medicine, and Technology section titled “CO₂ Shell Game” (Fall 2009) is interesting on three counts. (1) It repeats the common fallacy that an increase of a very small number is necessarily significant because when stated as a percentage increase that number seems relatively large.

For example, for something to go from .000001 percent to .000002 percent is a 100 percent increase, yet remains almost infinitesimally small.

For the CO₂ content of our air to go from 280 parts per million (ppm) to 385 parts per million is indeed a 37.5 percent increase—from .00028 percent to .000385 percent. Both are very small percentages, and their significance is still quite unknown.

LETTERS

Let us not jump too hastily to conclusions from this mathematical exercise.

I studied glacial geology at Cornell, so I have at least some grasp of the issues involved.

(2) The Columbia geochemists have given us an average figure of 280 ppm for the past 2.1 million years. That is a long period of time. Can they give us the highs and lows over those years? Were there times when the percentage was above 385 ppm? Below 280 ppm? It seems possible there were.

(3) The research team is quoted as stating that a “large and rapid increase in CO₂ [occurred] about 55 million years ago.”

To my knowledge, man was not creating much CO₂ 55 million years ago. If natural causes were responsible for that increase, is it not likely that natural causes might be responsible for CO₂ and climate changes now?

Gordon E. White '57JRN
Hardyville, VA

Columbia earth scientist Bärbel Hönisch, author of the study in question, responds:

First, small differences in the concentrations of CO₂, methane, or water vapor have a large impact on global temperature.

Second, the value of 280 parts per million (ppm) referenced in my paper is not an average value over the past 2.1 million years, but the average maximum value, calculated for several distinct time periods. The highest total CO₂ concentrations in these time periods varied between 250 and 300 ppm, and the lowest values between 180 and 210 ppm. Importantly, climate was warmer during periods when average CO₂ levels were high and colder during periods when average CO₂ levels were low. The high values that we observe today exceed, by far, the natural levels of the past 2.1 million years.

Last, the massive increase of greenhouse gases 55 million years ago was indeed caused by natural processes. Climate warmed dramatically worldwide, the ocean became more acidic due to the higher CO₂, and wide-scale extinction occurred among marine organisms. The comparison of natural events in the past with the modern anthropogenic CO₂ increase is important for a better understanding of

the consequences of this current increase. As in the past, natural processes eventually will neutralize this man-made increase in CO₂, but it will take tens of thousands of years.

GRAND MEMORIES

Michael Kimmage's review of Constance Rosenblum's *Boulevard of Dreams* brought back memories (“Heartbreak Highway,” Fall 2009). I lived at 2685 Grand Concourse from the time that I was two and a half in 1933 until 1954, and a relative lived in the apartment until 1974.

It was a grand address. When you said that you lived on the Concourse, people were impressed. Thomas Wolfe called it the “Park Avenue of the Bronx.”

My friends and I went over to Poe Cottage in Poe Park regularly. Small as it was, we still found it interesting each time. Across the street from my block was the Home for the Indigent Blind. For a child, it was a fine learning experience in compassion.

There were lovely restaurants, good shopping, movie theaters nearby, and even the Windsor off the Concourse, which was a Subway Circuit theater akin to Summer Stock. The Ascot Theatre was a good walk from home and had art and foreign movies. Farther south was the Concourse Plaza Hotel, which in its day was the height of elegance. My great-uncle Alex used to treat the family to holiday dinners there. I dreamed of sitting at the bar in a little black dress having a drink with my date when I grew up. That seemed so sophisticated.

It was a shame to see the Concourse go downhill and to witness the decline of the hotel. I ought to go back and see its resurgence.

Frances Brocker Rolband '52GS, '54TC
Charlotte, NC

GAMES OF GREED

Thank you, *Columbia*, for once again printing just-in-time material that addresses our current economic situation (“Clean Money,” Fall 2009). The concluding sentences of David Craig's review of Geoffrey Heal's *When Principles Pay: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Bottom Line* suggest that the mod-

els put forth by Smith and Friedman worked until their recklessness caused disaster.

There are, of course, debates raging across the country about the causes of and cures for the collapse, but I think none have the courage to address the ultimate solution.

The economic game we have been playing is one that, by its very nature, breeds greed and avarice. Some people achieve their needs within legal but questionable moral boundaries, and others push the legal boundaries. In all cases, the aim is to win. That implies that someone else must lose. When the obsessive nature of winning overtook the winners in their creation of artificial capital, then the fox got captured by the game.

I believe that people are eager for a new game. The market will find the way to reward the companies that are willing to sacrifice extravagance for real contribution to the marketplace. Real market growth comes from inspirational leadership, not deceptive leadership.

People will work their butts off for a leader whom they know is (1) working harder than they are, and (2) sharing the wealth with them. Conversely, people will seek every opportunity to surreptitiously get even with the boss who does not have their best interests at heart. In the long run, the leader with integrity is good for the economy.

Reverend C. Mark Ealy '71BUS
Lewis Center, OH

ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE

I must respond to Marshal Greenblatt's letter in the Fall 2009 issue (“Accentuating the Negative”).

As a veteran of World War II who flew 35 combat missions over Germany with the 8th Air Force, I take great offense at his remarks about Columbia University “denigrating our armed forces,” continuing to show its “outright hostility to America,” and its “routine disdain for soldiers.” These are signs of paranoia.

My feelings about Columbia University have always been positive. It would be interesting to find out what contributions Greenblatt has made to Columbia, from

which he graduated 48 years ago. Is he not proud of the education that he received at Columbia? Did that education not serve him well in his career?

Constructive criticism is one thing. Mr. Greenblatt's sour grapes-type of criticism is in very poor taste.

I give your editorial staff credit for printing his letter.

Stan Edelman, M.D. '49CC '53PS
New York, NY

For the first two paragraphs of Marshal Greenblatt's letter, I thought he was praising the magazine!

Eric Schneck '80SEAS
Brooklyn, NY

JOB FARE

I am a Bulgarian lawyer, educated at Oxford and at Columbia Law School, who has been practicing international law in the city of London for the past 11 years. I was proud to read about Valeria Panayotova's high ambitions and concrete plans for the future ("Pomp and Reduced Circumstance," Summer 2009).

To all of those kids today who have aspirations similar to Panayotova's, from wherever in the world they may come, my advice is this: Don't be disheartened in following your dreams by people such as Allen Byrum, who claim to have vastly superior experience to you and aim to knock you down.

Success is all about self-esteem, hard work, and ambitious yet realistic plans. Self-esteem is not the exclusive domain of any particular geographic locale. A SIPA graduate with "30-some years in international business" should know that.

Puzant Merdinian '98 LAW
London, England

I was surprised to find Allen Byrum's sarcastic sentence in the opening pages of *Columbia*: "Apparently the self-esteem movement has migrated to Eastern Europe."

The article that seemingly upset Byrum was describing recent SIPA graduate Valeria Panayotova's interest in advising mul-

tionals on their international strategies. Whether one attributes Ms. Panayotova's ambitious plans to her youthful idealism or to a sense of entitlement is a matter of personal opinion. However, it is not necessary to overgeneralize or make assumptions and derogatory statements toward the entire region of Eastern Europe due to a negative personal opinion of one individual.

In an age when everyone seems so cautious about discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or religion, I frequently encounter people who assume that Eastern Europe is somehow exempt from this principle. I was especially surprised that *Columbia* magazine had selected this letter for publication.

Ia Topuria '04GS
New York, NY

I hope that people would have greater empathy toward graduates who have had a difficult time with the current job market than was shown by the two letters in the Fall issue ("Kids Today . . .").

I wish those with good ambitions, even unrealistic ones, the best of luck in their job searches, networking, and any venture they create.

Barry Zorman '02GSAS
Phoenix, AZ

Your sampling of five recent grads to highlight a difficult job market was a small and inaccurate group. It reflected more the fact that these alumni chose their majors poorly in light of the economy. Had the author included a graduate of the School of Nursing, a different picture would have emerged. Throughout the history of the school, through depressions and roaring job markets, there has been virtually 100 percent job placement. Grads can walk out of Commencement and find a job at a starting salary that makes decent housing in Manhattan affordable. Kudos to retiring dean Mary O. Munding.

R. J. Oliver, R.N. '78NRS
New York, NY

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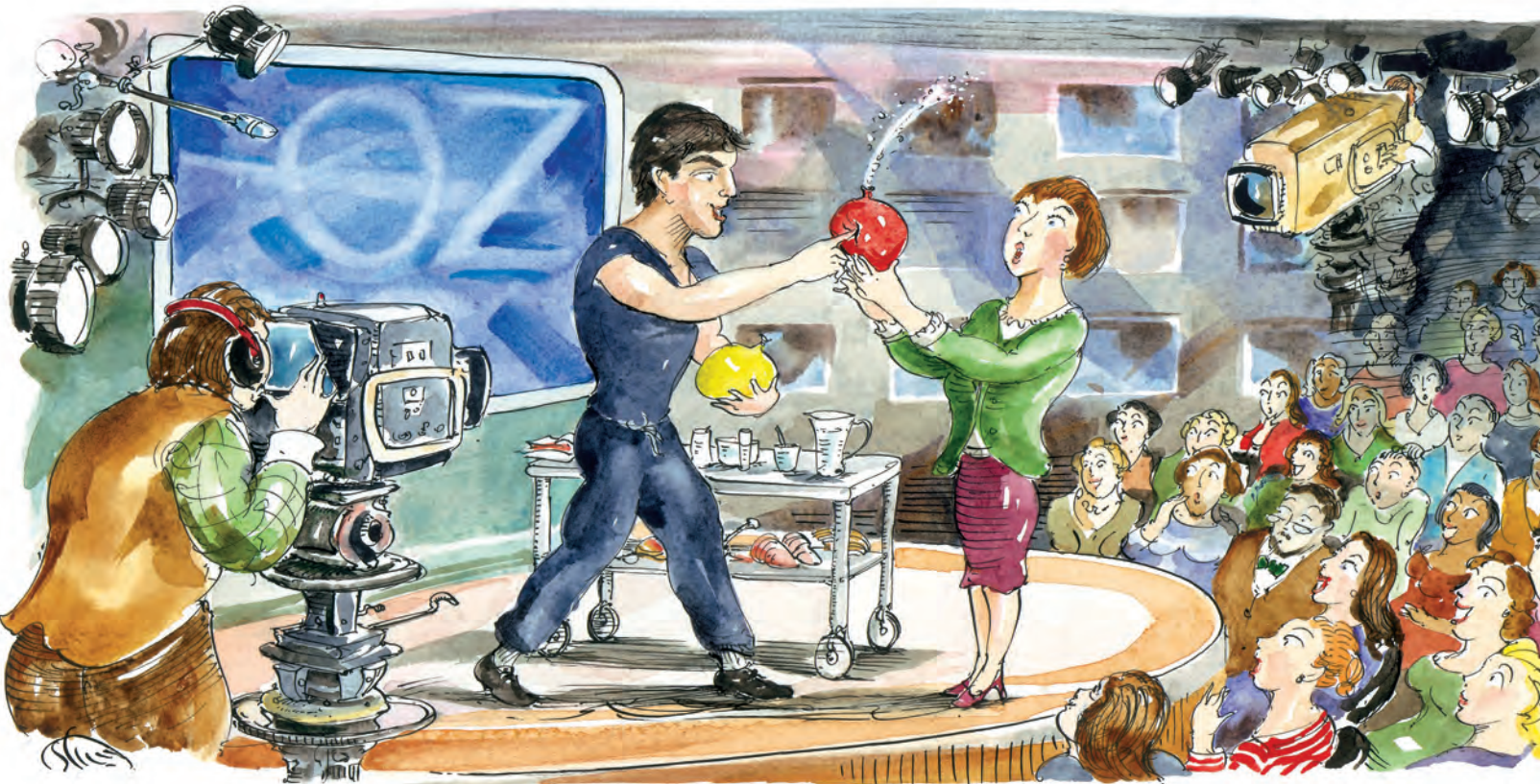
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The Right Stuff



COLLEGE WALK



That's Healthfotainment!

It's 40 minutes to showtime and heart surgeon Mehmet Oz is in David Letterman's old dressing room on the sixth floor of 30 Rockefeller Plaza, studying his script, greeting guests, and making sure the water balloons are ready.

Meanwhile, in the studio, his audience warmer, a chubby comedian named Richie Byrne, keeps a crowd of 200 people, most of them women, giggling. He pats his rotund belly. "If I were a numeral, I'd be a zero," he says. "Oz would be a one." Then he speaks of what he's learned in the past three months while working on *The Dr. Oz Show*: Eat green vegetables. Avoid sugar. Exercise at least a half hour a day.

A reasonable person might ask: Isn't this stuff obvious? Maybe, but according to a 2009 report by the National Center for Health Statistics, 34 percent of American adults are obese. And coronary disease is the number-one killer in America.

That's where Dr. Oz, professor of cardiac surgery at Columbia and attending surgeon at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, comes in. A decade ago, when he was performing 450 open-heart surgeries a year, he couldn't understand why so many of his patients didn't know how to take care of themselves. He'd come home and tell his wife, Lisa, that he wished he could have gotten to those patients sooner to explain to them what was at stake. "She challenged me to do something about it," Oz said later. Then Lisa Oz, a TV producer, pushed an idea: they would create a TV show that focused on health.

They called it *Second Opinion with Dr. Oz*. Oz scored a coup when his friend Gayle King, known to many as Oprah Winfrey's best friend, convinced Winfrey to appear on the first episode. Following that taping, in 2004, Winfrey began inviting the doctor on *her* show. He soon became a regular with his own segment, "Ask Dr. Oz."

Five years and 55 *Oprah Winfrey Show* appearances later, Oz is one of the biggest stars in daytime television with a hit show of his own. The straight-talking guy in the blue scrubs — he still operates on 200 patients a year — dispenses frank, commonsense advice about health and fitness. His book *YOU: The Owner's Manual*, which he coauthored with Dr. Michael F. Roizen (and with the help of Lisa, a Reiki master), was so successful that it spawned five other *YOU* books. There's *YOU: On A Diet*; *YOU: Staying Young*; *YOU: Having A Baby*; and so on.

"People change their habits based on how they feel, not based on what they know," Oz said. "You have to connect with your patients emotionally and not just state facts. They need to understand, and *feel*, what is at stake." During a recent segment, he used computer animation to show a 30-something smoker that her face will turn into an accordion of crevices by age 65 if she doesn't quit.

Most in the audience seem to connect with Oz. They listen attentively. Some take

notes. Some admire the doc's good looks. One middle-aged woman, sitting in the back row, quips to a friend, "He can operate on me anytime."

Oz said he tries to keep the hour-long show upbeat, surprising, and fun. A typical episode has one segment on nutrition, another on how to detect an illness, another on an exercise technique, and there is usually one taboo topic (discussed in what he calls the show's "no embarrassment zone"), such as how to read your health in the appearance of your stool, or what our bodily gas tells us. Today, it is about why women feel a need to urinate more often than men do.

A volunteer from the crowd is brought onstage and Oz directs her to hold a balloon filled with nearly a liter of water, about the amount women can keep in their bladder. Then, pressing down on the balloon with his hand, he demonstrates how the uterus pushes on the bladder. As he presses, water squirts out. "Men, generally speaking, don't have to deal with this problem," Oz says.

In October, a month after it premiered, *The Dr. Oz Show* was already one of the top syndicated shows, averaging 4.25 million viewers an episode, based on Nielsen ratings. Overall, it ranked number 13. *The Oprah Winfrey Show* came in fourth.

In many ways Oz is using a formula that catapulted Oprah to media baron status: teach people to lead healthier lives. But Oz realizes that knowing what's good for you isn't enough. Society needs a nudge. For that reason, he thinks there should be more health policies that create fitness incentives.

"We have to make it easier for people to make healthier decisions," Oz said. "That means having fresh and affordable produce at corner bodegas. Have gyms at workplaces. Where I work, Sony subsidizes the healthy food, so you have to pay more if you want french fries."

Do people still buy them? "Yes, but not as much as before."

— Cindy Rodriguez

State's Man

With the clock ticking before his speaking engagement at Faculty House, Ian Kelly '86GSAS was a block away, standing by the busy elevators at the School of International and Public Affairs. Kelly was cutting it close, but he wanted to return to the place it had all started; his finger instinctively hit 12.

Inside the car, packed with students and faculty, Timothy Frye, director of Columbia's Harriman Institute, thanked Kelly for taking time to come back on this late September afternoon. Kelly wouldn't have it any other way. "Secretary Clinton is at the White House today, so I have some time."

Kelly, who received his PhD in Slavic languages and literature, had returned to Columbia to give a talk on U.S.-Russian relations.

Sitting on a couch at Harriman, Kelly recalled his experience working closely with the Soviet Consulate, coordinating a student trip to what was then Leningrad. "That's when I got interested in the Foreign Service," Kelly said. "As a result of my experience — you know we have more of an interdisciplinary approach at Harriman — I found myself wanting to break out of language and literature studies and do other things."

Now, Kelly is the spokesman for the State Department, a job he began last May after a long career abroad and in Washington. (Before Hillary Clinton chose Kelly as spokesman, he was head of the Russia desk during the Bush administration.) Shadowing the Secretary of State means days full of strong-willed foreign ministers, sensi-

tive negotiations, and meetings that tend to end in "lateral." Then, Kelly has to come before the State Department microphones to tell the public (what he can) about it.

At Kelly's first daily briefing as spokesman, even his boss was giving him a hard time. Clinton joked, "Not only is Ian the new face of the State Department, but as an added qualification, he is a long-suffering Cubs fan." The Secretary then turned the podium over to its "new occupant," and the true cross fire began. As detailed questions flew his way, about everything from an uprising in Sri Lanka that killed 400 people to Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's being prevented from seeing a doctor, Kelly relied heavily on a big binder, flipping through thousands of

pages for official three-line statements, while apologizing for each delay. Even in such a high-profile role, Kelly's own views are seldom heard. "I can't color outside the lines," he said. "I can't give my own opinion — it's not about me."

During his talk at Faculty House, Kelly did give his own opinion, sharing his thoughts on what he has seen during his career. In front of a portable blue backdrop with "The Harriman Institute" repeated in white letters, Kelly stood at the lectern, draped his fingers confidently over the edges, and said, "First of all, let me say it's nice to be home." He then acknowledged

two of his former professors, who were seated in the front row.

When one of them, Columbia economist Padma Desai, asked Kelly about the possibility of Vladimir Putin returning to the Russian presidency, Kelly chuckled. He acknowledged that Putin "performed a real service to his country" by strengthening Russia's self-perception, and even commended him for realizing that Russia needs a new generation of leaders like Dmitry Medvedev. Then, Kelly's tone darkened a shade. "Whether or not [Putin] is completely comfortable with going into the sunset, though, is a different matter."

Kelly also shared a few personal anecdotes, including the time he spent locked in the library in the basement of SIPA. It was a place without windows or distractions — for Kelly, as good a place as any to finish his dissertation.

The thesis, which is about the treatment of history in Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, turns out to contain a bit of foreshadowing. Kelly writes, "Here, I address the problem of how man participates in the forward movement of history."

It's a problem he speaks to today — just not in a windowless basement.

— Allegra Panetto '09BC

Timely Measures

At 6:16 p.m., the door to the Presidential Room of Faculty House clicked open, and necks craned toward the entrance. Joseph Stiglitz, Columbia's bearded, bespectacled, and perennially late Nobel Prize-winning economist, grinned at the standing-room-only crowd that had gathered for a discussion, sponsored by the Committee on Global Thought, about the role of governments and central banks in creating a new financial structure. Stiglitz made his way to an empty seat at the front table beside two similarly bearded panelists, economists Adam Posen and Benjamin J. Cohen '59CC, '63GSAS, who had been awaiting his arrival since 6:00 p.m.

Without ceremony, Stiglitz launched into an assault on Wall Street banks and their Washington allies, the villains in his decades-long campaign against what he and other critics call market fundamentalism. "It's a lack of regulation, not low interest rates, that was the source of the financial markets debacle," he told the audience. "Banks happen to have 51 percent of the votes in Congress."

Maybe he's tardy to speaking engagements, but when it comes to ideas, such

as increased market regulation, Stiglitz, a University Professor of economics, often seems ahead of the curve: demonized and marginalized at first, and later — sometimes many years later — embraced.

Take his thoughts on gross domestic product. As a senior economic adviser to President Clinton in the mid-1990s, Stiglitz locked horns with the coal industry over a "green GDP" campaign that he supported. He and others in government had pushed to incorporate the cost of environmental damage and depletion when calculating gross domestic product, the predominant measure of an economy's performance. That would have made the social costs of energy production more apparent to policy makers — a troubling prospect for producers. Big Coal lobbied hard, and the plan was killed. The idea wasn't.

In 2000, Stiglitz ruffled more feathers. As chief economist of the World Bank, he launched a remarkable attack on the World Bank's sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, accusing it of pushing Washington's economic agenda — privatization and the lifting of price subsidies — on the

developing world. The argument won him admirers in policy circles of Asia, but caused an uproar at the Bank's Washington headquarters that led to his abrupt resignation.

Stiglitz continued his endorsement of government involvement in markets, and continued making enemies in the United States. Though he won the 2001 Nobel Prize in economics for research into the inefficiencies that arise when two parties to a transaction (say, a bad driver and his unsuspecting insurance company) don't share the same information, in his own country he remained a pariah among policy makers.

But Stiglitz embraced his opposition status. He wrote books attacking the dogma of market liberalization in developing countries, and traveled abroad to advise foreign governments.

Then, in January 2008, while attending the annual meeting of the American Economic Association in New Orleans, Stiglitz received a call from France. The man on the other end was Jean-Paul Fitoussi, a prominent French economist. Fitoussi had a message from his president, Nicolas Sarkozy. "Sarkozy would like you to lead an

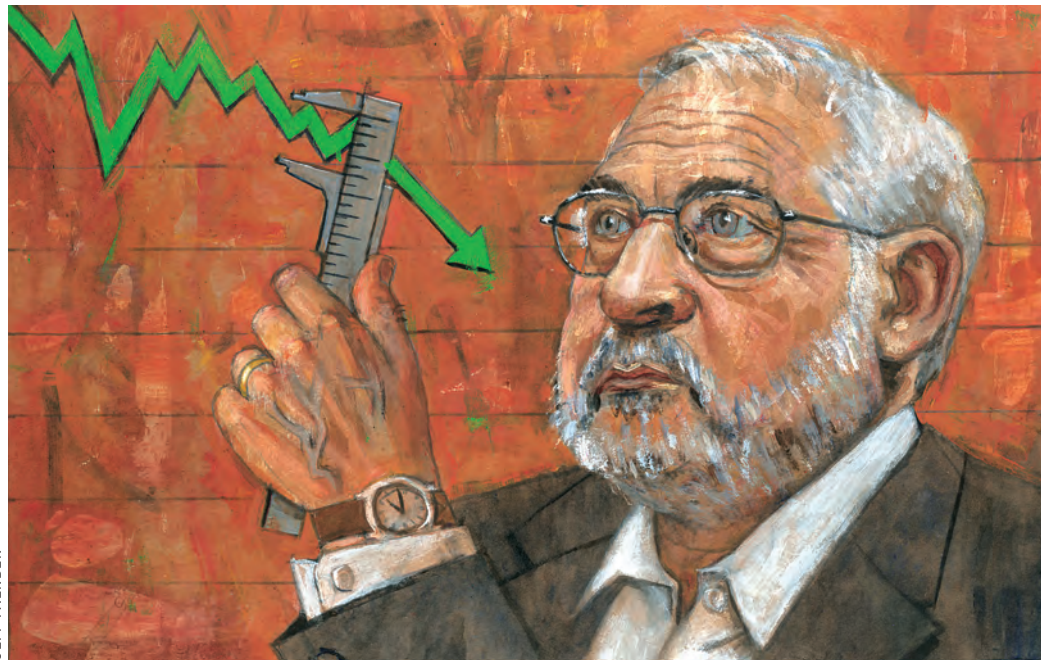
official commission on the measurement of economic progress,” Fitoussi said.

Sarkozy hoped his commission would encourage governments to measure the well-being of citizens, not just raw output. And he knew that that would challenge decades of economic orthodoxy. Which meant he needed a fighter. “If I give this kind of report to be done by the mainstream,” Sarkozy told Fitoussi, “we will never come out with something different.”

Stiglitz was in many ways the ideal choice, a respected academic who can rouse a crowd with crisp provocations and wonky economic concepts. One of his favorites: “If you measure things wrong, you’ll do the wrong things.”

By its nature, says Stiglitz, GDP treats spending on prisons as it would on more productive services like education, and distorts the economy’s picture when economic bubbles, like in housing or finance, inflate to dangerous levels. GDP also ignores the depletion of resources, environmental degradation, and health impacts of mining in developing countries. “The result of that is the well-being of the citizens of the country can go down at the same time that the GDP goes up,” he says.

In the United States, Stiglitz points out, GDP has begun to rise even as the unemployment rate hangs above 10 percent, painting a misleading picture for policy makers. “When the numbers that a government announces seem incongruous with what happens in



JEFF FAERBER

people’s lives,” he says, “the public thinks the numbers are being manipulated.”

The commission’s work, touching on new ways to measure quality of life, economic sustainability, and technical adjustments to the current GDP metric, became the centerpiece of an October conference of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the so-called rich-nations club, which has taken up an investigation of its policy conclusions. It has also prompted the influential G-20 to call for improvements in the way official statistics measure the well-being of citizens.

“The job of an economist is not just to describe the world,” Stiglitz has said, “but to work to improve it.”

Has history finally come around to Stiglitz’s activist vision?

Time will tell, but with the backing of a head of state and increasing support in America for government intervention in markets, Stiglitz is anxious to seize the moment. “You can push on an issue, and if it’s not an opportune time, it won’t have an impact,” he says.

— Daniel Sorid '99CC, '09JRN

Spin City

They took the stage dressed in silky high-collared Chinese shirts, blue jeans, and white sneakers. Each performer held a pair of sticks connected by a length of string, along which spun an hourglass-shaped spool about the size of a pineapple.

On this Saturday night in October, 120 young adults had shown up at the

Roone Arledge Auditorium to attend an anti-domestic violence dinner benefit hosted by Kappa Phi Lambda, an Asian-interest sorority. At buffet tables, guests heaped Styrofoam plates with fried rice, noodles, and spicy string beans made in Chinatown before sitting down for a night of performances.

The students onstage were members of the Chinese Yo-Yo Club. In a choreographed routine set to two music remixes (one from the soundtrack of the movie *Amélie*), the group members spun, tossed, and caught the spools, called diabolos. The audience shouted and high-clapped for the “whips” (whip-rolling the diablo at

a high point midair), the jump-rope–style jumps accompanied by high tosses, and the round-the-leg “orbits.” When a diabolo was dropped, the crowd responded with silence.

Vincent Liao ’11CC, a computer engineering major and president and cofounder of this satellite club within the Chinese Students Club (CSC), took center stage for his solo. In the early 19th century, diabolo, a descendant of the traditional Chinese yo-yo (itself dating at least to the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, 25–220 AD), was an especially upper-class fad in France and Britain. In 1905, a Frenchman named Gustave Philippart trademarked the term *diabolo* in Britain, helping to revive the game. Now, a century later, Liao was showing how far the sport had come.

Moving his arms before him, Liao set a white diabolo spinning on a vertical plane. Then, to oohs and aahs, he lassooed it again and again in midair. In diabolo-speak, the trick is a behind-the-back vertax genocide followed by a triple vertax genocide. (Vertax is short for vertical axle; genocide refers to a player releasing one stick, catching the yo-yo on the string, and then catching the stick.) The night before, during an outdoor performance at Night

Market, the CSC’s annual party on Low Plaza, Liao had flubbed the trick. Tonight, he was master.

Liao is tall and slender, and usually wears a T-shirt, rectangular eyeglasses, and an easy smile. His Twitter feed says things like “what keeps a train on the tracks while it’s turning, explained by richard feynman” and “mahjongggggg.” He speaks politely and slowly, in contrast to the whizzing machinery that he and his 20 or so regular members of the club like to set in motion.

Liao taught himself diabolo by watching video tutorials on YouTube and practicing for hundreds of hours. But, as Columbia’s players know, the activity requires not only good hand-eye coordination and a stomach for repetition — learning a trick can take six months — but that most elusive commodity in New York City: ample space. Especially in winter, when cold weather precludes any outdoor practice.

“If you’re doing a vertax, you probably want, to be safe, a 15-by-15 space,” Liao says. “You could probably do with 10-by-10 or 12-by-12. For a ceiling, if you’re not going to toss or do any suicides” — a suicide means the release of one stick — “it’s possible to do it with

an 8-foot ceiling. If you want to do some tossing, at least 15.”

The club reserves the bigger spaces on campus, but even these have their drawbacks: John Jay’s piano lounge (ceiling: 22 feet) has two columns in the center of the room, plus there’s a chandelier; Wien’s piano lounge (ceiling: 19 feet 5 inches) also has a chandelier; room C555, in Lerner, has a ceiling of only 16 feet; and the Lerner Party Space is divided into two areas, a smaller one with an 18-foot 4-inch ceiling interrupted by lighting fixtures and a staircase, and a larger one with free-and-clear air space, but a ceiling of only 8 feet.

So what is the ideal space? The consensus is Roone Arledge Auditorium (with ceilings of 30 feet on the stage and 36 in the main room), where the diabolo-ists will perform in February as part of Lunar Gala, the annual Chinese New Year celebration hosted by the CSC.

But Liao looks forward to the spring, when the club can practice outdoors again. The favorite spots are Lewisohn Lawn and the South Lawn.

“We like the exposure,” Liao says. “People see us.”

— Elizabeth Manus

Tourist Snapping Pictures of Children in Mali

In a dust-cluttered back street of Bamako
The tourist halts, collects a yelping pack
By granting them an instant picture show:
Behold! Their faces in his camera’s back!

Whooping, they crowd in, overjoyed to spot
A crony framed in liquid crystal display,
A naked little sister. It’s their lot
To live unphotographed until this day

When a vacationing wizard from the sky
Brings them a glowing screen in which to peer,
An instrument beyond their means to buy,
Whose cost might feed a family for a year.

A chill besets the tourist. Now he feels
His hands upon his Pentax clamp like locks
Lest it be stolen; now he blithely steals
Away these children in his light-tight box.

— X. J. Kennedy ’51GSAS

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Bigelow, center, on the set of *The Hurt Locker*. Screenwriter Mark Boal is at far left.



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The visceral cinema of
Kathryn Bigelow '79SOA has
heady theoretical roots.

Shoot Shoot, Bang Bang

She's acting out desires. She represents what people want to see, and it's upsetting, because they don't exactly know what to do with it.

— CULTURAL THEORIST SYLVÈRE LOTRINGER

Baghdad, 2004. An explosive ordnance robot rolls along a dusty city street toward a pile of white burlap sacks. Soldiers, American, leap from armored vehicles, cradling their M16s. They must evacuate the women, children, and old men, who could be killed or maimed if they don't move faster. Cars race past, horns blaring. Soldiers yell and push. Closer to the kill zone, three members of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit — Thompson, Eldridge, and Sanborn — huddle around a monitor, watching the feed from the robot's camera. Sanborn controls the robot by moving small joysticks on a board. The robot's pincer grasps a snatch of burlap and slowly parts the material, revealing the head of a dark gray bomb. "Hello, mama," Sanborn says.

The team calls the robot back and hitches a small wagon to it with a payload of charges to detonate the device. The robot goes off again on its miniature-tanklike tread. As it bumps over a pile of rocks, the rickety little wagon falls apart. *Shit.* Now Thompson has to go down there and lay the charges himself. Thompson, who has the heroic jawline of an aging quarterback, is the leader, the guy who wears the 100-pound steel-plated bomb suit and the helmet and gets up close to the deadly thing and touches it. His buddies zip him up, set his helmet firm, and wish him well.

Thompson walks toward the pile, breathing heavily in the desert heat. There are sand-colored buildings, burnt-out cars.

By Paul Hond

Shoot Shoot, Bang Bang

Above, a shuddering helicopter crosses the sun. Eldridge and Sanborn cover Thompson from a distance, scanning the windows and storefronts through the scopes of their rifles. Thompson reaches the bags, kneels before them. Slowly, delicately, he lays the charges. Then he straightens up, turns, and begins walking back toward Sanborn and Eldridge and the Humvee.

Suddenly, Eldridge sees something. He looks through his scope: there, across the road, in front of a butcher's shop, amid the skinned animals strung up in the heat, is a man in a white smock, and he is holding something. A switch flips inside Eldridge: "Sanborn!" he yells, and runs toward the shop. "Butcher shop, two o'clock, dude has a phone!" The man in the smock waves, smiles, the picture of innocence, but Eldridge is locked in. "Drop the phone!" he shouts, sprinting now. Sanborn, in pursuit, calls, "Burn him, Eldridge! *Burn him!*" But there's no clear shot, and the man pushes the buttons, and we then see Thompson running in his bulky suit, still within the zone, and the ground behind him erupts in a gush of pewter gray, and you cover your eyes as Thompson, our quarterback, is blown forward in slow motion, and the earth spews skyward like a volcano.

You must be dreaming, because when you open your eyes, you find yourself seated at a table in the brick patio lounge of the Beverly Hills Hotel. Birds chirp. Across from you is a woman, tall and slender, wearing a black leather jacket, blue jeans, and a small crucifix around her neck. She has long chestnut hair and expressive hands. "The light is so beautiful these days because we just had this giant windstorm," she says, a poet of extreme conditions. "The clarity — it's just so magnificent."

Yes. Magnificent. Sunlight seeps through a canopy of blade-shaped leaves. There are pink stucco walls, and clay pots of luminous pink and purple bougainvillea.

The woman is Kathryn Bigelow, the director of *The Hurt Locker*, a psychological thriller involving a unit of U.S. Army bomb technicians in Iraq and one of the most acclaimed movies of 2009. Having just consumed all eight of Bigelow's feature films in 72 hours, your brain is revved up for blasts, killer waves, hunks of metal, erotic obsession, blood, guns, burning rubber. Bigelow has long been one of our most daring and original filmmakers, and *The Hurt Locker* is the most potent cocktail yet of her vast visual powers and her lasting formal and thematic concerns. The movie examines, in a war setting, the attraction to physical risk, which, for the freewheeling, industrial-metal-listening bomb dismantler Staff Sergeant William James (played by Jeremy Renner), has a chilling intimacy:

"Hello, baby," James murmurs, brushing dirt from a plump, leaden bomb that he's uncovered in an empty square. Later, after snipping more wires, and coming within a whisker of his life, he retires to his Humvee and lights a cigarette: the Marlboro Man of Mesopotamia. "That was good," he says.

It's a classic shot from the Bigelow canon, where desire and death often converge, and heroes are seduced by things that might kill them. *The Hurt Locker* ups the ante by employing an immersive visual scheme — multiple Super 16 millimeter cameras, hair-trigger point-of-view shots, a 360-degree field of vision — that implicates the viewer in the action.

"It's an experiential form of filmmaking," Bigelow says between sips of fruit juice. "You're inviting the audience to walk in those soldiers' shoes, to look at the conflict through those soldiers' eyes."

As she speaks, you recall standing outside a UN compound, within range of a carload of bombs that the unit has come to defuse. You are surrounded by apartment buildings, from whose balconies and windows Iraqi men gaze impassively, unreadable as the wind. Your vision whips from one potential trouble spot to the next, until it locks onto a man on a rooftop: he is aiming a small video camera directly at you. It's as terrifying as it is absurd. Should you kill him? Who is he? And who are you?

"The movie is looking at the humanity of the conflict, and the dehumanizing, soul-numbing rigors of war," Bigelow says. "There are soldiers who are either just numb, or who are so switched-on that they're capable of anything."

Switched-on. It suggests a high-tech adrenaline rush: a click, a spark, wattage to the blood. You then recall that *The Hurt Locker* begins with a quote from the *New York Times* war correspondent Chris Hedges: *The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug.*

"What switches you on?" you say. "As a filmmaker, what's the drug?"

Bigelow gives a sporting laugh. "That's tough," she says, but she thinks about it for a moment. Then, with care: "I suppose it would be the opportunity to provide a text that is provocative."

That opportunity arose in 2004, when the journalist Mark Boal was embedded for two weeks with an EOD unit in Iraq. Upon his return, Boal, who had worked

"You're inviting the audience to walk in those soldiers' shoes, to look at the conflict through those soldiers' eyes."





previously with Bigelow, related his Iraq experiences to her, and “we both thought it would make a great entry point for a film,” Bigelow says. Boal wrote the script, and when Bigelow read it, “I knew it was tremendous. No one had realized that the epicenter of the war was squarely on the shoulders of the EOD and that they *were* the war, basically. It was very timely, and I wanted it to be as expedient as possible.” The movie became a financial reality, she says, when Nicolas Chartier of Voltage Pictures offered to raise the money. “I think this was a brave and creative choice on his part given that I didn’t want to cast any major movie stars in the leads in order to preserve the naturalistic tone of the material, and to heighten the suspense.” Bigelow also wanted to shoot in the Middle East, “as close to the war zone as possible.”

To that end, she scouted Morocco. “Bomb disarmament protocol requires a 100- to 300-meter containment, so the sets were naturally quite large,” she says. “Morocco could not provide that breadth of set, architecturally speaking — it looked like North Africa, not the Middle East. Baghdad, where the story was set, was a war zone and off limits as a film location, so we scouted Jordan, where the architecture was virtually a perfect match. The Jordanians were very receptive.”

Bigelow now had a theater of operations — the capital city of Amman — that could pass convincingly

for the war-rocked nation next door. As a bonus, the Jordanian military hardware — the Humvees, tanks, and armored personnel carriers — was American-made, and Jordan was also home to a community of Iraqi actors who had been displaced by the war. These resources, and the raw depiction of urban warfare, inject *The Hurt Locker* with the authenticity and immediacy of *The Battle of Algiers*.

It’s a sharp turn for Bigelow, most of whose work, like the brilliant vampire love story *Near Dark* (1987), and the visionary cyberpunk thriller *Strange Days* (1995), has been fiercely fictional.

“I’m almost more excited by reality in some ways,” Bigelow says. “Dealing with a conflict that’s real and ongoing provides the opportunity for the material to be topical and relevant. If you can cause people to think about that conflict as they walk out of the theater, then I think you’re really maximizing the potential of the medium.”

Bigelow’s mastery of that medium might be finally getting front-page attention (expect heavy Oscar action for *The Hurt Locker* this winter), but cinema hounds have been on the trail since her first feature, the art-house biker flick *The Loveless*, came out in 1982, starring leather-clad Willem Dafoe as the leader of a motorcycle gang that sojourns in a roadside town in the 1950s South. With its rebellious young bloods, simmering sexuality, and sherbet palette — the pinks and peaches

Bigelow with cinematographer Barry Ackroyd and script supervisor Aslaug Konradsdottir in the Madaba Refugee Camp near Amman, Jordan.

of the women's dresses, the lemon yellows and pistachio greens of the cars — it evokes Douglas Sirk, and inaugurates a succession of bold, genre-bending movies. These include *Blue Steel* (1989), about a female rookie cop who falls for a psychopath with a deadly fetish for her gun (“Death,” says the killer, “is the greatest kick of all”), and *Point Break* (1991), in which an FBI agent infiltrates a gang of bank-robbing surfers whose leader, a high priest of thrills, counsels, “If you want the ultimate, you gotta be willing to pay the ultimate price.”

Drawing inspiration from directors like Hitchcock, Peckinpah, and Fassbinder, Bigelow makes smart, violent, suspenseful, exquisitely photographed movies, shot through with grim wit and some of the most electrifying action sequences in the business: car and foot chases, shootouts, 100-foot walls of fire.

“There’s a maverick streak in her that enables her to handle these violent genres, but also to give them a very personal touch and deal with them in a very sensitive way,” says film critic and Columbia professor Andrew Sarris ’51CC. “I think *The Hurt Locker* is one of the best films of the year, and the best I’ve seen about the morass in Iraq.” Sarris also singles out *Blue Steel* as a favorite. “Her style is — I’ll use the word that *Time Out* used — seductive.”

Bigelow was born in 1951 in the northern California town of San Carlos, where she grew up riding horses and painting. She has a kind of buoyant, outdoorsy vitality, a big-sky embrace of the visual world, and an intense cerebral energy cut with New York punk and what she has called her “semiotic Lacanian deconstructivist saturation.”

A waiter comes by, and Bigelow indicates a nearby heat lamp. “If I could have one of these turned on to, like, nuclear,” she says cheerfully. The waiter obliges.

You think: *semiotic Lacanian deconstructivist saturation*.

The heat lamp turns bright orange. It starts to get very warm.

That’s when you remove your jacket and ask Ms. Bigelow about her time at Columbia.

Her attitude: to formalize, to frame, to keep a distance, to control. I think control is essential.

— LOTRINGER

New York City, 1972. Two strangers, a young abstract painter from California and a renowned cultural theorist from France, arrive in Manhattan. One heads uptown, the other, downtown.

The theorist is Sylvère Lotringer. He has just joined the French department at Columbia, where he will introduce, from Europe, the field of semiotics — the science of signs in society. He will also be the first professor in the United States to teach the works of contemporary French thinkers like the philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who claimed — intriguingly, for artists — that the signs and codes found in advertisements create, in the unconscious, desires that cannot be satisfied. For Lacan, desire is predicated on lack.

The abstract painter is Kathryn Bigelow. A student at the San Francisco Art Institute, she’s been awarded a fellowship for the Whitney Museum’s Independent Study Program. It’s winter and freezing cold. The city is blighted, near bankrupt, dangerous.

“I’ve got a little Levi’s jacket, sneakers, T-shirt. That’s it,” Bigelow recalls. “I decided that wherever my studio was, that was where I was going to live. It was in Tribeca before it was Tribeca — a *really* rough outpost. I’ve got my sleeping bag and a little dog-eared piece of paper that has my address: ‘Basement of an off-track betting building, three flights down.’ Someone takes me there. There’s no light, footsteps resound off the walls, and the person says, ‘Here’s your studio.’ It’s a bank vault. I think, ‘It’s going to be a little chilly.’ There’s snow outside, and I can’t feel my legs. So I gamely pull out my sleeping bag, praying that somehow the door to the bank vault doesn’t close, because it’s a 24-inch slab of metal. Mind you, there are gunshots echoing every night. And one of my creative advisers is Susan Sontag, which of course meant that I was never happier in my life.”

After completing the Whitney program, Bigelow stayed in New York and began to work with conceptual artists like Lawrence Weiner and the British collaborative Art & Language, which was based on “an attempt to decommodify art, yet still have it be defined as art and justify its existence as art,” Bigelow says. “We were in the Venice Biennale, where we put up a giant banner over the Grand Canal with an inversion of the famous Latin phrase, ‘Art is long, life is short.’ The group is always trying to subvert. Very political in its own way, and insidiously provocative. It made you think.”

With Art & Language, Bigelow started making non-narrative short films. The group returned to England

“There’s a maverick streak in her that enables her to handle these violent genres, but also to give them a very personal touch and deal with them in a very sensitive way.”

Shoot Shoot, Bang Bang

in 1976, and Bigelow, still in New York, applied for an NEA grant to make a short movie. She got the grant and shot the film, using her conceptual artist friends as crew. But the money ran out before she could edit the piece. “So I think, ‘Aha. Graduate school. Free mix at Trans/Audio!’” She submitted the uncut footage to Milos Forman, who was head of the film department at Columbia. Bigelow was accepted and given a scholarship for an MFA in film criticism.

Sylvère Lotringer, meanwhile, was attempting to bridge the divide between downtown artists and uptown theorists. He taught Lacan and Foucault by day, and, by night, explored the downtown art scene and the prepunk happenings at CBGB and Max’s Kansas City. In 1974 he launched a journal called *Semiotext(e)*, a watershed publication that brought art and theory together. The next year, he organized a conference at Columbia on madness and prisons called “Schizo-Culture.” He invited French poststructuralists like Foucault, Deleuze, Jean-François Lyotard, and Félix Guattari, and artists like Richard Foreman, William Burroughs, and John Cage. The event drew 2000 people.

Afterward, Lotringer was approached by students from the Columbia film department. “Semiotics was

in the air,” he says. “Filmmakers were the first to pick up on it. Artists get excited by new ideas earlier than academics. They wanted to know more, so they came to my classes, and that’s how I met them.”

One of those students was Bigelow.

“She came to my class to understand what was going on with semiotics, and Lacan especially,” says Lotringer. “It’s a very controlling thing, to make films. And semiotics is a system of control.”

Bigelow took classes with Lotringer, Marshall Blonsky, Edward Said, and Andrew Sarris, whose two-year film survey was another revelation. “I remember Sarris talking about Orson Welles and *The Magnificent Ambersons*,” Bigelow says. “To this day I can see him against the screen; he had this almost cherubic smile, infecting everyone in that room with his pure love of film. You walked out of that class unrecognizable, even to yourself. All he did was give his love of film to you and defy you not to pick up on it.”

In 1978, Bigelow completed her thesis, a 20-minute short called *The Set-Up*. In it, two men have a sloppy fistfight in a dark alley, trading insults of “fascist” and



“commie.” As the men tussle, two scholars — Blonsky and Lotringer — deconstruct the action in voice-over.

The following year, Bigelow began working with other students on an issue of *Semiotext(e)* called “Polysexuality,” which, says Lotringer, “was meant to invent new categories for sexuality, like soft sex or corporate sex, so that nothing could be considered abnormal or deviant. The cover showed a gay biker in San Francisco with a leather jacket and bare ass. On the back was a picture of a man who impaled himself on a giant phallus. Seductive image in front, disquieting image on back. Sex and Death. You give people what they want, but you prevent them from enjoying it in full.”

Fair enough. But what about that Lacanian saturation?

“In Lacan and Deleuze, you have the whole idea of neuroticism and perversion,” Lotringer explains. “For French theorists, perversion is taken more positively than in America. The word has no moral connotation. It means experimenting with your desires, instead of repressing them, as most people do. Neurotics repress things. In perversion, you acknowledge your desires and try them out.”

Cut to Staff Sergeant William James, encased in body armor, in punishing heat, plodding toward a roadside bomb.

Could his courage be a form of Lacanian desire?

“What becomes the discovery in the movie,” Bigelow says, “is that James is actually quite self-aware. He knows what switches him on, and he accepts it. He’s not living in a state of denial.”

The temperature generated by the heat lamp approaches Jordanian highs, and Bigelow graciously asks the waiter to turn it down. She hadn’t actually expected nuclear. “We could warm up half of Southern California,” she jokes.

Just then, a woman comes over. She’s an agent who has been lunching at a nearby table.

“Congratulations,” the agent says to Bigelow. “What an amazing year for you, I mean, all of this attention! Welcome to the Oscars, dear, you’re going to have a lot of opportunities. I think this is your year.” She returns to her table, and comes back a moment later with a well-known actress, whom she introduces to Bigelow. There is no doubt as to which direction the compass needles are pointed.

When the women go, Bigelow returns to Columbia and *The Set-Up*, to illustrate a central idea about her process.

“I began with *The Set-Up* to provide a physiological and psychological connection between the audience

and the screen,” she says. “While you’re watching it, you’re deconstructing the connection. In a perfect world, theoretically, you’re *experiencing* that connection.” She then refers to a scene in *The Hurt Locker*, in which Eldridge, caught in a cross-desert shootout, is ordered by James to grab the ammo from off the body of a fallen comrade. But the bullets, blood-smearred, jam the rifle. With enemy fire whizzing past, Eldridge frantically wipes the bullets, spitting on them to clean them off.

“There was this one article,” Bigelow says, “in which the writer talks about watching the scene and trying to get saliva in his mouth, so that he could help Eldridge clean the bullets.”

It’s what Lacanians call “scopophilia”: the derivation of physical sensation through the act of viewing. Mostly, it is associated with pornography. But it can just as easily be something that makes you wince or cover your eyes.

The explosion rips through the ground, lifting earth in a rolling torrent. Dirt and rust loosen and fly from the shell of a junked car. As Sergeant Thompson is hurled toward us on the road, we see the inside of his helmet turn dark red. He falls, lies motionless. Smoke rises from his body.

The Hurt Locker has just begun. We are about to meet Staff Sergeant James, Thompson’s replacement. With his record of disabling over 800 bombs — 873, to be exact — James, the “wild man,” as a giddy colonel calls him, has come here to do the one thing that makes him feel most alive.

As James is helped into his suit to perform his first death-defying mission with the unit, you seem to hear, in your mind, two disembodied voices, commenting on the text:

“Outwardly,” says Lotringer, “the movie is against violence, but of course, violence is very seductive. And she played with the seduction. To have seduction and Iraq at the same time was a gamble.”

And Bigelow: “The gravity of the subject is encapsulated within this physical beauty that creates a nice tension between the two elements. There’s something interestingly, graphically provocative about a man dressed in a bomb suit lifting up six bombs strapped to a wire.”

“What becomes the discovery in the movie is that James is actually quite self-aware. He knows what switches him on, and he accepts it. He’s not living in a state of denial.”



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Columbia magazine: You draw the title of your book from Justice Brennan's opinion in the 1964 Supreme Court case *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, one of the most important free-speech cases of the 20th century. Brennan wrote that "debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials." We all learned in school that in the best of circumstances a plurality of voices can help us arrive at the truth, but — given the messiness — is that why we should value free speech as much as we do in the United States?

Lee C. Bollinger: You raise a profound question, one that has occupied my attention for several decades. It was the thing that puzzled me the most when I started as a young scholar and ended up writing the book *The Tolerant Society* about this issue. Why would a society take the principle of free speech — which everybody more or less accepts as a basic principle — and expand it as far as our society has? It's the *scope* of the principle of freedom of speech and freedom of the press that is itself of interest.

There are classic arguments for unfettered speech. There is the one you've mentioned: we'll get the truth if we just let everybody say what they want, without regard to whether it's reasonable, unreasonable, or offensive. When this plays out in real life, though, we have people advocating horrible things like discrimination, the violent overthrow of society, hate, or genocide, and it's pretty hard to make the case that all of this is necessary to search for the truth. A second argument concedes that not all speech is necessary to the search for truth, but insists that interacting with "false" ideas reinforces our understanding of and commitment to truth. John Stuart Mill made both of these arguments. In my view, this second argument is also weak in explaining the full range of speech we protect.

Columbia: We should also be aware of what people are thinking. Even people on the edge.

Bollinger: That's the safety-valve argument, which says that we want people to be able to release what they're feeling, and we want to know what it is they're feeling.

Then there's the traditional argument that it would be great if we could eliminate those ideas that we so detest and fear, reasonably so. But we can't do that without threatening the speech we value.

Those points are all part of a reasonable debate, but they miss the profound meaning of what free speech has come to mean in the United States. Ultimately, I believe, we need to turn to a different understanding of what we're doing with free speech — which is found in the lessons inherent in the *toleration* of bad-speech acts. There is something in the character of this country that strives to be open not only with speech, but with all kinds of behavior. Ours may be the most open society in history.

I just came back from a trip to Asia, where countries like China and Singapore have a very different philosophy of how to

Freeing the FLOW

President Lee C. Bollinger's new book, *Uninhibited, Robust, and Wide-Open: A Free Press for a New Century*, argues that the idea of a free and independent press — and Internet — should be our principal export. Bollinger spoke recently with *Columbia's* Michael B. Shavelson.

Illustrations by
Keith Negley

compose a society. Their idea is captured by the term *harmony*; a society should be harmonious, and any conflict should be minimized. They think that out of a more collaborative, harmonious community will come advancement. In our route they see divisiveness and eventually chaos.

Part of the genius of the United States is our warm embrace of a society in which individuals can say and do many things that we might not like. The brilliance is in the idea that the long-term stability and inventiveness of a nation will be enhanced by a character that can resist fear of our natural authoritarian tendencies to dampen differences.

That's a recent idea. Free speech and a free press are really 20th-century inventions. It's unclear how the experiment will turn out, but we have for now settled on a distinctive approach, which is highly successful. In free speech and press, therefore, we're working not only on truth but on character as well.

Columbia: The Supreme Court justices over the past century must have had more faith in the individual than one would find at other times and places.

Bollinger: Their decisions definitely had to be rooted in a faith in people to take enormous differences in attitudes, desires, specific policies, and understandings of what makes a good life — and to live with great openness about disagreements and conflicts.

Columbia: That also implies a sophistication and intelligence among the members of the society to pick among ideas and arguments and determine which path to follow.

Bollinger: I think it clearly does that as well. If you believed that people generally would take ideas and go in the wrong direction again and again, then it would be hard to be committed to this kind of openness. Of course, always given the alternatives, there is a belief that not only is that the best among many worse or bad alternatives, but also that there is a kind of capacity or character we want to achieve.

Columbia: When the Internet was new, were you surprised by how much nuttiness was out there? Beyond the Web sites simply driven by hatred, who would have imagined that there were so many conspiracy theories, each with competing sites? I assume that the Internet didn't create these ideas, but that people with crazy ideas now have a great way to promote those ideas.

Bollinger: Your last point is an interesting one; we'll have to see over time whether the Internet is not just a mirror of how people think, both good and bad, but a cause of it. If you're steeped in First Amendment traditions, you are not at all surprised by the visibility of strange speakers. The Supreme Court cases typically do not present highly appealing characters offering reasoned arguments for their positions. Rather, the speakers are frequently offensive and worse. So, the Internet may simply reveal what we've already been seeing.



One of the things that I've looked at carefully over a long period of time is broadcast regulation and how it has appeared to be an anomaly within the system of freedom of expression. One thing that system reveals is that every time a new communication technology comes along, people get nervous. They are afraid that the technology is going to change the way people think and behave, and societies want to clamp down on it. I sense this happening now with the Internet, but of course we have to make some allowances for the fact that at some point the fears may be true. That they haven't been true in the past doesn't mean they won't be true in the future.

Columbia: You write in your book that “at the moment when our technological capacities to communicate globally are greater than ever, when the interdependency of peoples around the globe is greater than ever, and when the need for news about international and global issues is greater than ever, the technology that facilitates this communication is simultaneously undermining the capacity of the American media institutions to meet their responsibilities to the public. America is at risk of intellectual isolationism, at least as grave a problem for the nation as economic protectionism.”

You quote figures about the rapid drop in the number of foreign correspondents for newspapers, television stations, and networks. It is ironic because I can now go to my computer and read *Le Figaro*, listen to Xinhua, or watch Al Arabiya. Of course the problem is that people *don't*.

Bollinger: We see the admired institutions within the press, especially newspapers, suffering devastating blows to their financial viability and responding in ways that should lead us to be concerned under normal circumstances — but under current

circumstances, we should be truly alarmed. A common response is to cut back on the coverage of news, especially international news, which is very expensive. Foreign bureaus are being closed at a startling pace and the number of foreign correspondents is declining. There is a strong cause-and-effect relationship between what is covered and what people are interested in. As you point out, I pose the proposition that at the very moment when we need more information and knowledge about the world, we're getting far less.

One of the great things about the Internet is that it has broken down the monopoly position of major press organizations to channel information to the public. But it's a myth to say that, although the major branches of the media are under serious threat financially and are reducing their news coverage, we shouldn't be concerned because there are now other sources, such as bloggers, from which we can now get our news. Most people at the end of the day are going to turn to very few places to get their information. Time is limited, people's attention is limited, and we should think carefully about how people will be able to understand our world with the communications structure that exists.

There is a powerful need for institutions we can trust. We need journalists with professional standards and judgment, in large organizations, dedicated to sorting through information and giving us reports whose accuracy we can test over time. The fact that there are hundreds of thousands of places you can go to get information is good, but it's not going to serve the needs of creating a nation and a global society.

Columbia: You write that for the press to flourish, it cannot be composed of a multitude of isolated individuals, but that it must be an institution. What is the role of journalism schools, Columbia's and others, in shoring up that institution?

Bollinger: Given the crisis, the role of journalism schools — and of a great journalism school like Columbia's — should be to take those issues on. In October, Dean Nicholas Lemann, Professor Michael Schudson, and Leonard Downie, Jr., who is the retired editor of the *Washington Post* and a professor at Arizona State University, released a report confronting some of these issues. We have financial crisis in the press, it is leading to a decline in the coverage of local issues, so how can we develop policies and practices that will help alleviate these grave risks for American democracy? They focused on local news. This is precisely the kind of contribution a great professional school can make to the profession and to society. It's getting a lot of attention, and we couldn't be happier about that. (See the news story on “*The Reconstruction of American Journalism*,” page 35. — Ed.)

Columbia: You make the point that it was during the 20th century that the United States developed, codified, and embraced a national free press. In your book you express the hope that the

21st century will be the century in which the same will happen with the global press. What do you see as the *New York Times v. Sullivan* of the 21st century?

Bollinger: If we believe in freedom of the press and all that that means, we need to argue for it on a global scale. Because the rest of the world doesn't entirely accept this belief, we need to engage with the world about the issue. In other words, the project of the 21st century is to develop, as much as possible, some kind of global understanding of a free press. The United States needs to make this a top national priority.

Recognizing we're dealing with nation-states, it's inevitable that we're going to have to confront the issues of what kind of press principles we want on a global scale. This is not new. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which dates back to the 1940s, has wonderful language dealing with freedom of expression.

We have to start with the realization that this is what the United States did on a national scale in the last century. We had laws that punished the press for publishing things that would embarrass the government or would bring the public to hold the government in disrepute. We had laws that protected the reputations of public



“If we believe in freedom of the press and all that that means, we need to argue for it on a global scale.”

officials and made citizens potentially liable for saying false things about them. We had laws that forbade the press from covering trials while trials were under way. We had laws that forbade the press from publishing state secrets. We looked at each of these and decided, “No, we're not going to go that route.”

There are some exceptions, but essentially we said we're going to have a different society than those laws would give us.

If you look at the rest of the world, you'll find that most nations have more restrictive laws and about half have major censorship. Now, since we have reporters operating around the world — and should have more — and since what we publish here is now being read everywhere else, there already is a collision between the laws of other nations and the press. We have to look at our own experience, understand why we did what we did, and then figure out how to move in that direction in the global arena. The 20th century was in many ways a move from very local forums to a national forum as both the economy and communications technologies became national. Now that's happening on a global scale.

It was a logical progression and one that I had not really focused on before sitting down to write this book. I was thrilled with the opportunity to think about it for the first time myself. 📖



I. Román

debt

Fiction by Victor LaValle '98SOA

Her cell phone rang for the tenth time in an hour, and for the tenth time, she let it go to voice mail. When she opened her purse on the sidewalk, it was only to get her keys. She entered the lobby of her building, but before she reached the elevator, the phone rang again. Reception died inside the rising car and she breathed audibly with relief.

The doors opened, and she walked the hallway to her apartment. Twenty feet from her door, the phone buzzed again. She juggled her purse and her dinner and unzipped the purse, ready to throw the phone at the wall. But then she saw the number: a 305 area code. She pressed the button quick.

“Mom? Are you OK?”

“Samantha Cooley, I have been ringing this phone since morning!”

It wasn't her mother. It was a man. Samantha stiffened.

“Samantha?”

It was her father. His calls were as rare as a solar eclipse. She set down her bags, hung her head. “I'm sorry, Dad. I thought you were someone else.”

Her father cleared his throat twice. A tic that meant trouble.

“Someone came to our window,” he said, quietly. “And smashed it.”

Samantha touched the wall for balance. “What are you talking about?”

Her father raised his voice slightly and enunciated each word. “A man walked into the yard of *our* home and smashed *our* kitchen window with a brick.”

“Oh, my God!” Samantha said. “Are you all right? Is Mom?”

“Your mother and I were in the living room. We weren't hurt.”

Samantha realized where she was now: standing in the hallway of a building she'd been living in for only three months. She felt exposed. She picked up her purse and two plastic bags and walked.

“OK. OK,” she said, reaching her door. “No one's hurt. That's good.”

She rifled through her purse for her keys again, tilting her head and raising her right shoulder to keep the phone pressed to her ear.

Her father said, “Before this man ran away he shouted something. I didn't hear him too well, but your mother did.”

Samantha found the keys, turned the top lock. The click echoed in the long hall.

“He said, ‘Tell your daughter this is about what she owes us!’”

Samantha almost dropped the phone. “Are you serious, Dad? Is this a joke?”

“You think I'd joke about someone attacking your mother and me?”

Samantha stepped inside, dropped her purse, and nearly tripped over it. She stumbled forward in the dark while the door slammed shut behind her.

“Didn't Mom want to replace the kitchen windows anyway?” she half joked. Her father didn't laugh.

“Your mother told me not to call you. She didn't even want to be in the house when I did. You better not be in touch for a while.” He hung up.

Illustrations by Irena Roman

Samantha stepped into the kitchen, holding the bags, the phone still squeezed to her ear, even though her father wasn't there. She flicked the light switch beside the oven.

She could have screamed, but didn't. There, sitting cross-legged on the kitchen floor, his back against the fridge, was a man she didn't know.



"You're back," he said, almost pleasantly.

Samantha's reaction surprised even herself. She lifted the plastic bag in her right hand and said, "All I have is Chinese food."

The man pushed himself up, brushed at the wrinkles of his cheap sport coat. Samantha noticed, on the floor in front of him, a large pile of her old mail. Maybe he'd been looking for uncashed checks. Arranged on the small breakfast table were her DVD player, an iPod, a coffeemaker, and an electric toothbrush.

"I'm going to need more than Chinese food," said the man.

Samantha felt fear in her toes, running up through her legs. She couldn't move. The front door wasn't so far off, but she couldn't even make herself lower the bag of food.

"You're not . . ." she began, but didn't know how to finish the sentence.

You're not supposed to be here. You're not staying. You're not going to hurt me.

The man stood very tall. He had a long, narrow nose that pointed downward, almost over his lip. He looked like a stork, actually. Samantha tried to memorize his face, but her eyes wouldn't focus.

"My name is Paul Horvath," he said. "You didn't answer any of these." He kicked at the stack of mail. "But at least I see you got them."

Samantha stared at the pile. *Horvath*. Where did she know that name?

"If you'd ever picked up your phone I wouldn't be here now," Horvath said. "And my associate wouldn't have thrown a rock through your parents' window."

Now Samantha remembered him.

Hello, Ms. Cooley, my name is Paul Horvath. This concerns an urgent business matter. Would you please return my phone call at . . .

How many times had she heard that voice, that phrase, and just deleted the message? Dozens? Sometimes there were nine or ten in a single day.

Samantha felt her stomach drop, like when she was a kid and her mother had caught her swiping money from her dad's wallet. Her face was hot. She blinked rapidly. The last thing she wanted to do was cry.

To compose herself, she went to the cabinet over the stove and took out two plates. She set them out on the counter and took out the Chinese food. Brown rice, steamed vegetables, an order of dumplings.

"At least," said Horvath, eyeing the spread, "you're not spending your money on gourmet food." He looked at her, then quickly shook his head, as if ridding himself of a moment's sympathy.

Samantha opened the white cartons. She said, "Do you want a fork or can you handle chopsticks?"

Horvath frowned, as if disappointed he hadn't scared her. "Fork, I guess."

That helped Samantha relax a little. At one school in Suffolk County, where she'd been a substitute teacher for two months, a 13-year-old boy had pressed a gun to her thigh when she passed his desk. He just wanted to see her cry. And she had cried, but the experience had toughened her. Two college degrees, and that's the most she'd earned out in the real world — a little bit of backbone.

Samantha opened the drawer for the silverware. The knives shone in the light. She pulled out a fork and slid the drawer shut fast.

Horvath picked up his plate, but just stared down at the white cartons of food.

Samantha served herself. She wanted desperately to run, climb out a window, anything, but instead she took her plate and sat at the breakfast table. Using her chopsticks, she brought a clump of rice to her mouth and chewed slowly.

Horvath finally took a couple of dumplings and sat down across from her.

The DVD player and the iPod and the coffeemaker and the electric toothbrush were in his way.

“What’s that all about?” she said, pointing with her chopsticks. Horvath’s long nose twitched. “Collateral.”

“The DVD player’s mine,” she said. “But not the rest.”

Horvath looked confused. “You have a roommate?”

“I’m subletting. The place came furnished.”

Horvath deflated in his chair.

“I pretty much live by sublet,” Samantha told him. This was true. She’d moved 11 times in the past 6 years. “I keep a storage locker up on . . .” She caught herself. “I keep a storage locker for clothes. When the summer’s over, I go in and get all my winter stuff. When winter’s over, I go back and make the switch.”

She flicked at the shoulder of her white short-sleeve blouse. Four years old and fraying at the collar, but a luxury when she’d bought it. Running to teaching assignments all over town had kept her thin, which allowed her to keep wearing the same clothes. That, plus she often skipped meals.

Horvath shook his head. “I don’t make much, either, but I live a lot better than this.”

Samantha bit into a piece of broccoli. “I used to think suffering was part of the point of coming out here.”

Low pay, even less respect. The worst junior high schools in the city. She’d actually felt all that was romantic once.

“You could’ve paid off something.” Horvath popped a dumpling into his mouth.

“On my salary?”

“You could’ve picked up the phone.”

Samantha considered this. Despite her wish to defy Horvath, she couldn’t really disagree with him. She had, after all, run out on her debts. Now those debts had grown. Thirty thousand in student loans had, by now, ballooned to nearly \$70,000.

She’d never felt she had enough to afford a payment, not even the minimum of \$100 a month. Not even \$50. Saving seemed impossible. She’d always assumed she’d get a full-time teaching job some day, a regular income from which she could start to repay. She still believed it would happen. She just hadn’t managed it yet.

To avoid the whole business, she would move into new sublets before the billing statements could catch up. And she stopped offering forwarding addresses. Maybe the debt would simply disappear if she ignored it long enough.

Sometimes she even bought lottery tickets, thinking she’d hit it rich and pay off the loan in one lump. She kept hoping *something* would happen, that things would break her way. She knew this wasn’t logical, but still, she hoped for it.

“So what do you want?” she said.

“Five years I’ve been after you, Ms. Cooley. And you treated me like a . . . like a stink bug. I have no doubt that if I let you go, you’re just going to disappear again.”

Samantha didn’t want any more food. She didn’t even want to look at it.

“It’s getting late, Samantha. I suggest we come to some sort of agreement.”

Samantha looked into Horvath’s strangely youthful face.

“What kind of agreement?” she said.

Horvath stood up. On reflex, Samantha slid back in her chair.

“I was in here a while before you got back,” said Horvath. “I looked through every closet, every drawer.”

“I told you, none of this is mine to give,” Samantha said.

“I understand,” said Horvath. “But I have an idea.”

Samantha watched as Horvath went to the countertop near the oven. He pulled out the drawer containing the silverware.

He said, “I’m really not asking for much,” and reached into the drawer.

At the hospital, Samantha stuck with her story about hurting herself while cooking dinner. This, despite the nurses and the doctor all commenting on how perfectly clean the wound appeared to be. It was bad enough that the doctor actually called the police. She said she had to because she suspected Samantha might have been a victim of domestic abuse. But Samantha told the cops no more than she’d told the hospital staff. Her wound was dressed, she was given a prescription for pain medication, and then the cops drove her back to her apartment. They walked her inside and checked every room, but Horvath was long gone.

The cops noticed the blood streaked across her kitchen counter, and the meat cleaver in the sink. The cops, two good guys, then spent about 15 minutes trying to help her find the top half of her right pinky. She played along with it. When they discovered nothing, she tried to act surprised. But of course she wasn’t. She’d watched Horvath wrap the top half of her finger in some paper towels, which he folded neatly and deposited into the right front pocket of his pants. Samantha walked the police to the door and wished them a good night.

Their debt wasn’t completely settled, Horvath had explained. He couldn’t just erase \$69,086.37 with a cut. Not just one. But this *could* count as a kind of payment. Before he raised the cleaver he’d given her a choice: the finger or a \$10,000 payment — he’d give her until the end of the month. He’d waited for her to decide, but of course there was no real decision to be made.

Samantha couldn’t imagine going through with it, but already she felt the shock and pain drifting into memory. She even felt a little proud of herself. Horvath was the one who looked squeamish afterward. And when he left she only owed him \$59,086.37.

Now, as she got into bed, she held up the wounded hand. The physical pain was bad, but sometimes debt felt even worse. Samantha lifted the other hand. She wiggled all nine and a half fingers: \$10,000 for half a pinky. How much could she afford to pay down using this new accounting?

She closed her eyes. Her phone was silent. Soon she fell asleep. ▮

Victor LaValle’s most recent novel is Big Machine. He teaches fiction writing in Columbia’s MFA program.

AGAINST

Peter H. R. Green became the go-to doc for a shadowy illness by learning to diagnose celiac disease.

BY DAVID J. CRAIG



THE



GRAIN

For dermatologist Robyn Gmyrek, it was the cruelest fate: After she had spent years performing cosmetic procedures on people with warts, acne, scars, and crow's feet, in 2002 her own face erupted with lesions that itched and burned and caused her to claw at her skin until it was raw. "The suffering was *beyond*," says Gmyrek, an assistant clinical professor at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC). "It felt like my skin was on fire."

What to tell her patients? Would they trust a dermatologist incapable of caring for her own complexion? "I was honest with them," she says. "I told them I didn't know what it was. Most patients were understanding. But it was difficult to go to work."

Other doctors were puzzled by Gmyrek's condition, too. They wondered if she might have an allergic reaction to chemicals commonly found in the air, or even lupus. They gave her steroids, antibiotics, and herbal remedies. Nothing worked. In fact, Gmyrek's condition worsened over the next year, spreading to 70 percent of her body and forming open sores.

Eventually, Gmyrek began to suspect that she had a rash that stems from celiac disease, which is a severe allergic reaction to a protein called gluten that's found in wheat, barley, and rye. Her dermatological symptoms matched. And yet something didn't fit: Gmyrek recalled learning in medical school that all patients with celiac disease have chronic diarrhea, abdominal pain, and weight loss. That would figure, since celiac disease occurs when the small intestine, upon mistaking gluten for a toxin, attacks its own lining to diminish its absorptive power and thus seal off the rest of the body from the threat. Gmyrek didn't think she had any digestive problems.

Nevertheless, she made an appointment at Columbia's Celiac Disease Center, which is directed by Peter H. R. Green, one of the country's top experts on the disorder. Green recognized her skin condition as dermatitis herpetiformis, whose only known cause

is celiac disease. It occurs when skin cells attack themselves in a sort of autoimmune aftershock to the intestine's self-destruction. Green performed a biopsy on Gmyrek's small intestine a few days later to confirm she had celiac. "When I got out of anesthesia, Peter was there, and I could tell that he was excited," says Gmyrek. "He told me I had one of the worst cases he'd ever seen."

Why no diarrhea or abdominal pain? "That's a misconception many doctors have," says Green, an Australian-born gastroenterologist who speaks brusquely and with a rough-hewn accent. "Medical textbooks in the United States teach it wrong. That's a big problem." Only one in six people with celiac disease, he says, experience unusual gastrointestinal discomfort.

Gmyrek's treatment was straightforward, if arduous to abide, as is always the case for celiac: She needed to follow a gluten-free diet for the rest of her life. So she cut out wheat in favor of alternatives like flax, oats, quinoa, teff, and buckwheat. Within a month, her rash started to fade, and a year later, it had disappeared for good. "I feel very lucky," she says.

Gmyrek is one of the few people with celiac disease in the United States today who are fortunate enough to be diagnosed. An estimated 3 million Americans — about 1 in every 100 — has celiac disease, yet 97 percent of them don't know they have it, according to Green, coauthor of the 2006 book *Celiac Disease: A Hidden Epidemic*, which will be published in an updated edition by HarperCollins in January. Moreover, the prevalence of the disease is increasing: The percentage of Americans with the disorder has increased fourfold in the past 50 years, for reasons that are unclear to scientists.

Fortunately, few people with celiac disease experience symptoms that are as painful as Gmyrek's. But that doesn't mean their health situations are less critical. Most people with celiac disease will at some point be treated for a serious condition that stems from the breakdown of their small intestine, usually by a physician who is unaware of the underlying inflammation, Green explained recently in his office at CUMC. He ticked off a partial list of health problems that can result from celiac: osteoporosis, anemia, chronic fatigue, weight loss,

diabetes, attention deficit disorder, arthritis, migraines, seizures, numbness, infertility, depression, and intestinal cancer.

Celiac disease is a master of disguise because it may strike any section of the small intestine, with each section being responsible for the absorption of different vitamins and minerals and associated with different biochemical changes in the body. Even the most diligent doctors have difficulty spotting it. "Yet in Finland, they catch 70 percent of all cases, and in Italy, Ireland, and Australia, they spot an estimated 30 to 40 percent of cases," says Green. In Europe, dermatologists are trained to consider celiac as a potential source for skin conditions, he says, just as hematologists know that celiac is a possible explanation for anemia and neurologists know it can cause numbness.

Why are U.S. physicians spotting only 3 percent of cases? Part of the problem is that celiac disease, because it's treatable without drugs, hasn't attracted much attention from medical researchers in the United States, says Green. Drug companies pay for 80 percent of all medical research in this country, he points out.

"If drug companies don't think there's money to be made treating celiac disease," Green says, "doctors aren't going to see many research papers about it, they're not going to hear lectures about it at the big medical-education conferences sponsored by drug companies, and they're certainly not going to have attractive ex-cheerleaders showing up at their office doors with samples of gluten-free food, asking them how many people they diagnosed with celiac this week."

The secret life of wheat

The Greek physician Aretaeus of Cappadocia is credited with identifying celiac disease, having written in the first century AD of a "coeliac affection" that made the stomach "irretentive of food." He named it after the Greek word for abdomen, "koelia."

The disorder had probably appeared 8,000 to 12,000 years earlier. That's when humans, hunter-gatherers until then who survived on fruits, nuts, and the sporadic feast of meat, began cultivating crops, Green writes



Dermatologist Robyn Gmyrek, pictured here with daughter Lilah, suffered from a painful skin condition until she eliminated gluten from her diet in 2003.



Peter H. R. Green learned to diagnose celiac disease as a medical student in Sydney, Australia, where he says the condition is better understood than in the United States.

in *A Hidden Epidemic*. In this era, people in what is now Syria crossbred several types of wild grass to produce a large and nutritious grain, wheat. Wheat proved ideal for making bread because it gets sticky when mixed with water, a quality derived from gluten, which is a protein made of an unusually long peptide chain of 33 amino acids. Humans don't have digestive enzymes to break down gluten's complex molecular structure, but the protein is expelled harmlessly from most people; it's flagged as an intruder only in those with an overly cautious immune system.

Scientists in the late 19th century first noticed a link between carbohydrates and celiac disease. (Rice and bananas were recognized as safe and so patients were encouraged to eat lots of them.) In the 1940s, the dietary basis of the condition became clearer when the Dutch physician Willem-Karel Dicke observed that, during bread shortages caused by World War II, many sick children in his country felt better. Dicke and other scientists soon pinpointed gluten as the culprit behind celiac disease.

By the 1970s, doctors had acquired the tools they needed to diagnose celiac, Green writes. Blood tests could spot gluten-specific antibodies and a painless intestinal biopsy procedure would reveal the condition's signature anatomical damage: On the inner wall of the small intestine, *villi*,

Celiac disease is a master of disguise because it may strike any section of the small intestine, with each section being responsible for the absorption of different nutrients.

microscopic protrusions that stand plump and erect to absorb nutrients when healthy, instead would be flat and shriveled.

These diagnostic advances changed the way doctors viewed celiac disease, which is also called sprue. Prior to the 1970s, celiac disease was considered a rare childhood disorder because its gastrointestinal symptoms, such as diarrhea, tended to be most severe and recognizable in young children, when they occurred at all. But as medical technol-

ogy enabled doctors to detect celiac disease in the absence of these symptoms, physicians realized that the disease was a lot more common than they had previously suspected.

Doctors in Europe were the best at diagnosing celiac disease back then, just as they are today. The science journalist David P.

Hamilton has documented why: Countries such as Britain, Italy, Finland, and Sweden, which have nationalized health-care systems and invest large amounts of money in preventive care, trained doctors to look for the condition. As doctors made more diagnoses, patient advocacy groups sprouted up to demand government research, which further heightened doctor awareness.

Green attended medical school in the 1970s in Sydney, where the education system

has ties to England's. "In Australia," he says, "celiac was a part of our everyday thinking."

So when Green arrived in the United States for a research fellowship at Harvard Medical School in 1976, he was shocked to discover that U.S. physicians still regarded celiac disease as a rare disorder that mainly struck youngsters. "In the research setting," he says, "no one ever talked about celiac disease because there were no opportunities to study it." And among clinicians, a cycle of ignorance had taken root: Doctors rarely met anybody who'd been diagnosed with celiac, so they continued to regard it as a medical oddity not worth learning about.

Spotting bad labels

Green has been practicing gastroenterology at Columbia University Medical Center since 1981, and in that time he has diagnosed and treated about 2000 people with celiac disease. He launched the Celiac

Disease Center at Columbia, a full treatment, and research operation that employs three full-time doctors and a nutritionist, in 2002.

"I didn't set out to be an expert at this," Green says. "I was just doing my job as a gastroenterologist, ordering plenty of blood tests and endoscopies to look for celiac. Along the way I developed a reputation for diagnosing it and I started getting lots of patients by word of mouth."

First-time patients often arrive at Green's office frustrated and distrustful of doctors. "These are people who have collected doctors and wrong diagnoses," he says. "They've been told that they have irritable bowel syndrome, perhaps, and so every doctor they see afterwards looks down at his chart and says, 'OK, Mrs. Smith, how are you managing your irritable bowel syndrome lately? Not well? Oh well, yes, it's a difficult condition. You need to be more diligent, blah, blah, blah.'"

Over the years, many of Green's patients have made their medical records available to be studied anonymously, leading the Celiac Disease Center at Columbia to amass one of the country's largest databases of clinical information on celiac disease. Patients have also given financially to support the center's research mission, which has enabled Green to become a prolific study author.

In fact, to read the titles of the some 100 papers Green has authored is to survey almost all of the major questions related to the disease's clinical presentation. Green's work has helped demonstrate, for example, that very large numbers of celiac patients have thin bones and iron deficiency; that people with celiac have a twofold risk of developing intestinal cancer; that some of the worst health problems associated with celiac disease affect patients with no obvious gastrointestinal symptoms; that a gluten-free diet enables the small intestine

Gluten-free food has been widely available in Europe for decades, and it is now appearing in metropolitan areas across the United States.



to repair itself in all but the most severe cases of celiac disease; and that nonwhite people often develop celiac despite a misconception, common among doctors both in Europe and in the United States, that celiac is a Caucasian disease.

Green also has contributed to the most profound insight into celiac disease in the last half century: that much of its damage doesn't involve poor digestion at all. Research by Green and others suggests that the small intestine's inflammatory response can prompt other parts of the body to attack themselves, too, as happened to dermatologist Robyn Gmyrek. Green has helped demonstrate that people with celiac disease have unusually high rates of autoimmune diseases, such as type 1 diabetes, arthritis, Graves' disease, which attacks the thyroid, and Sjögren's syndrome, which destroys the mucous glands.

"Nearly 30 percent of the celiac patients I've seen have another autoimmune disorder, compared to 3 percent of the general population," Green says. "A gluten-free diet will often lessen the severity of their other disease symptoms."

Doctors have long observed that autoimmune diseases travel in packs; patients with one of these disorders, therefore, are usually tested for others. But American physicians have been slow to recognize that celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder, instead continuing to regard it simply as a digestive ailment, according to Green. He says this contributes to a lack of screening among people with disorders such as type 1 diabetes, who might unknowingly fuel their illness by eating wheat.

Interestingly, celiac disease is the only autoimmune disorder for which scientists have identified the primary environmental trigger. Scientists know of behavioral factors that contribute to other autoimmune disorders, such as how poor diet influences diabetes, says Govind Bhagat, a Columbia associate professor of clinical pathology who studies celiac disease. But in the case of diabetes, for example, it is suspected that a virus must also weaken the pancreas, and no one's identified that virus yet. Celiac

disease, therefore, provides a unique window into the mechanics of autoimmunity. Scientists know its trigger is gluten, and Bhagat and his colleagues now are asking: Why does the immune response seem to spread to other parts of the body? Are the attacker cells in the small intestine actually migrating? Or do biochemical changes in the small intestine signal to other organs that they should stop regulating their own immune cells?

Give them not their daily bread

Today, gluten-free food represents a \$1.8 billion annual market in this country. That's grown 25 percent in each of the

Among U.S. doctors a cycle of ignorance took root: Physicians rarely met anybody who'd been diagnosed with celiac disease, so they regarded it as a medical oddity not worth learning about.

past four years. Walk down the aisles of a Whole Foods and the universal symbol for gluten-free food — a wheat stalk with a slash through it — appears on hundreds of breads, pastas, pot pies, pizzas, crackers, cookies, muffins, beer, and even cosmetics.

Medical schools in the United States are updating the way they teach celiac disease. At Columbia University Medical Center, Green has trained colleagues to keep an eye out for celiac disease and he delivers an annual lecture that all students are encouraged to attend.


The typical American doctor remains uninformed, however. About 75 percent of all patients now diagnosed at the Celiac Disease Center arrive not by physician referrals, but because patients learned about Green's practice by searching the Internet or through a patient advocacy group. That shouldn't be surprising, though, because Americans with celiac wait an average of 11 years before they're properly diagnosed, as Green concluded in a recent paper.

The total number of people who have celiac disease seems to be increasing dramatically. One study conducted recently at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minne-

sota, and based on analyses of old, preserved blood samples, suggests that since 1959 the prevalence of celiac disease in this country has increased from 1 in 400, to 1 in 100. A major study in Finland in 2004 found the same rate of increase over that period. In both countries, diabetes rates also increased fourfold. A widely discussed hypothesis, offered first by the British epidemiologist David P. Strachan, is that people are becoming more prone to autoimmune disorders like diabetes and celiac disease because children are exposed to fewer germs and bacteria than in the past. This might stunt the development of the immune system, say many scientists.

"What's really tricky is that the additional celiac cases that we're seeing are the kind most difficult to spot," says Green. "They're the subtler cases, the ones where people don't have any obvious gastrointestinal symptoms."

Celiac disease is transforming itself into a more sneaky illness, Green believes, in part because women around the world are breastfeeding their children at higher rates than they did a few decades ago. Research suggests that a child who is breastfed is less likely to develop celiac disease — and for this reason Green definitely recommends it — yet breastfeeding also diminishes the likelihood that a youngster with celiac disease will show the types of obvious gastrointestinal symptoms that, ironically, help doctors spot the condition.

"You can understand why lots of cases are missed," Green says. "And the only way that's going to change is if patients take charge of their own care. If they suspect they have a problem with gluten, they need to go to their internist and say, 'Is it possible I've got celiac disease? Why don't you test me? Why don't you refer me to somebody who treats this?' We've got to talk up this disease." 

A new exhibition this winter will feature
a selection of Professor Thomas Roma's
modest and intimate photographs.

A Book-Sized World

The urge to understand through observation what is closest at hand is as old as art itself, and photography is especially suited to the pursuit. For more than 30 years, most of Thomas Roma's photography projects have involved life in his native Brooklyn. When his interest and curiosity have demanded it, he has traveled to take pictures in northern New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Sicily, his ancestral starting point.

Some 80 photographs depicting Roma's interests and curiosities make up "Pictures for Books: Photographs by Thomas Roma," a new exhibition opening on January 19 at the Miriam & Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery. The title refers to Roma's preference for displaying his pictures in book form, rather than in the enormous wall-sized enlargements that are so much a part of the contemporary art scene. The modest format complements his modest subjects: the

small gardens of his neighborhood, bathers at a public pool, passengers riding the elevated train, working-class houses, present and former synagogues, people at criminal court, worshippers at black churches, shepherds in Sicily. Roma shows us ostensibly mundane scenes, richly detailed and closely observed.

By engaging so obsessively with his surroundings — walking down familiar and unknown streets, knocking on church doors, driving, talking with strangers, taking pictures, then developing film and working through the laborious, repetitive trial-and-error process of making perfect prints — Roma gives us a sense that his effort, curiosity, and affection are balanced or nurtured by an underlying element of discontent. Why else the intense searching, reviewing, framing? And what is this rigorous attentiveness, recorded in picture after picture, but Roma's attempt to reconcile or confront this discontent, and to transform it? So the plainest objects, the most humble architecture, and the most ordinary neighbors emerge and take their rightful place in the heightened world of Roma's photographs.

By Susan Kismaric



From *Found in Brooklyn*





From *On Three Pillars*

Roma printed many of the pictures in the exhibition on a lightweight photographic paper stock called thesis paper. Unlike conventional photographic paper, thesis paper does not have a bright white baryta layer beneath the light-sensitive photographic emulsion layer. The resulting printed image has a luminous quality, as though light were

Roma shows us ostensibly mundane scenes, richly detailed and closely observed.

emanating from the picture itself. The choice of paper brings a special feel to Roma's sunlit photographs of Sicily.

Roma has been director of the photography program at the School of the Arts since 1996. His books of photographs include, among others, *Come Sunday*; *Found in Brooklyn*; *House Calls with William Carlos Williams, MD* (with Robert Coles); *Sunset Park*; *Higher Ground*; *Enduring Justice*; *Sanctuary*; *Sicilian Passage*; and *On Three Pillars*.

Susan Kismaric is a curator in the department of photography at the Museum of Modern Art. She is organizing Thomas Roma's show at the Wallach.

From *On Three Pillars*



From *Sanctuary*



From *Sicilian Passage*



From *Sicilian Passage*

"Pictures for Books: Photographs by Thomas Roma" will be on display from January 19 through March 27, 2010, at the Miriam & Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery. Call 212-854-7288 or visit www.columbia.edu/cu/wallach for more information.

She Covers the Waterfront

From parks to books to a floating pool, Ann Buttenwieser '84GSAPP brings New Yorkers to their own shores. // By Paul Hond

With a blast of its horn, the ferry departs from the Battery Maritime Building on South Street and churns into the East River. It's a balmy Friday morning in mid-October, and the decks of the boat are packed with bicyclists, raucous high schoolers, tourists with cameras and clip-on cell phones, sketch artists, daydreamers, young lovers, history buffs, and couples with and without small children. People on deck watch eagerly as the destination comes closer: a loaf of land at the confluence of the Hudson and East rivers, a small island marked by fluffs of trees, stately brick buildings, and, at the water's edge, what appears to be an ancient, rounded fortress or coliseum.

Minutes later, the ferry docks beside a sandy, man-made beach with a volleyball net and plastic palm trees bearing coconuts of red, yellow, and blue. Straight ahead, and higher up, beyond the emerald green turf and stone-wall tiers of Fort Jay, is the mast of a lone flagpole, rising from the island's star-shaped heart. For over 200 years, this locale served as a military post for the Army and, more recently, the Coast Guard, which left in 1996. In 2003, the U.S. government sold most of the island's 172 acres to New York State. Now it belongs to everyone.

The crowd disembarks. On the gangplank, one of the passengers, Ann Buttenwieser '84GSAPP, observes the scene with satisfaction. *This* is what it's all about: New Yorkers taking a free ferry ride to

enjoy *their* waterfront, descending, on this final weekend of the season, upon the cannon-studded, mansion-dotted, elm tree-shaded, water-bound pastures of Governors Island.

Buttenwieser's career — as a waterfront planner, urban historian, parks advocate, and writer — reaches its apotheosis here. Her new coffee-table book, *Governors Island: The Jewel of New York Harbor*, fittingly monumental in size and scholarship, covers three centuries of military history, while her work on the board of the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation, which operates 150 acres (the rest is run by the National Park Service as the Governors Island National Monument), looks to the island's future as a public space.

Ashore, Buttenwieser, who is an adjunct associate professor of urban planning at Columbia, strides along a paved walkway leading to some of the treasures of this abandoned installation. She is petite and brisk, with blond hair and wide, clear eyes that might best be described as swimming-pool blue. She speaks in a soft but authoritative voice that brings a listener's ear closer. "That's Castle Williams," she says, nodding at the rounded sandstone fortress. "It was completed in 1811, for the war with the British. During the Civil War, it served as a prison for Confederate soldiers." New York's very own Alcatraz.

Buttenwieser continues on the path, turning onto Colonels' Row, a two-acre green shaded by trees and lined with hand-

some brick buildings and columned houses. There are officers' quarters, an empty hospital (the birthplace, notes Buttenwieser, of Tom and Dick Smothers), and a startlingly long barracks in the neo-Georgian style.

"Liggett Hall was the longest military barracks in the world," says Buttenwieser, pointing with her chin. "It's longer than the height of the Chrysler Building."

"Longest in the world?" says one of her companions, since Governors Island seems too small to have the longest anything.

"In the world," Buttenwieser repeats, with a slight emphasis that settles the question for all time.

"Motherhood." That's the answer Ann Buttenwieser gives when asked about the origins of her park advocacy. In the early 1960s, as the mother of four young children, Buttenwieser spent many hours in the playgrounds of Central Park. There, she noticed that kids were getting hurt when they fell from the swings onto the asphalt surface. So she organized a group of parents in hopes of getting some help from City Hall. The group confirmed the asphalt problem by speaking with pediatricians at Lenox Hill Hospital, and located a company that produced a rubber matting called Safety Surf. When the city still wouldn't pay for the resurfacing, Buttenwieser and friends raised \$50,000 for a two-playground trial. "We brought the proposal and the money to the Parks Department, which was headed by Newbold Morris," she says. "It took two years, but we got the



city to do it.” Playground injuries dropped. Within five years, Safety Surf was in the parks budget, and remains so today.

The success led Buttenwieser into more ambitious territory. In the late 1960s, she cofounded, with future parks commissioner Henry J. Stern, the Council for Parks and Playgrounds, a citywide park advocacy organization that later became New Yorkers for Parks. (Buttenwieser

is still on the board.) But, like Melville’s seagazing crowds “pacing straight for the water,” Buttenwieser was inevitably drawn back to her element.

While working on her dissertation in the early 1980s (a landmark urban history called *Manhattan Water-Bound: Manhattan’s Waterfront from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*), Buttenwieser received a call from Albany. Governor Hugh Carey

wanted to appoint her to a commission charged with deciding what would happen on the 90 acres of waterfront parkland intended for Westway, the \$2.2 billion, 220-acres-of-landfill public works project that was poised to turn the crumbling West Side Highway into a six-lane supertunnel. Buttenwieser accepted the post, assuming (along with everyone else) that the plan, which had support in high places, was a

done deal. But Westway became a death battle, pitting the bullhorns and slingshots and pesky lawsuits of neighborhood activists against the big guns of labor, business, and government. Opponents feared that the property above the tunnel — and the parkland, too, eventually — would be turned mostly into luxury housing.

In August 1985, a year before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service petitioned for the northern spotted owl in Oregon to be listed as “threatened” over the objections of the timber industry, a federal judge in the Westway case ruled that the government had provided flawed testimony about the project’s impact on the spawning habits of the Hudson’s striped bass. With that, Westway’s defeat was sealed.

“There was a tremendous amount of antagonism toward the proposal,” Buttenwieser says. “The people who opposed it latched onto the environmental issue. At that time, and for many years afterward, environmental issues were used to stop projects. Nowadays, that seems to be less the case.”

After earning her doctorate in urban planning in 1984, Buttenwieser went to work for the Department of City Planning,

Hudson River Park, with its bikeways and walkways, luxuriant green lawns, landscaped piers, extensive recreation facilities, large seasonal crowds — and, in the water — plenty of striped bass.

Like the prolific park builder Robert Moses ’14GSAS, Ann Buttenwieser is a swimmer. She was born in Annapolis in 1935, and grew up on the Chesapeake Bay. Her father, Isador Lubin, was an economic adviser to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. When Ann was 11, Lubin took a job as industrial commissioner under Governor W. Averell Harriman ’54HON of New York. The family moved to Manhattan, which had a different waterfront from the one Ann was used to. “It was an industrial waterfront,” she says. “There was shipping and transportation. In high school, I went to France on the *Ile de France*, which left from the West Side piers, and I arrived home after my year abroad on the *S.S. America*, which also landed on the West Side. And to get to Annapolis you had to take the B&O [Baltimore & Ohio] Railroad — you got on a float car on the West Side and a barge took you across the river, where the B&O started. That’s what the waterfront was.”

Then came the asphalt playgrounds, the Safety Surf, and a taste for the good fight, for getting things done. What else could she achieve, given her talents and connections and expanding civic consciousness? How else to improve the lives of the children of New York?

A compelling answer presented itself while Buttenwieser was researching *Manhattan Water-Bound* in 1980. In a dusty room under the Battery Maritime Building, she discovered files from the Department of Ports and Terminals, dating from 1872 to 1935. They contained repeated references to “floating baths.”

These baths, Buttenwieser learned, were actually seagoing public swimming pools that had been built for the city’s tenement poor, with slatted bottoms that allowed the pools to fill with river water. Inspired, Buttenwieser wrote an op-ed and sent it to the *New York Times*, proposing the idea be revisited (with clean water, of course), given the lack of public pools citywide. “I thought, ‘Let’s bring them back,’” she recalls. The *Times* ran the piece on Memorial Day 1980, and for the next 20 years, at community and waterfront meetings, Buttenwieser talked about the floating pools. And talked. Mayor Koch offered her a garbage barge that would cost \$1 million to rejigger, but before she raised a single dollar, the boat sank. And so in 2000, Buttenwieser took matters into her own hands.

What followed was a textbook-worthy case of a Big Idea — ambitious, expensive, and improbable — making headway in rough seas (literally: the barge that was eventually purchased was being renovated in New Orleans at the time of Hurricane Katrina, causing a five-month delay), until finally, majestically, it enters port.

In her class at Columbia, called “Architecture, Planning, and Preservation: New York,” Buttenwieser uses the story to illustrate how things work. First, to solicit funds, you must establish a not-for-profit (the Neptune Foundation); then you have to raise the money, make yourself an expert in an esoteric subject (decommissioned

In a dusty room under the Battery Maritime Building, she discovered files from the Department of Ports and Terminals.

Waterfront Division, where she “traveled the country to see what other cities were doing, to try to find some models for New York.” Six months into the job, she was “yanked away,” this time by Governor Mario Cuomo and Mayor Ed Koch. When Westway fell, Koch and Cuomo set up the New York State–New York City West Side Task Force to figure out what to do with the roadway and the piers. And they wanted Buttenwieser to be deputy director.

The task force set to work, and 25 years later we see the results: a six-lane, mostly at-grade boulevard (Joe DiMaggio Highway, officially) and the five-mile-long

After graduating from the Dalton School, Ann attended Swarthmore, where she studied literature, competed on the swim team (she was a diver, too), and, at a Federation of Jewish Philanthropies benefit, met Larry Buttenwieser, a law student whose father, Benjamin Buttenwieser ’19CC, ’64HON, was a prominent banker, philanthropist, and Columbia trustee. (Larry’s mother was the former Helen Lehman, of the Lehman banking and political family.) Ann Lubin Buttenwieser transferred to Barnard for her senior year, had her first child, and, after graduating, settled into parenthood on the Upper East Side.



SARAH SHATZ

Island. He oversaw the island’s expansion and beautification, handpicked the architectural firm (McKim, Mead & White, which had recently drawn up the master plan for Columbia’s Morningside Heights campus), and exercised his “political savvy and his uncanny ability to implement an agenda for Governors Island,” as Buttenwieser writes. “Probably only George Washington, who had ordered construction for the first fort, had exerted the same impact.”

There’s a cyclical wonder to it. A pre-Revolutionary War military installation, boldly expanded, beginning in 1903, to more than twice its size (using landfill from the new Lexington Avenue subway line) by an unyielding administrator, becomes, 100 years later, a giant playground. Picnickers and cricketers share the rolling green of Fort Jay, visitors press their noses against the windows of the yellow Victorian mansions of Nolan Park, bicyclists and walkers traverse the three-mile esplanade, with water surging all around. There’s the Brooklyn Navy Yard, yonder across Buttermilk Channel, and Staten Island to the south, and, closer, looking as if she’s standing on the roof of a passing orange ferry, the Statue of Liberty. Waves lap the seawall, sending light spray upon the faces of watergazers seated on the movable benches, while behind them, readers lounge peaceably in hammocks, unwinding with the length of day.

Governors Island feels like a small miracle, an alternate reality in which the island was not, as almost happened between the two world wars, turned into a municipal airfield, or, as suggested by a revenue study commissioned by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani’s office in the 1990s, made home to a gambling casino.

In the end, the public stretches of New York’s 578 miles of waterfront will have been won by advocates who know how to work the system. And if it takes, say, a Moses-like power broker to do it, Buttenwieser isn’t complaining.

“No,” she says, with a twinkle of sage humor. “I think we need a czar.”

river barges), hire an architect, obtain permits, confront frightful cost overruns, and generally swim in an ocean of red tape.

Worth it? Buttenwieser’s voice tightens as she describes seeing the barge, christened *The Floating Pool Lady*, her gift to the city, arriving in New York harbor in the autumn of 2006. “It was,” she says, “like it was coming home.”

The seven-lane public pool, which berthed at Brooklyn Heights in the summer of 2007, drew more than 50,000 people that year. Next summer it will begin its third season docked off Barretto Point Park, in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx.

But if reading about the floating baths gave Buttenwieser her big idea, it’s tempting to imagine that the general concept was wafting in her consciousness for some time.

In an August 1965 issue of *Life* magazine, in the “Ideas in Houses” section, there is a photo essay called “A Fortress by the Sea.” The piece highlights an imposing structure built on a spine of rock on Long Island Sound. Designed by the architect Ulrich Franzen for the Buttenwieser family, the house has three three-story brick

towers and sits right on the sapphire-colored water.

The first photo shows a rectangular swimming pool lying at the foot of one of the towers. Above the pool’s far edge is a protective railing. Beyond the railing, the crystal blue bay. It appears, from that angle, that the pool is floating on the sea.

Governors Island: The Jewel of New York Harbor is itself a formidable piece of architecture, and Buttenwieser took special pleasure in its design and construction. In seven big, eventful chapters illustrated with photographs, maps, and drawings, Buttenwieser revives a potent little world, exposed on all sides to the winds of war, peace, and politics.

One of the book’s heroes is Elihu Root, “a highly regarded New York City attorney who was well connected socially and politically.” Root, who would later become secretary of state under Theodore Roosevelt and win the 1912 Nobel Peace Prize, was appointed secretary of war by President William McKinley in 1899, and became the master builder of Governors

NEWS

Harden elected to University Trustees

James Harden, a health-care executive who is among Columbia's most active alumni, was elected to the University's Board of Trustees this fall.

Harden '78BUS, '83PH has chaired the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) since 2007, during which time the nascent CAA has brought together graduates from across the University for special events, symposia, and concerts and offered alumni many new ser-

VICES. Harden also is the current chair of the Mailman School of Public Health's Board of Overseers and is the former president of the Columbia Business School Alumni Club of New York. A generous donor, he received Columbia's Alumni Medal, which recognizes distinguished service of 10 years or more, in 2000.

"I consider myself very privileged to have attended Columbia," says Harden. "Shortly after I graduated, I became involved in alumni activities, and as one's career progresses and you become more experienced and you have more resources, your engagement tends to grow. I've never said no to Columbia, and when I was asked to serve as a trustee, I was very happy to say yes."

Harden is the president of Catholic Health Services of Long Island, which is composed of five hospitals, three nursing homes, a regional home-care and hospice network, and an agency for special-needs patients.

At the Mailman School, Harden established the Public Health Scholars Fund, an endowment to provide graduate and doctoral students with tuition support. He has served on both the University's Alumni Trustee Nominating Committee (ATNC) and on the Trustee Advisory Committee for Socially Responsible Investing.

Harden was nominated to the Board of Trustees by the ATNC, which is made up of alumni representatives from each of Columbia's schools. The ATNC works closely with the board's own Trustee Nominating Committee to identify alumni leaders who might one day serve on the board. At the same time, it gives alumni a direct say in who helps govern the University. Six of Columbia's 24 trustees were nominated through this process.



James Harden

MICHAEL DAMES

Lions run away with Ivy crown

Columbia men triumphed at the Heptagonal Cross Country Championships at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx on October 30, edging out second-place Princeton by a single point. The pack of 92 runners spread out widely over the eight-kilometer sprint; when the Lions' first three runners — Brendan Martin '11CC, Kyle Merber '11CC, and Terence Prial '11CC — crossed the finish line, they trailed Princeton by five points. But then all of the Lions finished in the first half of the field, stealing the team championship. "This was a complete team effort and victory," head coach Willy Wood told the *Columbia Spectator*. "If one opponent would have passed by one [Lion], we would have only tied."



J-school report: local news needs handout

Newspapers produce the vast majority of serious journalism in this country, yet their earnings have been siphoned away by Web sites that offer free news content and cheap advertising rates. So why not slap new fees on Internet service providers and funnel the revenue to news organizations?

That's one recommendation in a 100-page report, "The Reconstruction of American Journalism," commissioned recently by the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. Authored by Leonard Downie, Jr., former executive editor of the *Washington Post* and a professor at Arizona State University, and Michael Schudson, a historian of journalism and a Columbia J-school professor, the report was underwritten mainly by the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

Downie and Schudson insist that the American marketplace no longer can sustain a vital free press. They say government intervention is needed especially to prop up local news operations, as local coverage has been hurt the most by newspaper cutbacks and shutdowns. Their boldest proposal is for the federal government to create a new institution, similar to the National Science Foundation, that would give grants to newspapers, broadcast stations, and Internet start-ups to do investigative journalism in the cities and towns they serve. The Federal Communications Commission could generate the necessary funds, Downie and Schudson write, through "telephone bill surcharges, fees paid by radio and telephone licenses, auctions of the telecommunications spectrum, or fees imposed on Internet service providers." The authors also want the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to require public radio and television stations — very few of which currently do any original reporting — to hit the street with their notebooks (and microphones and video cameras) or else lose their CPB funding. The CPB ought to receive more money from Congress, the report adds; the



PIOTR REDLINKSKI

Michael Schudson and Leonard Downie, Jr., discuss their report "The Reconstruction of American Journalism" at a symposium in Washington, D.C., on October 21.

United States currently spends \$1.35 per capita on public broadcasting. Compare that to Germany's \$25, Japan's \$60, Britain's \$80, and Denmark's \$100.

The report is generating intense debate about how involved the government should be in financing news. "While some of the specific recommendations that Downie and Schudson make have merit, the general thrust is that of a government bailout for journalism," wrote Steve Buttry, editor of Iowa's *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, on his popular blog. "As a First-Amendment purist who believes that independence ensures freedom, I cringe at the suggestion that we become that dependent on government."

Downie and Schudson aren't suggesting that the government alone can save local journalism. For instance, they also say that philanthropists and foundations need to start giving troubled news organiza-

tions the kind of money they customarily donate to museums, orchestras, charities, and universities; the Internal Revenue Service could make this easier by giving tax-exempt status to all serious news outfits, the report recommends.

But Schudson, in a testy exchange with Buttry on his blog on October 22, said that government financing is essential and shouldn't be dismissed for fear of censorship: "Does NSF work perfectly in funding the sciences and social sciences? Of course not. Is the BBC perfectly insulated from government pressure? No. Does CPB serve as an ironclad separation between Congress and NPR or PBS? No. But does each of these institutions work pretty well, on the whole? I think the answer is yes."

Watch a video interview with the authors and read the report at www.journalism.columbia.edu. — David J. Craig

Iran jails urban planner

Iran has imprisoned urban planning scholar Kian Tajbakhsh as an enemy of the state.

Tajbakhsh '93GSAPP, who was scheduled to begin teaching at Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP) this past semester, was arrested in Tehran on July 9, in the wake of that country's election protests. He was among several Western-educated scholars then indicted in a mass trial of more than 110

defendants. Iranian authorities found Tajbakhsh guilty of numerous security offenses, including espionage, and on October 20 they sentenced him to 15 years in prison. In early December, as *Columbia* was going to press, news reports indicated that Iran would level more spying charges against Tajbakhsh, who has denied all of the charges.

Cited as evidence against Tajbakhsh in his trial was his involvement in George Soros's Open Society Institute and his subscribing to a mailing list of Gary Sick, a Columbia professor of international relations who studies U.S.-Iranian relations. Iranian officials claim that Sick is a CIA operative. Sick, who says he never worked for the CIA, has written that the charges against Tajbakhsh are "political fabrications devoid of even the flimsiest effort to verify the truth."

The Scholars at Risk Network, which includes academics at 220 universities, has released a statement saying that Tajbakhsh's arrest "suggests a wider attempt to intimidate intellectuals and to limit academic freedom in Iran."

Tajbakhsh, who has dual Iranian-U.S. citizenship, is an expert on the evolution

of cities. He taught at the New School for Social Research from 1994 to 2001 and wrote two books, *The Promise of the City: Space, Identity, and Politics in Contemporary Social Thought* and *Social Capital: Trust, Democracy and Development*.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ian Kelly '86GSAS has urged Tehran to release Tajbakhsh. Several letter-writing campaigns are under way and a Web site, FreeKian09.org, has been created, featuring statements from the rock icon Sting, Gary Sick, and Mark Wigley, dean of GSAPP, and others.

Wigley recently hired Tajbakhsh as an associate professor at GSAPP. "He's right in the middle of an international debate among scholars about the history, present, and future of our cities," says Wigley in a video post on FreeKian09.org. "His specialty area is the way that civic leaders can best provide services for the local residents. . . . I was thrilled that over the course of the last year I was able to successfully recruit him back to Columbia University to be a member of our faculty. It is extremely painful to see him arrested and imprisoned."



AP PHOTO / LINA HOUSHANG HADI

Kian Tajbakhsh '93GSAPP appears at his August 25 trial in Tehran.

Changing minds on climate change

In the past three years, the percentage of Americans who believe that global warming is real has declined, from 77 percent to 57 percent, according to a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center.

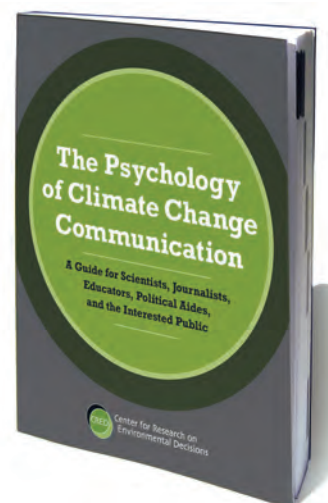
If you're a scientist, journalist, or educator looking to talk sense to the doubters, you'll find lots of practical advice in a new 43-page guide titled *The Psychology of Climate Change Communication*. Here are some tips: Talk openly about scientific uncertainties, but underscore that most scientists agree we have a *moral* imperative to take precautionary action against the threat of climate change. Be careful using terms like "theory" or "hypothesis" because nonacademics may hear these words as signaling idle speculation. Discuss how droughts and floods are more likely to occur because of climate

change, but acknowledge that climate change doesn't directly cause particular weather events. Also, don't terrify people with doomsday scenarios that can lead to apathy; rather, focus on solutions.

The guide, released by Columbia's Center for Research on Environmental Decisions (CRED), is based on the research of scientists at Columbia and elsewhere who study the psychology of risk assessment.

"Gaining public support for climate change policies depends on a clear understanding of how people process information and make decisions," says Debika Shome, a CRED researcher who coauthored the report with colleague Sabine Marx. "Social science provides an essential part of the puzzle."

For a copy of the free report, visit <http://cred.columbia.edu/guide>. — David J. Craig



Cuban blogger honored by Columbia

From her home in Havana, Yoani Sánchez maintains a political blog that few Cubans can access because of government censorship. Yet her blog, *Generación Y*, viewable at desdecuba.com/generaciony, is read by 14 million people worldwide, translated into 15 languages, and was named by *Time* magazine as 1 of the 25 best blogs of 2009.

In October, Sánchez was given a Maria Moors Cabot Prize special citation from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. The Cabot Prizes customarily go to journalists who cover Latin America and the Caribbean. Sánchez is the first blogger to receive the honor; she accepted her

ity, scarce resources and an enormous amount of guts.”

The other 2009 Cabot Prize winners are Anthony DePalma of the *New York Times*, Christopher M. Hawley of *USA Today* and the *Arizona Republic*, and Merval Pereira of *O Globo*.

Sánchez is being punished for speaking out, she says. On November 6, she alleges, she was abducted and brutally beaten in Havana by men she suspects were government authorities. Cuban officials have not issued any statements about the incident, which made international headlines after Sánchez blogged about it. A few days later, President Barack Obama '83CC partici-



REUTERS

Columbia recently honored Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez, seen here in her Havana home.

citation in absentia as Cuban authorities denied her permission to leave.

On her blog, Sánchez offers sardonic commentary about the hardships of day-to-day life in Cuba. She also fires stinging rebukes about Fidel Castro's failed policies and his propensity to blame the United States for domestic problems. "If in a maternity hospital cockroaches crawled on the walls," she wrote in one post, "it was the fault of the North Americans."

The Cabot board, in its citation, said Sánchez "pursues her craft with ingenu-

pated in an e-mail interview with Sánchez, answering several questions about U.S.-Cuban relations.

The U.S. State Department issued a statement saying it "strongly deplored" the attack. An open letter from Nicholas Lemann, dean of the journalism school and Henry R. Luce Professor of Journalism, said, "We call on Cuba's leadership to investigate what happened to her and punish those responsible."

Read more about Sánchez at news.columbia.edu/global/1738.

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Northwest Corner Building takes shape

The skyline of the Morningside Campus was filled out this fall, nearly 115 years after the University began construction in this neighborhood. A glass and aluminum-clad tower designed by renowned Spanish architect José Rafael Moneo now rises 14 stories above Broadway at 120th Street, on the last major lot to be developed on the original six-block campus.

The Northwest Corner Building will be home to researchers working at the intersections of chemistry, engineering, biology, and physics. It will be connected via suspended walkways to abutting science buildings Chandler and Pupin, in order to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. Construction is scheduled to be complete by the fall of 2010.

The building, which is estimated to cost \$179 million, will enliven a rather sleepy section of campus. An unadorned, 30-foot-tall brick wall has long loomed over the sidewalk on Broadway

just south of 120th Street, encasing the Dodge Fitness Center. The ground level of campus there rests atop the fitness center, two stories above the street and concealed from passersby. There's no campus entrance within 450 feet in any direction.

The Northwest Corner Building's main entrance will be a large windowed lobby on this street corner, with escalators leading up to a café and to a high-ceilinged science library. The café and library will be surrounded with windows, such that academic activity will be visible from the street. The new building thus will be unique to the Morningside Campus in that passersby will be able to easily view academic life on the inside.

Moneo says that by opening up this corner of campus he aims to create a passageway to the 17-acre campus extension that Columbia is planning to develop in Manhattanville, further northwest at 125th Street, over the next two decades.

"The north side of campus has always been Columbia's backyard," Moneo says. "I want to enhance the University's presence here and connect it to the city."

North by northwest

In the early 20th century, original campus architects McKim, Mead & White envisioned a slender brick tower, some 25 stories tall and topped off with a pyramidal dome, at the corner of Broadway and 120th Street. No facility was ever built on the lot, however, until Columbia put Dodge Fitness Center underground there in 1974. Tennis courts were laid down on top of the fitness center. Finally in 2005, with the University increasingly squeezed for space, the administration of Lee C. Bollinger decided to erect a new science building above Dodge.

The task put before Moneo — who worked on the project with New York-based architectural firm Davis Brody Bond — was the most challenging he had ever faced, the architect told the *New York Times* this fall. When he first visited the site, he tried to convince University officials that the fitness center needed to be relocated. But Columbia officials were adamant that Dodge had to stay and also that it would remain open during construction. "It isn't an easy building," Moneo told the *Times* on October 12. "The conditions were so difficult."

Moneo's solution was to erect two sets of vertical columns — one set on the north side of the gym, the other on the south side — and to bridge them with gigantic steel trusses that span the gym without touching it, essentially forming a tabletop upon which the Northwest Corner Building now rests. The three trusses, each 20 feet high, were too heavy for construction workers to assemble on top of the gym, so they assembled them on a temporary platform above the sidewalk on Broadway, and then slid them into place.

Viewed on a recent hard-hat walking tour, the trusses, bolted together by gusset plates on the first floor and fanning upward,



EILEEN BARROSO

Construction on the Northwest Corner Building, at Broadway and 120th Street, is scheduled to be complete in the fall of 2010.



RAFAEL MONEO / ARQUITECTO

A science library on the third and fourth floors of the new building will be walled with huge windows.

gave the impression of walking on an oversized Pratt train bridge. It's a structural element the designers plan not to hide: The trusses will remain clearly visible in the building's spacious interiors.

Another challenge was making the Northwest Corner Building stiff enough for scientists to perform sensitive experiments inside without being disrupted by passing subway trains and automobiles. Making a structure exceptionally stiff usually requires using lots of steel or concrete, but this conflicted with the prerogative to limit the amount of weight placed on the tabletop.

To find the optimal trade-off between stiffness and weight, Moneo's team drew up a hypothetical design that covered the building with crisscrossing steel support beams. Structural engineers then used computer models to quantify how much support each beam would provide. "There are two kinds of support that each diagonal beam might give," explains architect Jeffrey Brock '91GSAPP, a member of Moneo's design team. "First, it can keep the structure from buckling inward, which is a force we call compression. Second, a beam can keep parts of the grid from pulling apart, which is called tension. Beams that hold tension are usually more efficient."

Engineers thus removed from their models all diagonals upon which the primary force would be compression. Many experiments later, after testing the consequences of adding back some beams and taking out others, they arrived at the final structure evident in the building's facade: a sparse array of diagonals that affords the solidity of Low and the lightness of Lerner.

Odd beam out

Moneo says every detail of the Northwest Corner Building is intended to call attention to its underlying structure. Sunshades and ventilation grates therefore run parallel to the diagonal sup-

port beams, accentuating the seemingly helter-skelter placement of the supports.

"The way we optimized the use of the steel gives the appearance of a certain randomness," Moneo says. "That's what gives the building its presence."

The result couldn't be more different from Columbia's neoclassical red-brick buildings designed by McKim, Mead & White. Yet Moneo believes that his work shares with theirs an intellectual integrity: Just as the original Beaux-Arts buildings on Morningside Campus defined the 20th-century university campus, creating a space that delicately balances the private and the public, he says that the Northwest Corner Building articulates a contemporary spirit of scientific adventure. He hopes that the use of computer technology to create the building's odd crisscrossed design scheme, for instance, will serve as an example of how all architects might "propose alternatives to traditional practice."

Mark Wigley, dean of Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, thinks the architect succeeded. "Any building at a university should be a teacher," he says. "It should offer some guidance, some warmth, and some discipline,



EILEEN BARROSO

Architect José Rafael Moneo outside of the Northwest Corner Building.

but more than anything else, it should create the desire for a new kind of space and invite you to go beyond your assumptions. I think that Rafael has made an extraordinarily beautiful and intelligent building."

— David J. Craig

Celebrating Eric Kandel at 80



Charlie Rose and Eric Kandel

Columbia celebrated the 80th birthday of Nobel laureate neuroscientist and University Professor Eric Kandel with a daylong symposium on November 20. Seventeen colleagues and former students gave addresses describing how Kandel's work on brain function inspired their own research on topics ranging from the emotions of mice to the neuronal underpinning of moral thought. PBS talk-show host Charlie Rose, with whom Kandel is currently cohosting a yearlong series of special episodes on the brain, emceed a dinner. "One of the things that amazes me about being 80 years old is that I get as much joy out of science today as I did when I began," says Kandel. "That's because exciting things keep on popping up." Watch a video interview with Kandel at <http://news.columbia.edu/oncampus/1787>.

CAA to host Athens alumni gathering

Alumni from around the world are welcome to convene in Athens, Greece, from April 22 to 25 to participate in cultural and social events led by deans and faculty from across the University. The program is one of the Columbia Alumni Association's signature events.

Highlights of the Athens weekend will include behind-the-scenes visits to the Acropolis and other key archaeological sites; museum excursions; and lectures on antiquities and art. Participating faculty come from the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation; the School of the Arts; Columbia College; the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science; and the Mailman School of Public Health.

For more information, contact Ilene Markay-Hallack, the Office of Alumni and Development's executive director for University events and programs, at im2@columbia.edu or 212-851-7841.

The Columbia Alumni Association will host a series of cultural and social events in Athens, Greece, from April 22 to 25.



Alumni panel probes nonprofit obstacles

President Lee C. Bollinger moderated a panel titled From the Me Generation to the We Generation: The Future of Service on November 6 as part of the Fifth Annual Columbia Alumni Association's Worldwide Alumni Leaders Assembly.

The panel, which took place before an audience of 200 alumni, probed the challenges to successful nonprofit programming, among other issues. Participants included New Jersey Senator Frank R. Lautenberg '49BUS; New York City Chief Service Officer Diahann Billings-Burford '02LAW; and Rockefeller Foundation President Judith S. Rodin '71GSAS, and Deogratias '01GS, the founder and director of Village Health Works, a nonprofit health-care clinic in his native Burundi.

Deogratias, who narrowly escaped the genocide in Burundi in 1994, came to the United States soon thereafter with a fake visa and wound up homeless on the streets of Harlem. He worked odd jobs, learned English, and in 1997 enrolled in the College of General Studies, majoring in philosophy. Deogratias, who is the subject of the Tracy Kidder book *Strength in What Remains*, attended the Harvard School of Public Health and subsequently returned to his rural village of Kigutu, where he launched Village Health Works in 2005.

Despite working in one of the world's poorest nations, Deogratias said that his core challenges are similar to those of nonprofit executives everywhere. "NGOs and other programs have to work *with* the community, not [simply] within the community," said Deogratias, who goes by his first name because of security concerns in his homeland. "You have to figure out: Why are you doing this? Is this service for ourselves or for the community? And if so, are we getting the community involved?"

To watch an online video of the discussion, which requires inputting a University ID, visit <http://alumni.columbia.edu/caa2009assembly/index.html>.

College senior will take Rhodes to Oxford

This November, Columbia College senior Raphael Graybill faced an enviable dilemma: Take the Marshall Scholarship he was offered on the 18th, or reject it and take the Rhodes offered to him three days later.

Either way, he knew he would be going to Oxford University on a full scholarship to pursue a master's degree in politics, focusing on the media's influence on politics and civic engagement.

Graybill, a political science major, chose the Rhodes award, he says, partly because the Marshall Scholarship would go to another recipient if he declined it; the Rhodes has no such process. "This way, someone else gets to go in my place," he says.

A native of Great Falls, Montana, Graybill already has an impressive résumé: In 2008, he was the youngest member of Montana's delegation to the Democratic National Convention and last summer he

worked on health-care issues at the U.S. Senate Finance Committee's majority staff office. Graybill has also served as statewide field coordinator for an attorney general campaign. In addition, he is involved with the Lutheran World Relief foundation as a member of its President's Council.

Graybill is captain of Columbia's ski and snowboarding team and is an auxiliary police officer with the New York Police Department's 26th Precinct. Once a week, he patrols Upper Manhattan.

"Raphael is a terrific leader, as well as a great student," said Michael Pippenger, associate dean of fellowship programs at Columbia College. "That he was awarded both the Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships is quite a feat and it speaks to the ways people recognize his commitment to public service and his potential for a very bright future."



MICHAEL B. SHAVELSON

Raphael Graybill

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Nursing dean Munding honored for 24 years of leadership

Mary O'Neil Munding '81PH, dean of the School of Nursing, was honored by more than 250 friends and colleagues in academia and health care at Low Library on November 9. Munding will step down as dean, after 24 years of leadership, by June 2010.

Gala cochairs Mary Dickey Lindsay '45NRS and Sally Shipley Stone '69NRS presented Munding with a gift of a wooden cap-

tain's chair, symbolizing a new professorship that has been proposed in her honor. More than \$2.3 million has been raised to date for the endowed chair, to be held by future deans of the school.

Guests saluted Munding for her wide-reaching influence on nursing education and practice. It was on her watch that the School of Nursing became one of the preeminent nursing-education programs in the country. As dean, Munding championed the role of advanced practice nurses, who have a large degree of autonomy in treating patients. Perhaps most notably, she oversaw the creation of the first clinical doctoral degree in nursing; that degree, the doctor of nursing practice, is now offered at more than 200 nursing schools.

Joining School of Nursing trustees, administrators, and alumni at the celebration were University President Lee C. Bollinger '71LAW, Columbia University Medical Center Dean Lee Goldman, and guests who included Congressman Charles Rangel; former New Jersey governor Thomas Kean '63TC; Herbert Pardes, president of New York–Presbyterian Hospital; and Ellen Futter '71 BC, '74LAW, president of the American Museum of Natural History.

Munding will remain on the nursing faculty after handing over her administrative duties. A search for her successor is currently under way.

— Marcus Tonti



NANCY ADLER

Hilda Hodges Jones '79NRS and Christopher S. Jones '67LAW, pictured here with Mary O'Neil Munding '81PH, in center, are among donors creating an endowed professorship in Munding's honor.

“Give back to
Columbia.
Because it’s
something we
can do, and
should do . . .”

— KENNETH FORDE '59PS



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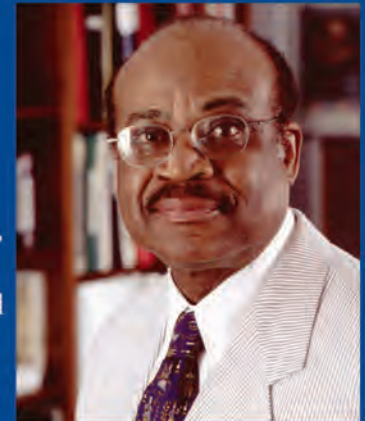
Kenneth Forde, M.D., a pioneer in the field of colon cancer, has educated and inspired generations of Columbia doctors.

Dr. Forde likes to say, “At Columbia, I’ve gone from applicant to student to intern to resident to professor and now to Trustee.”

Now, he is leading by example once again—by including Columbia in his will.

Join Dr. Forde and others in the 1754 Society, a group of alumni and friends who have made bequests and other planned gifts to the University.

To learn more about Dr. Forde and planned giving, visit giving.columbia.edu/plannedgifts or call 800-338-3294.



NEWSMAKERS

Young scribes go for it

Jodi Kantor '96CC, a Washington correspondent for the *New York Times*, has reportedly received a seven-figure deal from Little, Brown to write a book about the First



GETTY IMAGES

Jodi Kantor '96CC

Couple. Kantor wrote an article about the marriage of Barack and Michelle Obama that appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* on November 1 . . . Karen Russell '06SOA and Josh Weil '04SOA were two of the National Book Foundation's "5 Under 35" young writer honorees at a November 16 ceremony that kicked off a weeklong celebration of the National Book Awards. Russell is the author of the 2006 short-story selection *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves* and Weil of *The New Valley*, a triptych of novellas published in 2009.

AIDS empowerment

The New York AIDS Coalition recently selected Brittany Allen '02GS as its new executive director. Allen, who formerly worked as a program coordinator for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Planning Council, will run the statewide organization that trains tens of thousands of people with HIV and AIDS to advocate for their own health care.



COURTESY OF XEROX

Ursula M. Burns '82SEAS

First to the top

Ursula M. Burns '82SEAS was named CEO of Xerox this past summer, becoming the first black woman to lead a Fortune 500 company. The mechanical engineer began her career at the company 27 years ago.

Airwaves assessed

Julius Genachowski '85CC, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), recently appointed Steven Waldman '84CC to head the FCC's Commission on the Future of Media in a Changing Technological Landscape. Waldman, an Internet entrepreneur and journalist, will lead an FCC-wide assessment of the news media



OZIER MUHAMMAD / THE NEW YORK TIMES

Steven Waldman '84CC

and make recommendations for how the commission can ensure that Americans get the news they seek.

Persuasive profs

Arturo Valenzuela '71GSAS is the new U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Previously, he was professor of government at Georgetown and director of that university's Center for Latin American Studies . . . Thomas Hull '73SIPA, a professor of international relations at Simmons College, received a Presidential Meritorious Service Award in November. He was recognized for his work as U.S. ambassador to Sierra Leone from 2004 to 2007, during which time he took a lead role in peacekeeping efforts.

Late-night player

Jenny Slate '04CC has joined the cast of *Saturday Night Live* for its 35th season.



GETTY IMAGES

Jenny Slate '04CC

Best known for her role in the parody sketch "7th Floor West" in *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, Slate has also appeared regularly on HBO's *Bored to Death* and the Fox comedy series *Brothers*.

EXPLORATIONS

Chasing God's particle

Columbia physicists hope to soon observe the one elementary particle yet to be discovered of the 17 predicted by contemporary theory. The particle, which theorists have dubbed the Higgs boson, is crucial to scientists' understanding of the universe; as hypothesized, the Higgs boson interacts with other elementary particles in a way that slows them down as they move through space. In other words, the Higgs boson explains why matter, even at the scale at which it is composed of single points of energy, has mass.

About 20 Columbia physicists, including professors Gustaaf Brooijmans, Emlyn Hughes, John Parsons, Michael Tuts, and students and postdoctoral researchers, are among thousands of scientists from around the world who are about to begin searching for the Higgs boson at the new Large Hadron Collider (LHC) near Geneva, Switzerland. The LHC, which is the world's most powerful particle accelerator, lies in a 17-mile-long circular tunnel below the Franco-Swiss border. Built at a cost of roughly \$4.5 billion over 13 years, it oper-



MAXIMILIEN BRICE / CERN

Physics professor Michael Tuts, pictured here at the new Large Hadron Collider (LHC) near Geneva, Switzerland, manages about 400 scientists who hope to discover new types of elementary particles at the LHC.

ated briefly in September 2008 but soon was shut down for repairs before being fired up again this past November. LHC scientists expect that in early 2010 they will begin accelerating beams of protons to near the speed of light and then aiming them at each other, causing the protons to burst into sprays of constituent particles. Radiation detectors will monitor the energy emitted by these particles, many of which will disappear within a fraction of a second.

Mike Tuts manages about 400 physicists from U.S. institutions who are assigned to one of the LHC's four main research projects, called ATLAS, which stands for A Toroidal LHC Apparatus. The ATLAS team is looking for the elusive Higgs boson as well as other particles whose existence physicists have yet to even hypothesize. The Higgs boson, which is named for Scottish physicist Peter Higgs and is often called God's particle because of the deep secrets it could reveal, was described by theorists in

the 1960s. But it has never been observed because no particle accelerator has produced enough data to verify its existence. The LHC will produce 1 billion proton-proton collisions per second. At that rate, physicists expect that a Higgs boson will appear about once every five seconds; within a couple of years, scientists hope to have enough data to identify its properties.

That will be the crowning achievement of the Standard Model of particle physics, a theory that attempts to describe all matter in the universe, according to Tuts. "The only thing more exciting will be to see entirely new discoveries that we can't even anticipate," he says. "For instance, we might see something that proves to be the stuff of dark matter, or we might detect a loss of energy in a proton collision, suggesting that a particle has moved into another dimension that we can't see. Now, that would be truly astonishing."

— David J. Craig



ADAM HART-DAVIS / SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

One of several radiation detectors at the Large Hadron Collider is lowered into an underground chamber in Cessy, France, during the LHC's construction. Detectors surround several small sections, usually a couple of hundred feet long, of a 17-mile-long tunnel through which particles will travel at near the speed of light.

BigShots, small shutterbugs

It's a digital camera, just like the ones grown-ups use, complete with a flash and standard and panoramic lenses. Only it's cooler: A transparent back panel reveals the camera's inner workings and a hand crank can provide power when you don't have batteries.

The BigShot camera, designed by computer science professor Shree Nayar, is intended to teach youngsters about science while they express themselves creatively. It comes as a kit, allowing children as young as eight to assemble the device. Each step in the assembly teaches a basic concept of physics: why light bends when it passes through a transparent object, how mechanical energy is converted into electrical energy, how a gear train works.

"The idea was to create something that could be used as a platform for education across many societies," says Nayar, the T. C. Chang Professor of Computer Science and the chair of that department at Colum-

bia's Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS). The project is an extension of his work as director of the school's Computer Vision Lab, where he develops highly sensitive cameras.

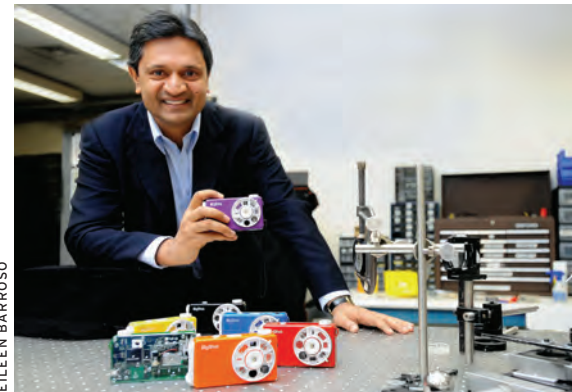
Nayar hopes to roll out the BigShot camera internationally, with a large number being donated to schools in underprivileged areas of the United States and other countries. The camera now is in prototype form and Nayar soon will be looking for a partner — either a company or nonprofit — to help put BigShot into production.

In the meantime, Nayar and engineering students have been testing out BigShot with children in India, Vietnam, and New York.

"I am addicted to the pictures; I can't get enough of them," says Nayar, who along with several graduate students, has created a Web site, bigshotcamera.org, to showcase the photography of youngsters. "The fact

that some of the kids were using a camera for the first time," Nayar says, "and they were able to frame what they thought was important and capture that moment so beautifully, was really remarkable."

— Anna Kuchment



Computer scientist Shree Nayar has created a camera that teaches children about science.

One fish, two fish . . .

"When we look at a river in New York City at night, we usually see lights and activity — our city reflected back at us," says architect David Benjamin '05GSAPP. "But what if, instead of looking

at the water and seeing a mirror, we were able to see it as the membrane of another ecosystem?"

To call attention to aquatic life in the city's waterways, Benjamin and several colleagues recently installed sonar equipment in floating plastic tubes capped by lights that twinkle when fish swim underneath. The lights also change color to indicate water quality — blue means that oxygen levels are higher than the previous week, which is good news for organisms below; red signals that oxygen levels are decreasing, which can indicate pollution.

The project, called "Amphibious Architecture," is led by Benjamin and Soo-In Yang '05GSAPP, codirectors of Columbia's Living Architecture Lab, and Natalie Jeremijenko, an installation artist and engineer at NYU.

The sensors are at Pier 35 in the East River and at East Tremont Avenue in the Bronx River through the end of 2009; a permanent bank of sensors may soon be installed at Pier 35.

"We want to engage people's curiosity," says Benjamin. "The water surface is one of the city's most beautiful facades, and there are lots of interesting things going on below there." — DJC



Architects recently installed sonar equipment within floating tubes that light up when fish swim underneath in the East River.

REVIEWS

Ghosts // By Jay Neugeboren

Asylum: Inside the Closed World of State Mental Hospitals

Photographs by Christopher Payne with an essay by Oliver Sacks (The MIT Press, 209 pages, \$39.95)

“Before I began this project in the summer of 2002,” writes Christopher Payne in his extraordinary and extraordinarily moving book of photographs, “I had never visited a state mental hospital.”

“A friend,” he explains, “who knew my interest in forgotten architecture and industrial archeology, told me about one on Long Island he thought might interest me. It was Pilgrim State, the largest facility of its kind in the world when it was built in the 1930s. I drove there and was immediately astounded by its size and dumbfounded by its desolation. . . . I wondered how a place so big, easily larger than any number of towns or major universities, could be so forsaken.”

Unlike Christopher Payne, I have been visiting state mental hospitals for nearly 50 years. My brother, Robert, now 66, first incarcerated in Creedmoor State Hospital in the mid-'60s, has been a resident of several of the institutions Payne photographed, and has been in and out of others most of his adult life. I have seen them at their best and their worst — when they were places where competence and kindness helped Robert to a better life than was predicted for him; when they were hellish warehouses of neglect and cruelty; and when they were, like the hundreds of thousands of people who inhabited them, forsaken.

Between 2002 and 2008, Payne '90CC visited more than 70 hospitals in 30 states. The vividly exacting and brilliantly selective photographs he made for *Asylum: Inside the Closed World of State Mental Hospitals* chill by their very beauty and haunt by what is absent: We do not see a single picture of a living human being.

Oliver Sacks provides a splendidly informative and acutely sobering introductory essay to the book. “The first state hospitals,” he tells us, “were often palatial buildings, with high ceilings, lofty windows, and spacious grounds, providing abundant light, space, and fresh air, along with exercise and a varied diet.”

“Most asylums,” writes Sacks, “were largely self-supporting and grew or raised most of their own food. Patients would work in the fields and dairies, work being considered a central form of

therapy for them. . . . Community and companionship, too, were central — indeed vital — for patients who would otherwise be isolated in their obsessions or hallucinations.”

These hospitals, invariably built far from populated areas, also offered literal asylum by providing “control and protection for patients, both from their own (perhaps suicidal or homicidal) impulses and from the ridicule, isolation, aggression, or abuse so often visited upon them in the outside world.” By the end of the 19th century, writes Sacks, who is Columbia University Artist and professor of neurology and psychology, state mental facilities had “become bywords for squalor and negligence, and were often run by inept, corrupt, or sadistic bureaucrats.”

Payne grew up in Boston, and on childhood trips along Interstate 95, he saw Danvers State Hospital “looming in the distance, high on top of a hill. It looked like an ancient, far-away castle, with towers poking above the trees, forming a long string of peaks that hinted of its monumental size.”

There is for Payne, as for Sacks, something utopian about these self-sufficient communities that ultimately, alas, devolved into dystopian dumping grounds. Through his luminous photographs, in both vibrant color and limpid black-and-white, Payne evokes the grandeur of the hospitals, and also their sadness, deterioration, and death. Judicious use of shadow and light, along with a shrewd mix of camera angles that, by turns, induce wonder, awe, claustrophobia, and vertigo, enable us to sense what can no longer be seen: what daily life might have been like in these places for patients, the majority of whom, once they arrived, never left.

Payne guides us from the majestic, decaying facades of asylums to their innards — from grounds, buildings, and farms to staircases, lobbies, and wards. The ward, he writes, was “the center of patient life . . . the space that best typifies the mental hospitals.

“The view down the corridor, with its rigid symmetry and procession of identical bedroom doorways, speaks to the monotony of institutional life. In all the hospitals, the wards were fundamen-



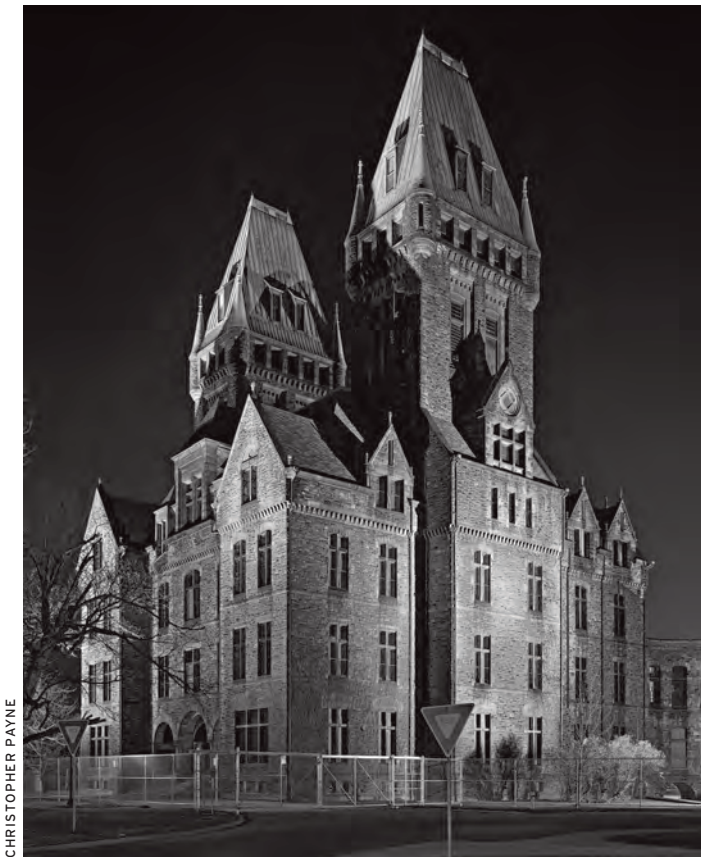
A patient ward in Buffalo State Hospital, closed in 1974.

tally the same, sharing a plan driven by the need for efficiency and organization. On their own, they are just hallways, but together they are symbols of a closed and isolated world.”

He takes us from rooms where people slept, to the coffin-like tubs in which they bathed; from the bakeries and kitchens where they worked, to the surgical suites where lobotomies and autopsies were performed. We see shoemaking and dressmaking shops, laundries, auditoriums, gymnasiums, baseball fields, beauty

salons, TV studios, and bowling alleys, along with subterranean tunnels, heating ducts, and exhaust flues. We travel from asylums that seem, in colorful period postcards, luxurious vacation resorts, to still-life compositions of individual rooms, chairs, beds, and articles of clothing that startle by their stark, serene simplicity.

Payne selects and arranges tenderly: multicolored straitjackets displayed as if for sale at an elegant boutique; a single hanging straitjacket — crisp, clean, and eerily divorced from its function;



CHRISTOPHER PAYNE

Buffalo State Hospital, designed by H. H. Richardson.

a plain wooden box, much like a Joseph Cornell construction, in which dozens of toothbrushes with brightly colored handles hang neatly. A small stack of dirty paper cups on a shelf, stray toothbrushes and toothpaste tubes, and cracked, peeling paint on the wall behind the box remind us that these brushes, paste, and cups once touched the teeth, mouths, and tongues of people we used to call lunatics.

From photos of exteriors that make these institutional complexes seem enchanted worlds, we move to the more and more personal (work, food, clothing), and, at the end of the book, to morgues, stone grave markers (stacked and numbered for future use), cemeteries, and to a storage area filled with floor-to-ceiling shelves of what appear to be glossy, orange-colored cans of paint. We learn, however, that they are unclaimed cremation urns containing the remains of patients.

Payne's photos evoke the tangible textures of lost worlds and the lost souls who inhabited them — places now inhabited, when inhabited at all, mostly by ghosts. He enables us to see what was too often denied or lost by inspiring us to imagine the individuality and complexity of the people who lived in these places, while also helping us to imagine the helplessness, hope, pain, confusion, and isolation that marked the lives of people for whom such places, whatever else they may have been, were home.

Jay Neugeboren '59CC is the author of 17 books, including Imagining Robert: My Brother, Madness, and Survival, A Memoir. His most recent novel, 1940, was published in 2008.

Heart of Darkness // By Michael Kimmage

Koestler: The Literary and Political Odyssey of a Twentieth-Century Skeptic

By Michael Scammell (Random House, 720 pages, \$35)

When Arthur Koestler arrived in New York City in March 1948 to launch an American speaking tour, his visit was front-page news. An audience of 3000 filled Carnegie Hall, eager to hear Koestler's thoughts on "the radical's dilemma" and on America's pressing need to confront Soviet communism. Koestler had gained worldwide fame for his novel *Darkness at Noon*, published in 1940.

The hero of the novel is Nicholas Rubashov, a devout communist caught in Stalin's net in the 1930s for straying from the party line. Before his inevitable execution, he is interrogated and forced to confess to ludicrous crimes. At the heart of his ordeal is an "absolute faith in History": Stalin may be fallible, but the Soviet cause is infallible and can be made to justify countless deaths, including Rubashov's own.

The novel's taut, philosophical style made it a staple of international literary culture, damaged the Communist Party's global reputation, and made its author an icon of the *engagé* intellectual. For much of the Cold War, Koestler was a celebrity anti-communist.

Yet when Koestler, the author of some 30 books, died in 1983, his chosen legacy was detached from political parties, movements, and causes. In his will, he left most of his estate to endow an academic chair in parapsychology.

This unorthodox evolution can now be traced in *Koestler: The Literary and Political Odyssey of a Twentieth-Century Skeptic*, a new biography by Michael Scammell '85GSAS, professor of creative writing at Columbia. In Scammell's telling, Koestler knew

his century's ideological tempests firsthand, flirted with its chilling certainties, and continued to return, over the course of his life, to the oasis of skepticism. Scammell presents Koestler as "a gambler and provocateur, taking physical and intellectual risks that led him to exciting and dangerous places, and sometimes to important insights ahead of his time. He was a Zionist in Palestine when it was extremely unfashionable to be a Zionist, and an anti-Zionist when Zionism was in its prime. He was a communist before communism became à la mode for western progressives, and an anti-communist at the floodtide of communist popularity during World War II."

Koestler was born in Budapest to a Hungarian-Jewish family in 1905. Like many Europeans of his generation, he possessed a lasting "thirst for utopia." Koestler first saw utopian possibility in Zionism, and then, by the 1930s, in the Soviet Union. (In a guesthouse in Turkmenistan, a new Soviet republic in the 1930s, Koestler heard a recording of Sophie Tucker singing "My Yiddishe Mamme" in the neighboring room; when he knocked on the door, it was opened by Langston Hughes.) In the interwar years, Koestler worked as a journalist and was famous in many European countries. He was also a Communist Party member from 1933 to 1938, serving as a conspicuous cog in the Soviet

propaganda wheel; his efforts were directed at the intelligentsia of Western Europe.

Koestler's journey to anti-communism went through Spain, where he had traveled as a journalist and as a communist. Arrested amid the chaos of the Spanish Civil War, Koestler entered "the twilight world of ideological outcasts and political prisoners," in Scammell's words. There he came to feel that charity is "not a petty-bourgeois sentiment but one of the gravitational forces which keeps civilization in its orbit," in Koestler's words. This banal insight, when applied to Stalin's ruthlessness, toppled his faith in Soviet virtue, leading Koestler to *Darkness at Noon* and to a career of anti-communist advocacy.

In an entry for *The God That Failed*, a 1949 compendium of autobiographical essays on communism, Koestler chronicled his communist years with such lucidity and eloquence that his essay became a classic of political self-analysis. As the Cold War took shape, Koestler immersed himself in anti-communist conferences and organizations, lending them the luster of his name. Koestler the Cold Warrior sought proximity to the new "seat of the Holy Roman Empire," as he described Washington, D.C., and for a few years he lived in the U.S.

Koestler traced "the spiritual crisis of the west" — of which communism and fascism were comparably symptomatic — back to the scientific revolution of the 17th century. Not fully secular and not at all pious, Koestler worried less about the conflict between faith and reason than about the divorce between science and culture. For him, modern culture had failed to humanize "the ideology of the Enlightenment," and too often a harsh Enlightenment ideology was able to dominate Western culture. The first half of the 20th century had registered abuses of political rationality aligned with the Enlightenment. The century's second half, Koestler feared, might witness a similar abuse of scientific rationality. Thus, he applied the dissolvent of his skepticism to modern science, in book after book, risking ridicule in his explorations of parapsychology and extrasensory perception.

Scammell begins and ends his authorized biography with the double suicide of Koestler and his wife Cynthia. The 78-year-old Koestler was suffering from Parkinson's disease and leukemia; his younger wife was healthy at the time of his death. This macabre event cast a shadow over Koestler's overall reputation, as did posthumous revelations of womanizing, including an allegation of rape, which Scammell moderates to "an unfortunate encounter."

Scammell's intent is to rescue Koestler from undeserved neglect, to claim him as more than a period-piece anti-communist (or intellectual rogue), and to present his "fusion of autobiography, psychological penetration, and dialectical analysis" as a "unique contribution to 20th-century prose." Scammell succeeds brilliantly. His research — 20 years of it — is prodigious, his writing is impeccable, and his erudition is proportional to his extraordinary, multifaceted, multilingual subject. This will be the standard Koestler biography.



BETTMAN/CORBIS

Arthur Koestler in New York City.

REVIEWS

Scammell's *Koestler* is not flawless. At times, the recounting of Koestler's hectic personal life crowds out the creative work that was Koestler's lifeblood, and Scammell devotes more critical attention to the later scientific books than to *Darkness at Noon* or to the essay in *The God That Failed*. Perhaps Scammell wanted to give the lesser-known Koestler his due and to avoid repetition of the familiar, but precisely because Scammell has written a major book it would have been valuable to have more of the major Koestler in it.

Scammell won considerable acclaim for his 1984 *Solzhenitsyn: A Biography*. Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Arthur Koestler might seem polar opposites. Born in the Soviet Union, Solzhenitsyn became a Christian conservative in the Russian mold, a skeptic about progress, about Europe, and about modernity, whereas the cosmopolitan Koestler was always "a leftist at heart," a seeker of progress, and a European hedonist in his daily life.

Scammell's two biographies should be read as a contemporary instance of parallel lives, the genre invented by Plutarch to distill political wisdom from the biographies of military and political giants. Solzhenitsyn and Koestler were both ardent communists in their youth; both were illuminated by their time in prison, leading them to become sworn enemies of the Soviet Union; both would merge the writing of history and autobiography with appeals for political action; and both devoted their intellectual maturity to contemplating the Enlightenment and its consequences. For Solzhenitsyn and Koestler alike, the Enlightenment was never a textbook chapter in the history of philosophy. It was the libretto of ideas behind the history of a terrifying century.

Michael Kimmage is an assistant professor of history at the Catholic University of America. He is the author of The Conservative Turn: Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers, and the Lessons of Anti-Communism.

Giant Slayer // By Josh Getlin

Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City

By Anthony Flint (Random House, 256 pages, \$27)

When Random House sent Robert Moses a review copy of Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961, New York's master builder was predictably infuriated. Jacobs declared war from the very first sentence: "This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding." An attack, in other words, on Moses's record, which would ultimately include the construction of 13 bridges, the Cross Bronx and Long Island expressways, 658 playgrounds, 2 tunnels, 17 state parks, plus Lincoln Center and the United Nations.

Moses '14GSAS, '52HON returned the copy, advising Random House to "sell this junk to someone else." But to his consternation, Jacobs's work became one of the most influential books ever written about American cities and how they function. A Greenwich Village mother and activist, she deplored the human cost of urban renewal and denounced Moses's replacement of lively neighborhoods with skyscrapers, housing projects, and highways. Jacobs celebrated the everyday magic of the American city, praising communities where different classes mingled and storefronts shared space with apartments. From her second-story window at 555 Hudson Street, she marveled at "the ballet of the good city sidewalk," and her crusade to preserve, rather than simply demolish, older buildings was embraced by a new generation of planners beginning in the 1960s.

The story of Moses and his impact was told in the classic 1974 portrait, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, by Robert Caro '67JRN. Far less has been written about Jacobs's life and her battles against the über-planner's projects, most notably, a planned expressway through Lower Manhattan. Anthony Flint's *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City* attempts to fill this gap, and for the most part succeeds admirably. Flint '85JRN, a former reporter for the *Boston Globe*, chronicles the clashes between Jacobs and Moses as they began locking horns in the early 1950s. The two never met. But their David and Goliath confrontations — she as a grassroots organizer, he as the city's most powerful planner — sparked angry battles over the future of Washington Square Park, the streets of Greenwich Village, and the congested, densely populated communities of Lower Manhattan.

Flint's narrative ends when both players left the stage in 1968. Moses, who had enjoyed support from politicians going back to Al Smith in 1918, was stripped of his powers by Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Jacobs, her husband, and their two sons, driven by her opposition to the Vietnam War and the draft, moved to Toronto. More than 40 years later, Flint writes, "the business of development has changed completely as a result of Jacobs's work. Builders and local government officials alike defer to the concerns

of the neighborhood, involving the community in every step of the process. . . . They live in fear of riding roughshod over citizens.”

The book charts Jacobs’s emergence as a journalist with *Architectural Forum* and an activist, focusing initially on her protests against Moses’s plans for an extension of Fifth Avenue through Washington Square. Long before it became common, she and her grassroots allies mastered the art of working with the media; they cultivated such rising politicians as Edward I. Koch and John V. Lindsay. They also learned the value of deploying children in battles with City Hall. Once, when Jacobs was buying long underwear for her boys, a clerk asked her if it was for the winter. “No,” she said. “It’s for picketing.”

Flint’s crisp, entertaining prose contrasts Jacobs’s passion for Washington Square’s bohemian flair with Moses’s button-down disapproval. To Moses, Flint writes, the park “needed a shave and a haircut, and to find a steady job. It needed to knock it off with the poetry readings and start serving a practical function for the city again.” When Flint describes the fierce citizen army that sprang up to defend the square, in essence he describes the birth of modern community protest politics, including tactics that would inspire “freeway revolts” in other cities. These strategies are now routinely employed by organizers from coast to coast, and Moses’s famous complaint that the only people who opposed him were “a bunch of mothers” seems almost poignant in retrospect.

Wrestling with Moses suffers in its parallel approach to these twin characters. Flint provides a wealth of little-known material about Jacobs. Yet no matter how thorough he is in summarizing Moses’s career, Flint’s work on Moses comes off as second-best compared to Caro’s blockbuster. More important, Flint describes but does not fully explore a revisionist school of thought that is more sympathetic to the builder. Indeed, the author’s comment that Moses’s “entire career, built on energy, ambition, single-minded pursuit of power has been repudiated” may strike some as excessive, given the

2007 exhibitions, lectures, and publication of *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* — the work of Columbia historian Kenneth T. Jackson and his former colleague Hilary Ballon — that tried to balance the historical scales. Jackson praised Moses as a man who, despite autocratic flaws, changed the city and embodied a can-do ethic. With New York lurching through the rebuilding of ground zero, some openly voice nostalgia for a planner who knew how to get things done.

Jacobs celebrated the everyday magic of the American city, praising communities where different classes mingled . . .

Flint does acknowledge that some of the ideas in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* would eventually collide with other priorities. The push to preserve older neighborhoods, for example, had the unintended effect of blocking construction of much badly needed housing across the country. It also encouraged a gentrification that would have been the last thing on Jacobs’s mind. On the day after she died in 2006, someone left flowers and an anonymous note at the door of the building where she had lived: “From this house, in 1961, a housewife changed the world.”

There have, in fact, been many changes at 555 Hudson Street: When Jacobs and her husband bought their three-story walk-up in 1947, it cost them \$7000. Recently, it sold for \$3.3 million.

Josh Getlin ’72JRN is a former New York bureau chief for the Los Angeles Times. He is currently working on a book about Los Angeles school desegregation, busing, and basketball in the 1970s.

Creation Myths // By Claudia Rosett

No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations

By Mark Mazower (Princeton University Press, 236 pages, \$24.95)

“Indispensable, if imperfect” is how President Barack Obama has described the United Nations, praising it as “vital to America’s efforts to create a better, safer world.” Yet, when it comes to nailing down just what those imperfections are, views vary widely. Critics of the UN have faulted it over the years for everything from being irrelevant to intrusive, timid to overreaching, inept to pernicious.

Columbia’s Mark Mazower, professor of history and of world order studies, adds his voice to the critics. In a slim volume based on recent lectures he delivered at Princeton and Columbia, he sets out to debunk an array of easy assumptions about the integrity of the UN’s founding aims and consistency of its core ideas. Taking his title from remarks by Britain’s Lord Halifax at the UN’s 1945 founding conference in San Francisco — that “ours is no

enchanted palace” — Mazower delves into the history of contradictions on which the UN was built and the convoluted course of its evolution since.

These themes offer rich pickings, he argues, because some of the basic premises of the UN are simply irreconcilable. The institution seesaws between its charter rules of respect for the sovereignty of its member states and overarching ambitions of global governance, too often delivering dismal results on both fronts. Recent history offers such prime examples as the relative impunity with which UN peacekeepers sent to places such as the Congo have sexually exploited children they were meant to protect. Another example is the UN’s 1996–2003 Oil-for-Food program in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, which burgeoned into a multibillion-dollar scam as

The institution seesaws between its charter rules of respect for the sovereignty of its member states and overarching ambitions of global governance, too often delivering dismal results on both fronts.

the UN tried simultaneously to impose sanctions on Saddam and collaborate with him in delivering relief.

Mazower does not delve into such recent cases, however. His concern is with the more distant past, and the making of “the tensions and ambiguities” he describes as “hardwired into the UN from the start.” To focus his argument, he summarizes the ideas and ventures of a handful of influential figures over the past century, among them South African statesman Jan Smuts, Russian-born Zionist Vladimir Jabotinsky, and India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Filtering his commentary through their stories, Mazower revisits the founding and failure of the League of Nations, followed by the creation and morphing mission of the United Nations. In both cases, Mazower argues, the original aim was to protect and serve the needs of empire: respectively, the British Commonwealth and then the victors of World War II, principally the United States. In both cases, the founding aim fizzled. At the UN, with the Security Council largely paralyzed by the Cold War standoff between the Soviet Union and the U.S., the chief action defaulted for decades to the General Assembly, which became a receptive forum for an anticolonial movement spearheaded by the likes of Nehru. Once that movement took hold, the General Assembly expanded at speed, from its original 51 member states to 192 today, turning the Great Powers into voting minorities.

With the end of the Cold War, hopes for a new birth of UN ideals quickly soured. Snared in its own contradictions, the UN ultimately failed, for example, to prevent such horrors as the genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, and Rwanda. Today, writes Mazower, the UN continues its search “so far in vain — for a political *raison d’être* more suited to the needs of the present.”

This book digs into such ironies as the legacy of one of the UN’s founding fathers, South Africa’s Smuts, a white supremacist who played a major role in crafting the League of Nations and who later wrote the preamble to the UN Charter. Smuts saw the British Empire as a vital guardian of his home turf and a moral force for spreading Western civilization around the globe. In his scheme, there was no contradiction between white supremacy and the reaffirmation, in the preamble to the UN Charter, of faith in “the dignity and worth of the human person” and “the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.” Reality proved otherwise.

Yet, for all the author’s erudition and insights, this book spins off the rails with Mazower’s central discussion of Israel and the Palestinians, subjects on which he apparently shares many of the inclinations evident in today’s UN itself. This is a treatise much concerned with UN thinking and policy on minorities, self-determination, and anticolonialism. These are worthy topics, but at the UN they have long been used as code phrases for prejudices and policies that entail winking at some members’ exploitation of the UN’s prolific flaws, and manipulating those same failings to condemn and isolate Israel. If that is what Mazower’s readers are expecting, he does not disappoint.

Mazower’s chief beef with the UN is its role in the establishment in 1948 of the nation of Israel. He details the process with indignation, glancing over the industrial-scale murder of 6 million Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, and dismissing the aspect of partition that offered not only the Jews but the Palestinians a state of their own — which the Palestinians refused. Focusing chiefly on Jewish thinkers of the day, Mazower draws parallels between the “Hitlerite” pursuit of ethnic purity in Europe and the Jewish quest for a secure homeland. This is delicately done. Mazower does not bluntly equate the two, but he scatters select historical crumbs to point his readers down exactly that trail. He adds, it seems cynically, “If I have not cited a single Arab voice here, it is because their voices — which were certainly being raised in protest — were almost entirely ignored.”

Mazower is accurate in his summing up of the UN’s philosophy as adrift in “dreams of a past that had never existed and a poor guide to what might lie ahead.” But this book is a poor guide to what lies behind.

Claudia Rosett ’79GSAS is a journalist-in-residence with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and writes a weekly column on foreign affairs for Forbes.com.

China Club

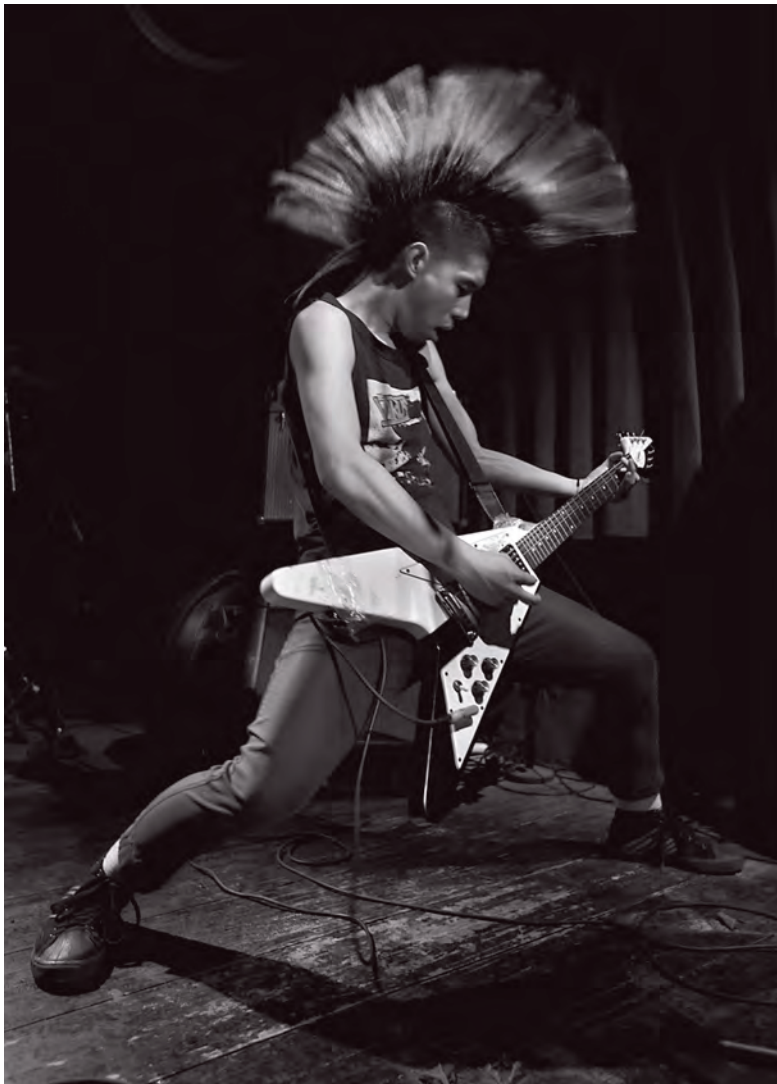
Sound Kapital: Beijing's Music Underground

By Matthew Niederhauser with illustrations by Chairman Ca and compilations by Yuli Chen.

(powerHouse Books, 176 pages featuring 125 photographs, \$24.95)

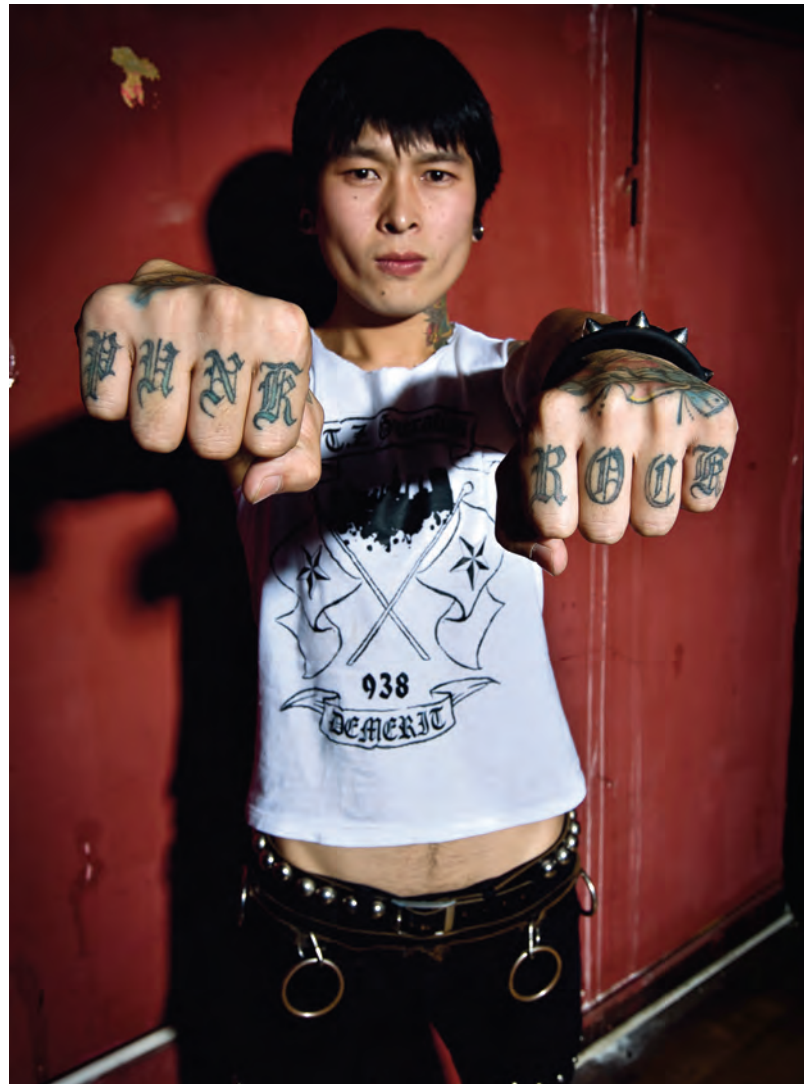
In 2007, expat photographer Matthew Niederhauser '05CC went to hear some music at a dive bar called D-22 in Beijing's university district, not expecting much. To his surprise, he found a vibrant underground-music scene. The next time he went, he took his camera. *Sound Kapital: Beijing's Music Underground* is a compilation of nearly two years' worth of photographs, featuring the punk bands and underground rockers that Niederhauser came to know. "I became addicted to these live performances

and fully possessed by the compulsion to catalog them photographically," writes Niederhauser, who studied anthropology at Columbia. Intimate color portraits against a red background are juxtaposed with black-and-white shots of performers on stage, all taken at D-22. The book also comes with a compilation disc of the featured performers mastered by Yuli Chen, who produced the music for the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Rock on.
— Allegra Panetto '09BC

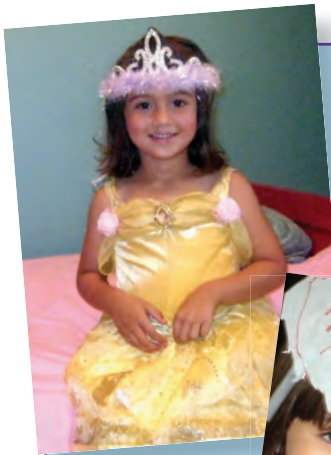


Demerit

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW NIEDERHAUSER



Liu Liu



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PARIS, 7th: Fifth floor, quiet, alcove studio sleeps 3, balcony. View Eiffel Tower. Separate kitchen: 207-752-0285; www.parisgrenelle.com.

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA: 1-bedroom apartment; nightly. 415-999-0412.

TORTOLA, BVI: 3-bedroom house 60 feet above Long Bay Beach. 646-526-7111; ewinghouse@gmail.com; www.ewinghouse.com.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA: 2-3 bedroom apartment. Weekly, monthly. 004368110616230; miazonta@aol.com.

VIENNA: Studio, quiet, clean, modern, central (9th district), maid service. Weekly or longer. leonard@columbia.edu.

Real Estate

ASPEN, CO: Amy Doherty Properties, Inc. Top residential and commercial broker in Aspen. Principal: Amy Connolly Doherty, former investment banker with Credit Suisse, BA Williams '84, MBA Columbia '89: 970-930-5733; adoherty89@gsb.columbia.edu.

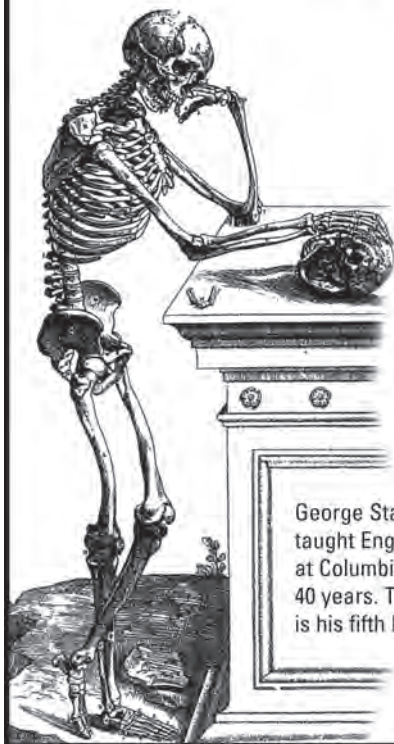
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COLUMBIA *alumni*
ASSOCIATION



Year of the Lion

When the Alumni Association of Columbia College met in early 1910, an important matter was set forth by the association's president, William Curtis Demorest 1881SEAS. Demorest, whose mother, Ellen, was a famous dress designer and fashion maven, wanted to attire the University, in a manner of speaking, with a mascot.

At the meeting, a future lawyer named George Brokaw Compton 1909CC put forth

his idea. Yale, Compton argued, had its Bull Dog, Brown its Bear, Princeton its Tiger. The Army had its Mule and the Navy had its Goat. Columbia, Compton suggested, should go straight to the top of the food chain. "We have the King's Crown," he is quoted as saying. "Let us have the lion."

On the face of it, this would seem an obvious crowd-pleaser. The lion represented courage, dominance, and power, and the

association expressed due enthusiasm for the proposal. But not everyone was convinced. In a letter to *Spectator*, published on April 8, 1910, someone called "Alumnus" wrote:

"It has been with mingled feelings of regret and mortification that I have noticed during the past few years an evident desire on the part of a large portion of the Alumni to revert to the old order of things that certain of our fathers gave their lives to eradicate. Many, many years ago a little handful of brave men, and not the least of them our distinguished Alexander Hamilton, fought for seven long years against discouraging odds for the realization of their hope of hopes. A few of these whose office it was had the temerity to depart to such an extent from the accepted form as to restyle Kings College 'Columbia.' And so, I wish to enter a vigorous protest against the growing tendency to make the Crown the all-important emblem of the University. Whereas I admire the British Lion and have profound respect for his roar, I believe the eagle's scream, harsh as it is, would be sweeter music to the shades of those who died on Harlem Heights."

But many students of the day weren't as sensitive to the reverberations of the long-ago war of independence. On May 4, 1910, the Student Board voted to admit the lion as the official school mascot.

So if you happen to see Roar-ee the Lion on campus this year, be sure to wish him a happy 100th birthday (lions live only to about 15 in the wild). Raise a glass to Compton and Demorest, too, for they truly unleashed a beast. As legend has it, Howard Dietz, of the Class of 1917, was so inspired by the golden-maned symbol of his alma mater that he adopted the lion as the mascot for the company for which he was head of publicity: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

— Paul Hond

The Roaring Twenties: the Columbia lion, circa 1920.



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2010 Calendar

Antarctica: Expedition to an Ethereal World
with Astronaut Scott Carpenter
January 8–21

Mystical India
January 24–February 10

Tanzania Safari
February 7–17

Expedition to Antarctica
February 9–23

Africa by Private Jet
February 26–March 20

Antiquities of the Nile Valley and the Red Sea
with Guest Lecturer
Dr. Margaret Nydell
March 3–13

Wonders of the Galápagos
with Professor Mark Cane
March 5–13

Hidden Corners around the World by Private Jet

- *Desert Crossroads and the Himalayas*
March 21–April 3

- *Sacred Places of Asia*
April 5–19

- *The Ancient Silk Road*
April 20–May 3

Jungle Rivers and Rain Forests of South America
April 17–May 2

Waterways of Holland and Belgium
April 25–May 3

Venice and the Medieval World
May 13–21

Byzantine Odyssey (Turkey)
with Professor Richard Sacks
May 24–June 7

Celtic Lands
May 25–June 3

Mediterranean Music Cruise
June 9–19

The Galápagos Islands: A Family Adventure
June 20–29

River Rafting Adventure
June 21–27

Wild Alaska Journey
June 27–July 4

Cruising the Baltic Sea
with Professor Pegi Vail
July 3–11

Great Lakes (Family Friendly)
with Professor Evan Haefeli
July 17–24

Into the Arctic
July 31–August 15

Russia: Exploring Moscow and St. Petersburg
with Professor Deborah Martinsen
August 5–13

The Dalmatian Coast
August 26–September 3

Music Cruise in the Classical World
September 19–29

Legendary China
September 21–October 4

Moroccan Discovery
September 25–October 8

Undiscovered Greece
September 27–October 7

Village Life in the Italian Lake District
October 2–10

Journey through Vietnam
October 2–17

Empires of the Sea
October 5–18

Sacred Places of the Mediterranean
October 27–November 8

World Highlights by Private Jet
with Professor Peter Awn
November 6–19

Israel: Timeless Wonders
November 26–December 8



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