

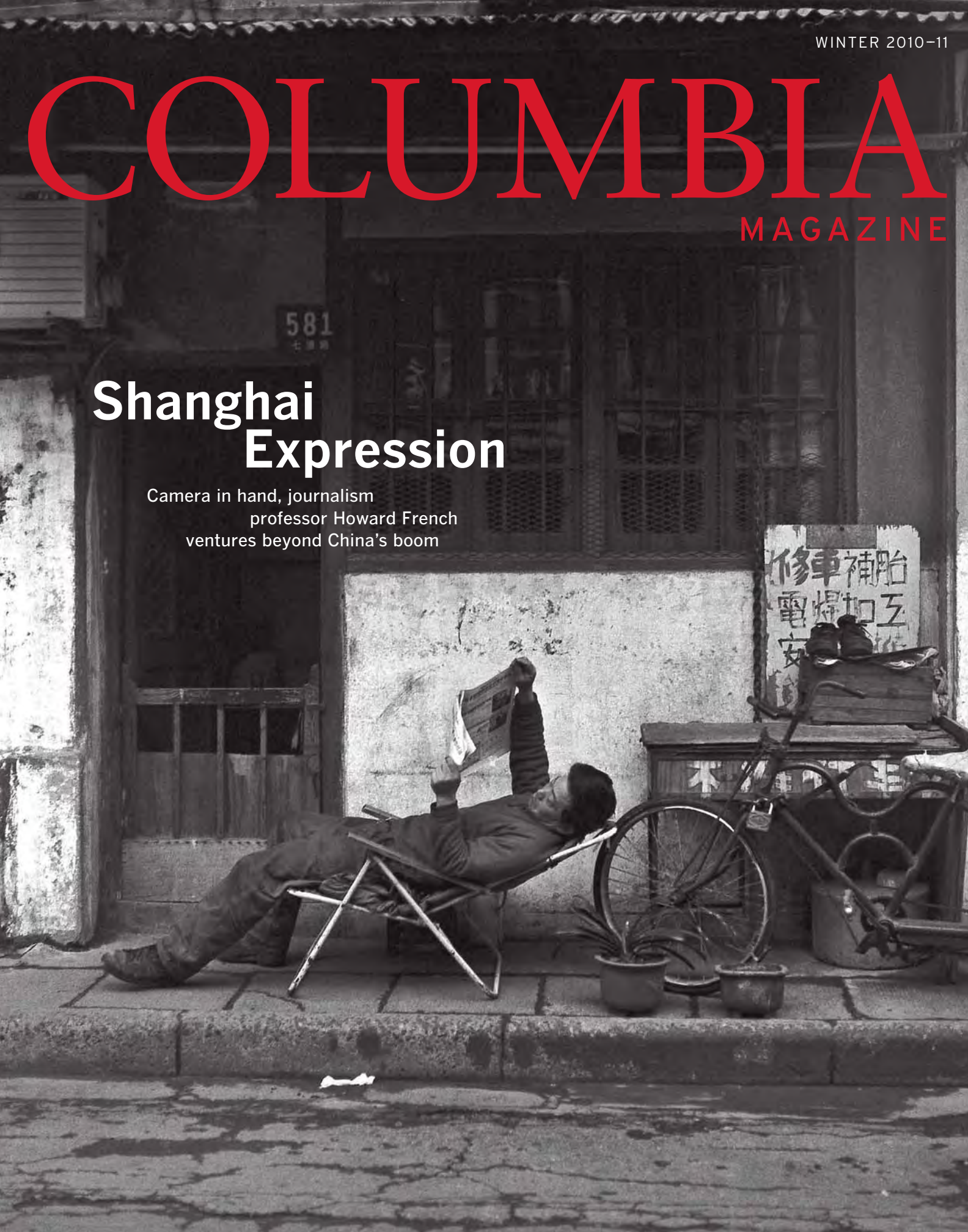
WINTER 2010-11

COLUMBIA

MAGAZINE

Shanghai Expression

Camera in hand, journalism
professor Howard French
ventures beyond China's boom





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Howard French is a former senior writer and correspondent for the *New York Times* who has headed bureaus in China, Japan, West Africa, and Latin America. He is an associate professor at the Graduate School of Journalism and a fellow of the Open Society Foundations. >> **Page 12**



Sheena Iyengar is the S. T. Lee Professor of Business at the Columbia Business School. An expert on the psychology of human decision making, she is the author of *The Art of Choosing*, which was a finalist for the Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year award. >> **Page 20**



Lincoln Mitchell is an associate research scholar at Columbia University's Harriman Institute, where he focuses on Georgia, the Caucasus, and political development in the former Soviet Union. He blogs on baseball and foreign policy in the *Faster Times* and domestic politics in the *Huffington Post*. >> **Page 26**



Emma Aarnes was born in South Carolina, attended Vassar College, and is a 2009 graduate of Columbia's MFA program in fiction. She currently lives in New York City and is finishing her first novel, *Fleeing Charley*. >> **Page 30**



Samuel Moyn is a history professor at Columbia. He teaches modern European intellectual history and has special interests in France and Germany, political and legal thought, and Jewish studies. >> **Page 56**

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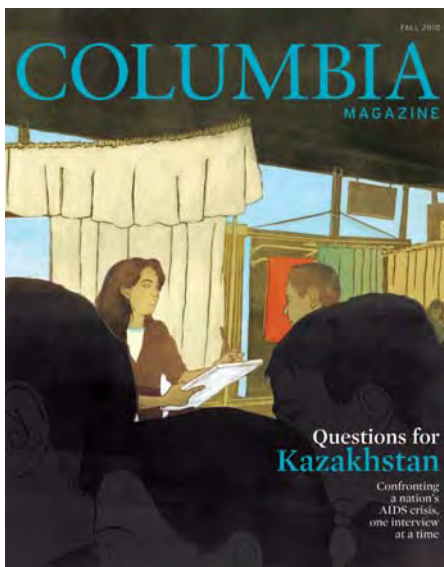
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letters

IN DEEP WATER

“Oil + Water” (Fall 2010) provided a clear and simple explanation of how deep drilling works and how BP got into trouble.

There is a point on which I’d like clarification. Roger N. Anderson asserts that “oil and gas production make up a large percentage of the government’s revenue. That and the IRS are the two big moneymakers that feed everything . . .” That’s news to me. I teach the federal budget in a college course. The budget has only one category where direct fees from oil and gas producers could reside: “other miscellaneous receipts.” However, at \$18 billion, that’s a small percentage of the \$2.5 trillion total receipts expected in FY2011. Might we have some clarification?

Peter Martin ’03SW
New York, NY

Roger N. Anderson responds:

Thanks to Peter Martin for correcting me. I should have said that oil and gas royalties generate significant income for the U.S. government. I overstated its scale by comparing it to the IRS.

Here is a literary footnote I should like to submit for the excellent piece on the infamous Gulf oil spill.

For some reason, the well that exploded was named Macondo, from the misbegotten village in García Márquez’s novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, while its gooey detritus washed ashore on Barataria, named for Sancho Panza’s fanciful “insula” in *Don Quixote*. Life, it seems, has never ceased to imitate art.

Gregory Rabassa ’47CC, ’54GSAS
New York, NY

OUR ARMY

I read the Fall 2010 issue of *Columbia Magazine* in almost one sitting. Each and every one of the articles was fascinating and informative. I wonder, however, whether the editor was dozing or lost his blue pencil while preparing Paul Hond’s excellent article on Lt. Col. Jason Dempsey (“You and Whose Army?”). What possible relevance to the story was it that the interview was conducted in the lounge where Linda Tripp had tea with Monica Lewinsky? It was a prurient and snide aside that added nothing to the story and simply reminded us of a chapter in American history that shamed our politicians and our civic institutions.

Keep up the good work, but use the blue pencil occasionally.

Larry Kobrin ’54CC, ’57LAW
New York, NY

What a wonderful job Jason Dempsey and others in the military are doing to assess political attitudes in the armed forces openly and without bias.

I consider myself a veteran — but one who fought for my country by blocking the steps of Low Library to prevent the ROTC from recruiting on campus; by being dragged away from anti-Vietnam War rallies by the police; and by registering voters in South Carolina for Martin Luther King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference. All this was while I was attending graduate school, studying physics.

My son joined the Army just before 9/11, and I found myself returning to my pre-college enthusiasm for the military.

Today’s all-volunteer Army is an enlightened and supportive organization. Occasionally it even goes after some of its bad apples, as it did in the case of Gen. Stanley McChrystal, who was forced to stand down after trashing the commander in chief — and who also had a hand in the cover-up of the Pat Tillman killing.

All of this leads me to the shortcoming of Dempsey’s research. Several contacts I have with active military personnel tell me that throughout the ranks there is open and bitter trashing of the commander in chief. This is insubordination and should be punished

LETTERS

and suppressed. Almost certainly McChrystal's, and who knows who else's, high-level permissive attitude about such stuff has trickled down or burbled up. It is annoying as hell for military personnel to be surrounded by those who air their conspiracies about Obama.

Dempsey, particularly from his current office attached to Michelle Obama, should look into this. It is degrading to the military to have this going on unchecked.

Claude Suhl '65GSAS
High Falls, NY

SITUATION NORMAL

After reading Josh Getlin's fascinating piece in your Fall 2010 issue about *Next to Normal* ("The Ballad of Kitt & Yorkey"), my wife and I got tickets and attended a performance. Our hearing is not perfect, so we both made sure to insert our hearing aids once inside the theater. We both found the acting, singing, staging, and lighting first-rate, and would have been totally involved in the experience but for the cacophonous and loud music that enchanted Getlin. It did not enchant us at all: It got in the way of the words so obtrusively as to wholly obscure a great deal of what emerged from the mouths of the actors, all of whom enunciated clearly and projected quite well, and made it difficult for us to hear what was being said, except when loudly (and quite well) sung in this quasi-operatic theater piece.

In all respects, however, this was a fascinating magazine issue in every way.

Joseph B. Russell '49CC, '52LAW
New York, NY

GREAT ADVENTURES

Michael B. Shavelson's review of Richard Snow's *A Measureless Peril* ("Atlantic & Pacific," Fall 2010) prompted me to obtain a copy of the book, and I am writing to say how much I enjoyed it. As a sailor who served in the South Pacific during World War II, I recognized many familiar aspects of Navy life and routine, and as a constant and avid reader of WWII history, I enjoyed immensely

the background material on the Atlantic conflict, from start to finish. My sincere congratulations to the author.

I was an aviation ordnanceman in the New Hebrides islands Efate and Espiritu Santo in 1944 and 1945. (New Hebrides is now Vanuatu.) Readers of James Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific* will recognize the setting. I recall there were French plantations there, with owners who protected their daughters from the barbarian Yankee sailors at all costs (maybe the officers were allowed social contact), and I presume Michener drew on this atmosphere for his stories. It was not as romantic and lovely as portrayed in the book, but was rather a very hot and humid jungle environment. Port Vila was the capital, and was governed jointly by the British and the French, in alternate years. We were allowed liberty in Vila, which had a dismal USO, of all things, but no girls for us. Two elderly French widows, whose husbands had been exiled to Efate in lieu of prison before the war, set up a restaurant in their home on the outskirts of town, and we went there a few times for some decent French cooking and so I could try out my high-school French. An interesting experience for us swabbies.

Later I also served a month in beautiful American Samoa. I got there in a four-hour flight in a Royal New Zealand Air Force DC-3 from Espiritu Santo to Fiji — with a five-day layover ostensibly for weather (or so the pilots could enjoy the pleasures of Suva, the capital) and then four more hours to Samoa.

V-E Day occurred while I was in Suva, with much celebrating by the locals, including a parade by the local Fuzzy-Wuzzy police and others. Great adventures for a kid.

Gano B. Haley '49CC
Monroe Township, NJ

SITUATION NORMAN

Saul Rosenberg's review of Thomas Jeffers's Norman Podhoretz biography is a love fest all around ("Further Commentary," Fall 2010). Jeffers had previously edited *The Norman Podhoretz Reader*

and, as Rosenberg writes, thoroughly identifies with Podhoretz. Indeed, Jeffers's voice merges with Podhoretz's voice.

Rosenberg himself was briefly an editor at *Commentary*, so it's no surprise when he praises Podhoretz as "a first-class intellectual of enormous culture and considerable humanity" whose "pugnacity masks a warm heart." And with what results? The most notable achievement of Podhoretz, the godfather of neoconservatism, is the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. Iraq has suffered over a million dead, 3 million refugees, and 5 million orphans. In proportion to the population, this is equivalent to the U.S. suffering 10 million dead, 30 million refugees, and 50 million orphans.

This is quite an accomplishment for a man of considerable humanity and warm heart, but Podhoretz wants even more. He has called for the U.S. to bomb Iran. His war cry has been echoed by journalist David Broder and South Carolina senator Lindsey Graham. Podhoretz is even using a similar pretext as last time: Iran's (nonexistent) nuclear weapons pose a threat to Israel (which really does have nuclear weapons).

Columbia Magazine could and should have run a more critical review of a biography of a man who has led the country to disaster, and who is clamoring for even bigger disasters.

John W. Farley '77GSAS
Henderson, NV

LEAP INTO THE FUTURE

I read the fall issue of *Columbia Magazine* and was particularly interested to learn about the many Columbians working in Africa and elsewhere around the world. It seems that Columbia alumni are involved either as founders of these organizations or as soldiers on the ground working to make things better.

My classmate Marjorie Schlenoff '73SW recruited me in 2008 to go with a group to Cape Town, South Africa, to work in the LEAP Science and Maths School. The organization she founded, Teach With Africa (TWA), has now sent teams of teach-

Travel with Columbia

ers, businessmen, psychologists, and social workers for three successive summers and is expanding its programs to continue their work on a year-round basis. The program is reciprocal in nature, with participants implementing what they have learned back in their schools and businesses in the United States. Students and teachers from the LEAP schools also have come to the United States to learn, teach, and otherwise cross-fertilize the organizations that TWA participants represent. Marjorie Schlenoff is the straw that stirs the drink as the program expands dramatically from year to year.

We hope to approach the School of Social Work about possible linkages with TWA and LEAP in the near future.

John P. O'Neill '73SW
South Easton, MA

LADY CHATTERLEY'S OTHER

I was delighted to see that Columbia has acquired the papers of Barney Rosset, an innovative publisher and courageous advocate for the freedom of expression ("Defender of the 'obscene,'" News, Fall 2010). I was disappointed, however, that you mentioned First Amendment lawyer Ephraim London but overlooked the brilliant lawyer who defended Rosset and his company Grove Press, Charles Rembar '38LAW, with whom I had the privilege of practicing law right after graduating from Columbia.

When the U.S. Post Office confiscated *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, published by Grove Press, Rembar sued the New York City postmaster and won in New York, and then on federal appeal. Subsequently, he defended Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* and John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* — the latter argued before the U.S. Supreme Court — which played a major role in changing the nation's approach to obscenity.

In 1968, Rembar published *The End of Obscenity*, which won a George Polk Award in Journalism. The *New York Times* review said it was Rembar who "talked our courts, state and federal, into

Continued on page 60



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with Professor James Danoff-Burg
February 4–12

South Africa and Namibia by Sea
February 14–28

Expedition to Antarctica
February 15–28

Hidden Wonders around the World by Private Jet
with Professor Pegi Vail
February 28–March 23

The Red Sea, Nile Valley, and the Holy Land
March 26–April 7

Central and South America by Private Jet
with Professor Terrance D'Altroy
March 26–April 10

Insider's Japan
April 13–25

Venice and the Medieval World
April 22–May 4

Israel: Timeless Wonders
May 13–25

Historic Cities of the Sea
May 15–29

Byzantine Odyssey (Turkey)
May 23–June 6

Classic Greek Isles
June 6–18

Journey of Odysseus
June 8–19

Baltic Sea Cruise
with Mikhail Gorbachev and Lech Walesa
June 9–20

Coastal Life along the Adriatic Sea
June 20–28

Wild Alaska Adventure
June 26–July 3

Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice
July 9–17

Cruising Alaska's Glaciers and Inside Passage
July 21–28

The Black Sea
with Dr. Charles King
August 5–16

Crossroads of Cultures in the Mediterranean
August 29–September 13

Village Life in Tuscany
September 4–12

Waterways of Russia
September 13–23

Danube to Istanbul
September 16–26

China, Tibet, and the Yangtze
October 8–26

River Life along the Rhine and Mosel
October 15–23

North Africa's Mediterranean Coast
October 17–November 2

French Alps and Provence
October 18–27

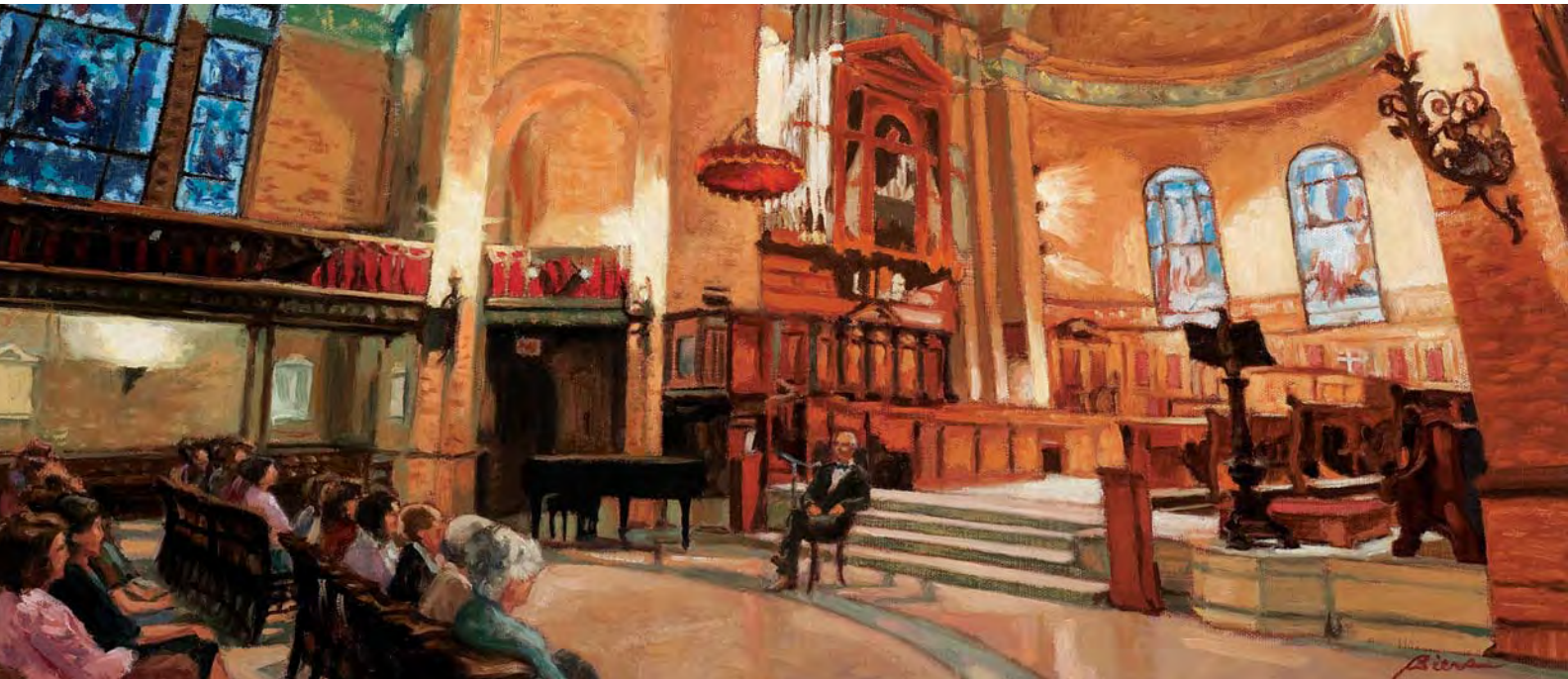
Greatest Treasures and Legendary Places by Private Jet
November 1–22

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November 4–14

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The Teacher and the Trappist

On a Monday evening in October, Wm. Theodore de Bary '41CC, '53GSAS, '94HON slowly made his way to the transept of St. Paul's Chapel to deliver the Columbia Catholic Ministry's annual Thomas Merton Lecture. As usual, the former provost was elegant in his trademark blue-and-white bow tie. But now, at 91, he chose to sit while speaking.

No matter. For the man who had pioneered the notion that classics of Asian literature and philosophy could be taught in a manner not unlike Contemporary Civilization and Humanities, the evening was something of a cross-cultural culmination. In the lecture, titled "Merton, Matteo Ricci, and Confucianism," de Bary examined the relationship of Catholicism and Confucianism as expressed by the worldly Trappist monk of the College class of 1938 and the renowned 16th-century Jesuit missionary to China. De Bary had not known the latter. As an undergraduate, however, he did have a nodding acquaintance with the former.

"Merton had graduated a few years before," de Bary told the audience of colleagues and friends. "But as a part-time English instructor and half-serious graduate student, he continued to hang out with the editors of *Jester* in their offices on the fourth floor of John Jay."

A few days later, de Bary was settled in the fifth-floor suite of Kent Hall that he has occupied since 1989. Sporting the same blue-and-white bow tie worn at the lecture, the father of neo-Confucian studies in this country was surrounded by heaps of books, many of them thread-bound Chinese and Japanese texts carefully packed in beige cases, bearing markings beyond the comprehension of a casual visitor.

Merton was still much on de Bary's mind. Both had been relatively big men on campus, having been members, for instance, of *Philoloxian*, the venerable Columbia literary society. But de Bary had inclined toward student government and leadership, Merton toward the College's literary life. De Bary embraced socialism; the future humanist flirted with

communism. Following Pearl Harbor, one joined the Navy, while the other entered an abbey. “Our interests were very different,” said de Bary. “I think Merton’s religious inclination superseded everything else.”

If Merton found his calling at Gethsemane, de Bary found his at Columbia. Just as Merton was the public face of the Trappists, so de Bary became a totem of Columbia continuity. In the wake of the 1968 riots, he was the first chairman of the Executive Committee of the University Senate. His tenure as executive vice president for academic affairs and provost from 1971 to 1978 coincided with some of the most turbulent years in the University’s history.

But for de Bary, the classroom has always been paramount. The University’s John Mitchell Mason Professor Emeritus — a title named for Columbia’s first provost and equivalent to the highest academic rank of University Professor — de Bary has served as Special Service Professor since 1990, continuing to teach despite ostensible retirement. He still commutes to campus regularly from his home in Tappan, New York. On Mondays and

Wednesdays, he takes the University’s Lamont shuttle from nearby Palisades to teach classes. On Friday, when coming in for committee work, he prefers to drive.

Even as provost, de Bary always kept one foot in the classroom, personally negotiating his lecture time with University President William J. McGill. “Teaching is a need,” de Bary said. “I’ve always looked forward to my classes. So few people are able and willing to teach undergraduate courses.”

On the other hand, de Bary can recall aging professors who stuck around too long — a fate he doesn’t wish to share. He says he is ready to yield the lectern at a moment’s notice, though so far no one has complained, despite his occasional senior moment. “Sometimes you need to pause because you can’t remember something and have to come back to it,” he said. “The most memorable occasion was when I said to the class that I couldn’t recall a certain word. And do you know what that word was? ‘Amnesia.’”

There are other forms of loss. This fall, for the first time in many years, de Bary sat in the Baker Field stands at Homecoming without his good friend Arthur

Weinstock ’41CC, who passed away in April. Another compatriot, the human rights scholar and University Professor Emeritus Louis Henkin, who spoke at a 1990 symposium held in de Bary’s honor, died less than two weeks before the game.

No blow, however, has been more profound than the death in 2009 of his wife Fanny ’43BC, whom he married shortly after graduation. They celebrated their 60th and 65th anniversaries in St. Paul’s, the site of her memorial service and his recent lecture. “I miss her greatly,” he said softly. “But I don’t go around moping.”

Indeed, de Bary told with some amusement an anecdote from long ago. On New Year’s Day 1941, Merton and his old *Jester* and Philo comrades Robert Gerdy ’39CC and Ed Rice ’40CC visited Fanny and her sister on Long Island. As Merton recalled in *The Secular Journal of Thomas Merton*, he shared “three egg-nogs out at Northport among those giggling Jane Austen girls.”

“Merton was a storyteller,” said de Bary. “My wife was not a giggly girl.”

— Thomas Vinciguerra ’85CC,
’86JRN, ’90GSAS

Grouped Therapy

Albert Ellis often said that he would have been an efficiency expert if he hadn’t become a psychologist and best-selling author. But an actual efficiency expert would scoff at the state of his papers, which were recently donated to Columbia’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

“It’s a complete mess,” says Michael Ryan, director of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. “It’s one of the more disorganized collections I’ve come across.” It’s also an “A-level” resource for researchers, he added.

Ellis, who died in 2007, developed rational emotive behavior therapy (a precursor to cognitive behavioral therapy) to help

people overcome neuroses without undergoing years of analysis, which he considered a very inefficient approach. He received an MA and PhD in clinical psychology from Columbia in the 1940s, but items in the collection go back to his undergraduate days at the City College of New York. The collection, a gift from the Albert Ellis Institute and Ellis’s widow, Debbie Joffe-Ellis, contains over 70 years of correspondence (including letters from Ayn Rand, with whom Ellis had an affair), Dictaphone recordings, and hundreds of small index cards on which Ellis liked to make notes. The papers will be available to the public in early 2012.

This past November, six movers and two archivists helped pack and transport the collection from the Albert Ellis Institute, a townhouse on East 65th Street, to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. They made short work of it, packing up about 300 linear feet of papers and 600 boxes in less than two hours. It wasn’t complete chaos: Ellis’s notebooks (some inscribed with the Bronx address where Ellis spent his childhood) lined the shelves from floor to ceiling, in chronological order. Other materials, including sheet music for Ellis’s therapeutic song parodies, a 1968 postcard sent from the U.S.S.R., vinyl records,

photographs, and floppy disks, were packed into moving boxes for a hired archivist to sort through, starting in January. A Mr. Potato Head, nail clippers, and confidential patient files, also found in the office, were not part of the gift.

Before the first letter is cataloged, the archivist will have to conduct extensive research on Ellis, and learn enough about him and the people around him to know what to look for in the collection.

“With someone like Ellis, it’s important to find out what he did and how he operated,” Ryan says of the man whom the American Psychological Association once ranked as the second most influential psychotherapist of the 20th century, behind Carl Rogers. (Freud came in third.) “You would want to read his books, because manuscript pages will show up, and you will want to match like with like. You’d also want to learn who his patients were — there are a lot of correspondence files — and to talk to people at the institute. You’d want to get as full a portrait of the man as you could.”

Once the preliminary research is done, the initial survey of the collection begins. In such a large trove, there could literally be millions of pieces of paper. “You have to go through box by box,” says Ryan. “There’s not a quick way around it.”

Generally, the author’s organizing method is preserved so researchers can gain insight from the arrangement of his papers. But Ellis’s papers are in such a jumble that the archivist must impose his own order.

While weeding through a lifetime of notes and letters, the archivist will build a preliminary architecture, taking notes on the scope and content of each box. This information will then be grouped into series and subseries. Correspondence, for example, might be one series, subdivided by incoming and outgoing letters. The archivist will also appraise the items, deciding what should be kept, thrown away, or returned to the institute.

“You want to subdivide a series when necessary, but you have to be careful,” says Susan Hamson, the curator of manuscripts

and university archivist at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. “If a collection is hyperorganized, down to the item level, you can’t find anything.”

According to Hamson, topical organization is often best, but one has to be attuned to the subject. “The collection speaks to you, and the organization often comes to you. It’s as much an art as a skill.”

Anyone who wants to look up notes about Ellis’s best-selling books *Sex Without Guilt* or *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*, or read those letters from Ayn Rand, will be welcome to search the finding aid — the online guide created by the archivist to help researchers locate the materials they are interested in — and fill out a call slip. When the papers are delivered, researchers will be able to examine the documents in the reading room.

Hamson doesn’t envy the archivist charged with organizing the Ellis collection. But Michael Ryan isn’t too worried. “They’ve all seen worse,” he says.

— Leslie Hendrickson ’06JRN

Death Rights

There are the death-curious, the death-fixated, and the death-obsessed. Then there is Norman Cantor.

On a rainy, dreary day last autumn, Cantor ’67LAW, a soft-spoken academic from Hoboken who for 25 years taught a seminar at the Rutgers School of Law called *Death and Dying*, took the ferry to Manhattan to visit *Bodies: The Exhibition* at the Exhibition Centre on Fulton Street. He wore a bright-blue windbreaker stitched with the seal of the Israel Tennis Center and kept it zipped up snugly over his retired professor’s paunch. He went into the old brick warehouse, got his senior discount, and entered the show with some misgivings.

Inside the dimly lit rooms of the gallery were about 20 human bodies in various stages of dissection, preserved through the technique of plastination, by which water and lipids are replaced with polymers and dyes. The finished product is both remarkably lifelike and strangely inhuman. Facial features are erased in the process, destroying individuality. The flayed bodies in Cantor’s midst were arranged in familiar poses: A male cadaver, strung with muscle and ligaments, carried a football in the yearbook style of a collegiate star; a cadaver and a skeleton faced each other, fingertips touching, like dancers in a pair spin; and a sinewy conductor raised his baton, doubtless for a performance of

“Funeral March of a Marionette.” Elsewhere, discrete organs and bodily systems, extracted in all their intricacy and fineness, lay miraculously intact, accompanied by eye-popping facts on wall placards (the human body contains 60,000 miles of blood vessels!) that buttressed the semblance of an anatomy lesson.

“Opponents of these types of exhibitions claim that they’re voyeuristic and disrespectful, and that it’s offensive to exploit human remains in that way,” Cantor said as his eye wandered over a skull veiled by a net of red blood vessels. “The bodies at this exhibition are even more controversial, because most, if not all of them, come from China, and the suspicion is that many

of these people were executed Chinese prisoners. The exhibitors say they obtained the bodies legally, according to Chinese law. The problem is that China wasn't really giving the prisoners' families a chance to object to the sale of the bodies, and the exhibitors admit that they cannot show explicit consent by the decedents."

In his new book, *After We Die: The Life and Times of the Human Cadaver*, Cantor

But Cantor is no moralist. He doesn't object to such exhibitions, with their whiff of acetone and sideshow sleaze, so long as the decedents gave their permission. His attitude is pretty much "die and let live." In *After We Die*, he cites an American poet who wanted his skin to be used to bind his own writings, and a man in the Galilee who wished for his body to be left in the wilderness and eaten. In both cases, the courts

dren were in a legal scuffle over whether baseball's last .400 hitter should, according to his conflicting desires, be cryogenically frozen or cremated and scattered over the Florida Keys. Cantor wondered: Even if Williams's wish to be resurrected were undisputed, would the responsible parties be bound to implement it if they found cryonics abhorrent? (Williams's remains are currently being stored in pots of liquid nitrogen at a cryonics facility in Scottsdale, Arizona.) Could a corpse, in short, have legal rights?

The answer, of course, is yes — you can't, for instance, rob a grave, or wantonly mistreat a body — but when it comes to the more whimsical aspirations of the departed, Cantor feels the courts are too restrictive. Which isn't to say he's laissez-faire. "There are limits of decency and good taste," he said, walking past what looked like a nice rack of lamb from Lobel's. "In 2009, von Hagens had a display in Germany in which two corpses were copulating. To me, that was beyond the pale. People objected strenuously, and in his next exhibition he did not use copulating corpses."

Cantor skimmed other curiosities: a gallstone-afflicted gallbladder like a closed oyster, a slab of marble-textured lung, and the pinkish sea coral of a bronchial tree. He then paused at a skeleton with two titanium hip prosthetics. This reminded Cantor of his own hip implants — "I've been meaning to ask my doctor about that hip recall" — and of his years wearing down his cartilage on the hard tennis courts in Israel, where he lives half the year.

It also raised the question of Cantor's own postmortem dreams. Since he has no children and expects no visitors, he dismissed a traditional burial as a waste of space and decent wood. "I'm leaning toward cremation," he said, as if considering a color for his office. As described in *After We Die*, the cremation process takes two to four hours, and would leave about seven pounds of matter, minus his titanium bolts. His "cremains," as they are known



conducts a legal and historical examination of the disposition and treatment of the human corpse that leaves no stone unturned. Among entries on premortem planning, body snatching, medical dissection, autopsies, disposal methods (including green burials), and legal protections for the human carcass, Cantor devotes several pages to the mother of all cadaver spectacles, *Body Worlds*, created by the German anatomist Gunther von Hagens, who invented plastination in the 1970s and, like an artist, signs his works. Cantor deems the provenance of von Hagens's cadavers "more kosher" than those at *Bodies*. "It does trouble me a little bit," he said, pausing before a glass case containing a central nervous system, which resembled a large fishbone, "to think of the origins of these pieces."

ruled that these methods were inherently disrespectful toward human remains. Cantor isn't so sure. "I don't think it would necessarily be a desecration of human remains if you incorporated them into a book, a pair of shoes, or a work of art," he said. "If you wanted to wear a lock of someone's hair in a locket, why not a piece of finger?"

Cantor's interest in such matters can be traced back to 1973, when his stepbrother, a criminal attorney who had a chronic illness, passed away at age 39, leaving instructions for a New Orleans-style funeral. The widow was to wear white, and a Dixieland jazz band was to lead the procession from the funeral home in Trenton. (The family reluctantly complied.) Thirty years and many Death and Dying seminars later, Cantor read about Ted Williams, whose chil-

in the business, would be entrusted to his life partner, an Israeli woman who is averse to cremation (according to Cantor, there is one crematorium in Israel), but who has agreed to honor his wishes.

As for what he'd like done with his ashes, Cantor was undecided. There were

really so many options. He mentioned a woman who sought to comply with her husband's wishes by sprinkling his ashes in the sand trap of a beloved golf course (the management refused), though when it was suggested to Cantor that he do something similar on his favorite tennis court,

he shook his head. Ashwise, his tastes lay on this side of the foul line. Still, he wouldn't begrudge others the prerogative. "I would be willing to urge someone to do it in secret," he said, "if that were truly the wish of the deceased."

— Paul Hond

City of Schwartz

"The day I walked into that building changed my life."

An audience of 20 or so architecture lovers was gathered in a Morning-side Heights restaurant on a fall evening, listening to Andrew Dolkart '77GSAPP, a professor of historic preservation and the director of Columbia's historic-preservation program, explain how he became a champion of the apartment house.

First came a phone call, in 1988: A woman named Ruth Abram was starting a nonprofit to tell the stories of 19th-century immigrant families through the homes they inhabited. She had leased one of the surviving tenements on the Lower East Side but knew little about it. Could Dolkart write its history?

In truth, Dolkart had no real interest in the tenement. For him, New York's greatness sprang from the Beaux-Arts majesty of McKim, Mead, and White's mansions (and their Columbia campus) and Carrère and Hastings's New York Public Library. But as a freelance historian he needed the work, so he went down to the address on Orchard Street.

What he found there surprised him. Usually when he visited a building, he noticed architectural details and the flow of spaces provided by trained architects and craftsmen. But now, as he entered the five-story brick walk-up and stood inside a dim, narrow room, what struck him was how easily he could imagine what it had been like to live there 100 years ago.

"It was a place that was so redolent of the thousands of people who had moved through the building," he told the group, "that it captured what for me is so important about architecture: It tells us about people's lives."

This experience led Dolkart to focus his career on vernacular architecture, a specialty that has more recently led him to investigate another, related species: the five- and six-story apartment building. Hundreds were built in the 1920s and 1930s to house working people who could finally afford to leave the tenements. Today they define vast swaths of the city, especially in northern Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. These are the buildings New Yorkers walk past every day — brick and stone, often bearing evocative European-flavored names like Waverly, Bedfordshire, Launcelot, Juliette, Ulysses. They line the Grand Concourse and rub shoulders with Upper West Side row houses.

"They are," said Dolkart, "the most ignored building type in all of New York."

Largely written out of the city's architectural history, and gerrymandered out of its historic districts, these early apartments have become Dolkart's latest preservationist passion. The buildings, Dolkart explained, were, like the tenements, largely designed and constructed by immigrants who began at the bottom of the architectural market, fabricating inexpensive working-class housing. Dolkart's research suggests that a handful of building plans

were constantly reused, with ornament selected from a set inventory.

The architects' training varied considerably: Emery Roth, for example, attended Columbia, while Simon Schwartz and Arthur Gross, who designed 25 buildings on West End Avenue and scores elsewhere, met at the Hebrew Technical Institute.

"Rather than the city of McKim, Mead, and White," Dolkart said, "we are the city of Schwartz and Gross."

That's an idea that New Yorkers will become more acquainted with. Just days before Dolkart's October talk, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission announced that it hoped to create a massive historic district encompassing most buildings from 70th to 107th Street, Riverside Drive to Broadway — a decision that was influenced by a report that Dolkart had written on behalf of the West End Preservation Society. And the history he wrote 20 years ago of the Lower East Side tenement helped to create the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, now a landmark itself, and a favorite of many people who are looking for a window into New York's history.

"Architecture isn't just about the bricks and mortar, and it isn't just about people running around identifying styles," said Dolkart. "'This is a Greek Revival house.' Well, so what? What was so powerful for me when I visited that tenement was that I could see how that building had *lived*."

— Joshua J. Friedman '08JRN



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The Power of Linger

By Paul Hond

To shoot his photo essay *Disappearing Shanghai*, J-school professor Howard French had to make something else fade from view: himself.

Howard French stands in a narrow alley, peering down into the black box of an apparatus that dangles from his neck at waist level. The apparatus resembles a cross between a miniature traffic signal and an old stereo speaker. French sees, through the box, a perfect square image: peeling walls, parked bikes, shuttered windows, hanging laundry, and, just outside a doorway, a shirtless man in sandals.

“A lot of my work is centered on a notion of intimacy, and of entering what I think of as the real private world of my subjects,” says French, a former *New York Times* reporter and, since 2008, associate professor of journalism at Columbia. “You won’t find pictures

of mine where people are posing for the camera or, generally speaking, responding to my presence.”

French is tall and thin, with the solemn, searching air of a traveler who has landed peacefully on this planet to observe and chronicle how we live. He grew up in Washington, D.C., spent college summers in Ivory Coast (his father was a doctor with the World Health Organization), has lived on four continents, speaks seven languages, and seems, in his composed, penetrating manner, to have universalized himself into a spectral eyeball. He meets you on his ground, which, you soon find, is your ground, too: a relaxed but serious place where human beings can make inquiries and learn.

Photographs by Howard French

In 2003, the *Times* sent French to China to be its Shanghai bureau chief. French spent his first six months in Shanghai immersed in language study. The daily training was so rigorous and exhausting that French, seeking escape from the thickets of speech, did what came naturally: He began wandering the streets during his off-hours with his 1956 Rolleiflex camera. He loves the Rolleiflex, which produces a distinctive square frame and has manual functions that require slow, deliberate operation. Over the next five years, French haunted the alleys of Shanghai, discreetly recording a vanishing way of life.

In 2009, back in New York, French showed his street pictures to his friend and mentor, the photographer Danny Lyon, who advised French to take his notion of intimacy a step further by entering people's homes. French agreed. That summer, he returned to Shanghai with his Canon 5D Mark II, a digital camera that responds well to low light and doesn't require a

flash. For three months, French knocked on doors, gaining deeper entry into those private worlds.

"When I walk outside with a camera in my hand, I'm a different person," French says. "My head is screwed on in a different way, and it's almost a personality change. I'm not casually out with a camera; I'm there to take pictures. From this has grown a sense of license, or authority. There's no question in my mind of whether what I'm doing is OK, or what people are going to think about it."

French, who got his first camera as a child from his father, has long been acquainted with the privileges conferred by the press badge. Over his 22-year career at the *Times*, he wrote dispatches from Red Hook and Rwanda, Port-au-Prince and Pakistan, Tokyo and Tanzania, empowered in his role of newsperson to ask strangers incisive questions. It's a mode that translates well to his photography.

"The process feels very similar to me," says French, who at the J-school teaches a





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course on reporting in China and another on reporting in the developing world, with an emphasis on Africa. “As a journalist, I don’t just randomly walk down the street interviewing people. I go out with an idea of a particular mission. I have a sense, even if I am open to surprise, of what kind of characters will be the most interesting for my purposes, and how best to approach them in order to gain access. Up until that point, I see journalism and photography as being very alike. You have to overcome a lot of the same hurdles.

“One of the biggest impediments to journalism students is something simple that most of them never stopped to think about before they got here, and that is: How do you actually approach somebody? How do you start a conversation? How do you break the ice? How do you gain someone’s confidence? Documentary photography requires every single one of those skills. You might even say it demands them at a higher degree.”

To prepare for a project like *Disappearing Shanghai*, French walks around. He figures out the traffic patterns, studies the light, marks the human scene. And he never hides his camera: It is always out, because the sooner people become accustomed to it, the sooner he can start to work.

“If I spring it on you, you are going to throw your hands up as if you have been assaulted. So I walk around with my camera totally visible, making no bones about what I’m doing or who I am. All of this happens before the serious work begins.

“A lot of these more intimate Shanghai pictures came about as a result of what can only be called the ‘power of lingering.’ I can walk up to you — you’re a stranger hanging out on a street corner or sitting on a park bench or eating your dinner or sitting in front of your house — and initially, because I’m very tall and don’t look at all Chinese, perhaps you are uneasy.

“I’ll stand five feet away from you. If I have to stand there for an hour, I’ll stand





“When I walk outside with
a camera in my hand,
I’m a different person.”

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there for an hour. And eventually you will think, 'This person who I was really curious about when he first walked up is now just part of the landscape. He has been here for an hour now, shifting from one foot to the other, daydreaming. I don't need to be too concerned with him.' So I've blended into the environment, even though I am as alien as I could be. And when I feel the temperature is just right, I take my picture."

Last summer, at one of China's two international photo festivals, French exhibited his black-and-white landscapes of a part of Virginia where his ancestors were slaves. He also spent a month taking pictures and teaching photography to photojournalists in Burma, an extremely isolated and restrictive country for which he had to work hard to obtain a visa. Currently, he's collaborating on a book of his Shanghai photos with the Chinese novelist and poet Qiu Xiaolong.

"One striking quality about Howard's Shanghai pictures is that they're not just

about a building or the lane or the alley or the small side streets," says Qiu, who grew up in that rapidly changing city. "It's also about the culture and people associated with these streets. Nowadays, if you go to China, and Shanghai especially, you will see a lot of pictures of modern or postmodern buildings. Howard captures the traditional Shanghai that is disappearing."

That's more than French himself might offer. As a writer who has published thousands of articles and a book called *A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*, and who has completed his first novel and recently won an Open Society Fellowship to research a book on Chinese migration to Africa, French understands the limits of words.

"Having worked for five years on *Disappearing Shanghai*, I don't feel I need to tell people what it means," he says. "The whole purpose is for the pictures themselves to speak." ㊟



Grave Decisions

By David J. Craig

Columbia psychologist Sheena Iyengar applies her expertise in human decision making to the most difficult question of all.

It is, increasingly, the way we die: Hooked up to ventilators, IV drip bags, feeding tubes, and catheters, we breathe on, stubbornly and uncomfortably, until someone tells a doctor, *Let him go*.

Today, nearly one in five Americans spends their final days in a hospital's intensive-care unit. Many will have been connected to life-support systems for weeks or even months. And once a terminally ill person has gone unconscious, it's usually a loved one who decides when the most aggressive forms of life support are removed.

When *is* the right time to pull the plug? When does medical technology become, rather than a life-saving miracle, a way of prolonging a person's suffering?

"In U.S. hospitals, people don't get much guidance on this," says Columbia social psychologist Sheena Iyengar, who studies how people make end-of-life decisions. "A doctor will tell you if he thinks

your mother or father is comfortable, but if you're considering letting them go, you'll need to broach the subject yourself. The doctor will then give a quick overview of the options and say, 'Well, tell us whenever you've decided,' and walk off."

It's not this way in all Western countries. In France, for instance, doctors consider it a part of their job to inform family members when they think it's time to remove a person from life support. "The French take a more paternalistic approach," says Iyengar. "They do this partly to protect the family from the stress of making the decision."

For many Americans, the idea of letting a doctor decide when a parent or child should die might seem outrageous. After all, fear of so-called death panels — an allusion to government rationing of medical treatment — nearly derailed Barack Obama's health-care-reform bill last year. Iyengar believes,

Illustrations by James Steinberg

however, that Americans have a lot to gain by deferring to doctors. She's found that people who receive guidance from experts when making complicated decisions, including when to suspend life support, tend to be more at peace with the outcomes.

"Americans value personal autonomy almost as much as they value life itself," says Iyengar. "But we need to ask ourselves: Are there some choices we're better off not making?"

How many is too many?

Iyengar, who is the S. T. Lee Professor of Business at Columbia Business School, has made a career

of decoding how we make decisions, from the yogurt we place in our shopping carts to the mutual funds we select for our IRAs. Her conclusion: Although we crave lots of choices, we get overwhelmed easily, even paralyzed with indecision, when weighing our options.

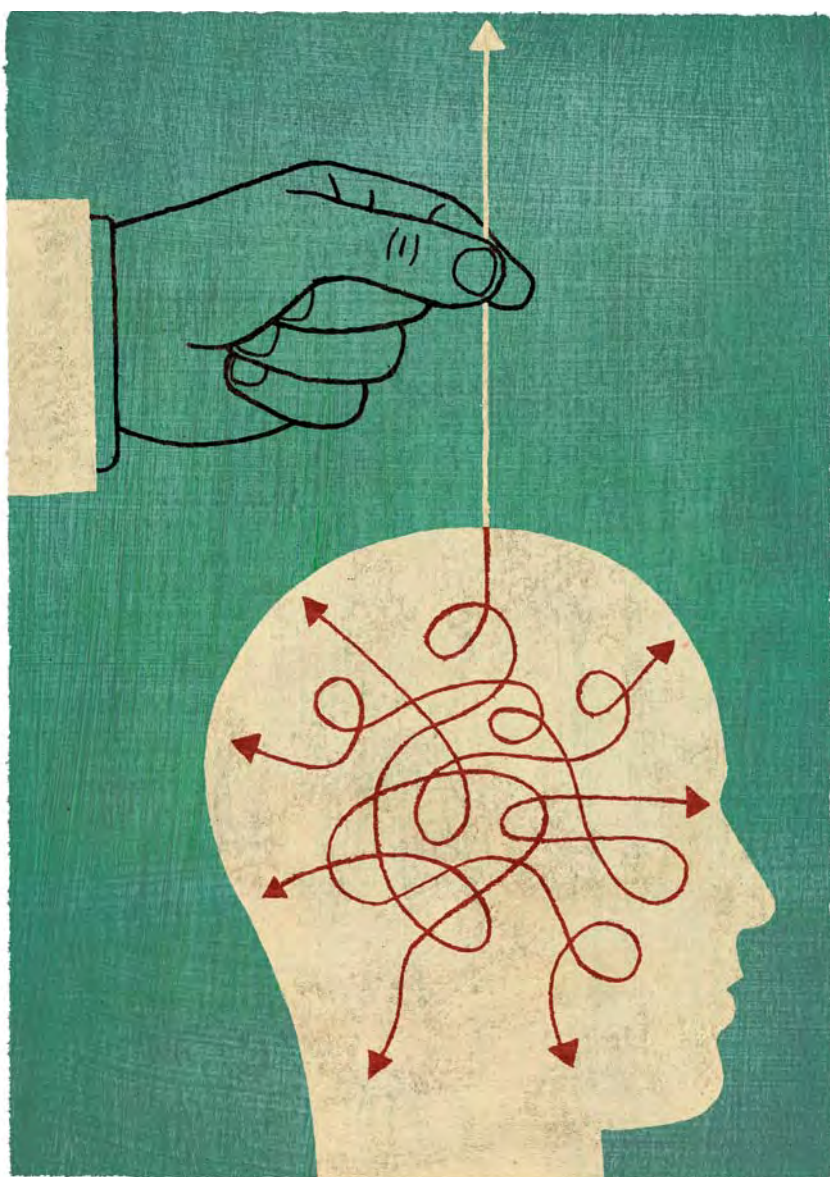
Iyengar, 41, is a celebrity in social science circles, but her ongoing work on end-of-life care isn't yet well known. She's built her reputation by teasing out the subtleties of how people make much less weighty decisions.

Iyengar's big moment of inspiration came in a grocery store in the early 1990s, while she was a graduate student at Stanford. She recounts the episode in her recent book, *The Art of Choosing*, which provides a readable overview of her work. Back in Menlo Park, California, Iyengar often browsed the gourmet aisles of Draeger's Market, only to leave empty-handed. She wondered, Might hundreds of varieties of produce be enough to cloud a shopper's mind?

To test her hypothesis, Iyengar set up a tasting booth at Draeger's. She offered some shoppers 6 varieties of jam, and others 24. She found that customers were more likely to approach the table with the larger selection, yet they were 10 times more likely to buy jam from the table with only six samples. Too many possibilities, it seemed, left a bad taste in shoppers' mouths.

The jam study — which Iyengar soon repeated using Godiva chocolates and other foods, with the same result — provided a news-you-can-use nugget that made headlines across the country. It would also prove influential in the field of psychology. Since the 1960s, researchers interested in human decision making had focused mainly on how our irrationality hinders our ability to make good choices, such as through our tendency to be biased in favor of familiar options. Iyengar's work opened up lots of new questions, such as: When can choosing be a pleasant experience? How many choices are too many? How does the range of our options affect our satisfaction with what we eventually choose?

Another one of Iyengar's early studies found that Americans who observe a fundamentalist religious faith are happier than those who follow a more liberal practice. Her findings seemed counterintuitive to many psychologists: She found that people who observe customs that limit their personal freedom — for example, by prohibiting premarital sex, alcohol,



or some kinds of music — nevertheless feel a greater sense of control over their lives.

“Iyengar’s work is brilliant and has had a profound impact,” Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert recently told the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. “It has shown us that there are cognitive and emotional costs to decision freedom.”

Although her work is rooted in psychology, Iyengar is an interdisciplinary scholar, drawing from a variety of fields — business, economics, philosophy, sociology, and biology. Over the course of her career, she’s found more and more practical applications for her work. In recent years, she’s examined enrollment in 401(k) retirement savings plans, determining that participation rates fall as the number of fund options increases. Ditto for Medicare’s prescription-drug plan.

And companies are responding.

Partly as a result of the jam study, consulting powerhouse McKinsey & Company instituted its 3-by-3 Rule: Never present clients with more than three options at a time. Similarly, Iyengar tells of an encounter with a Fidelity Investments executive

pigmentosa. She also began rebelling: She wore hip clothing and stopped attending religious services. After a high-school guidance counselor told her that attending a community college was the best option for a blind person, Iyengar’s anger helped motivate her to get accepted into the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School.

Governed by so many rules and restrictions — religious, cultural, and physical — Iyengar “became acutely aware of the pleasures, as well as the frustrations, of freedom and its limitations,” she says. “It’s all rooted in my upbringing.”

Nowadays, Iyengar’s personal life is informed by her work. Consider the way she selects her clothes and the furnishings in her apartment: by enlisting the advice of friends she trusts to translate her personality into the visual language of fashion and home decor.

“I listen to lots of people’s interpretations of who I am and how I should look,” she says. “I choose to delegate — the same way most of us are happy to relinquish our dinner-music choice to Pandora and our wine choices to the *New York Times* Wine Club.”

“Americans value personal autonomy almost as much as they value life itself. But we need to ask ourselves: Are there some choices we’re better off not making?” — Sheena Iyengar

who told her the study inspired a new mantra at the firm: Narrow it down.

Iyengar’s work has also demonstrated cultural variables associated with choice. She found, for instance, that college students in Japan are less bothered than American students about being told what to wear, what to eat, and what time to awake in the morning.

“The Japanese find meaning by fitting in and making other people happy,” Iyengar says, “and therefore they demand autonomy in far fewer aspects of their lives.”

Elements of style

The daughter of Indian immigrants, Iyengar was raised in a strict Sikh household in Flushing, Queens. As a girl, she kept her dark hair long and uncut, wore special undergarments at all times, even in the shower, and attended temple three times a week. As is customary among Sikhs, there was talk of an arranged marriage.

Then, when Iyengar was a teenager, she went blind, the result of a genetic condition called retinitis

But doesn’t everybody crave autonomy when it comes to something as intimate as personal style?

“It depends on whether you see your personality as existing apart from other people or as a product of your relationship with people,” Iyengar says. “Most of us think the way we see ourselves represents some deep truth, but very often we’re wrong. What does it mean if I consider myself to be a great worker if my boss gives me a critical performance review? Do I ignore him? I think that when we open ourselves up to other people’s opinions and advice, we learn things about ourselves. And then we can change in ways that ultimately give us more control over how people see us. In a sense, we become more free. It’s possible that my blindness helped me see this, but I think this is a part of the human condition.”

Flying solo

About two years ago, Iyengar, along with Simona Botti, of the London Business School, and Kristina Orfali, of the Columbia Center for Bioethics, set out

to explore the psychological costs associated with removing a family member from life support. Specifically, they looked at 19 couples in the United States and France who had made the agonizing decision to let a premature infant die.

“Before this, we’d studied how people make pretty routine decisions,” says Iyengar. “This was going to open up some dramatic new questions.”

All of the parents interviewed for the study had decided to take their babies off life support within a few weeks of their births. The difference was that the French parents had followed the advice of doctors, whereas the American parents had been left to make the decision on their own.

Iyengar and her colleagues wanted to know: How did the parents cope emotionally afterward? Did they feel they’d done the right thing? Did they wish that a doctor had given them more or less advice?

The study, published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* in 2009, showed that the American parents, three months after their child’s death, struggled more with feelings of guilt, doubt, anger, depression, and resentment. “The emotional trauma was incred-

There were also some surprises. Although the American parents were tormented by having ended their child’s life, they told the researchers that they couldn’t imagine having relinquished that decision to a doctor. “They insisted the choice had to be theirs alone,” says Iyengar, “even as they were trapped by the burden of it.”

A sticky proposition

There’s considerable debate among bioethicists about whether patients and their families in the U.S. and other industrialized nations receive too little guidance in making painful medical decisions. The American medical system, in this regard, is more typical than the French system. In France, doctors adhere to a traditional set of ethical guidelines that date back to the time of Hippocrates and hold that patients are incapable of acting in their best interest. Doctors throughout the West tended to subscribe to this view until the 1960s and 1970s, when the idea took root that patients are in the best position to choose their own treatment. In the U.S. and many European countries, a series of court cases formal-

“I’ve found that patients often need a type of advice and emotional support that only doctors can provide, and which they’re not getting.” — Kristina Orfali

ible,” says Iyengar. “It was straight out of the novel *Sophie’s Choice*. They’d say things like, ‘I feel like I played a role in an execution,’ and ‘I feel like I’m not grieving enough, like something’s wrong with me,’ and ‘The hospital workers wanted to torture me.’”

The American parents were also haunted by what-ifs, imagining all of the unlikely scenarios in which their child might have been able to survive and lead a normal life. Most of the French parents, in contrast, said they believed that their child’s death was inevitable.

“The French were coping better overall,” Iyengar says. “They’d say, ‘Our child gave us a new perspective on life,’ and ‘No one could have changed this; I don’t blame anyone.’”

The most obvious lesson here, according to Iyengar, is that it’s comforting to receive guidance from an expert in a stressful situation. “When a doctor offers a recommendation, you’ll feel less guilt about what you’re doing,” she says. “You can tell yourself, ‘I’m only doing what the doctors are advising.’”

ized the doctrine of informed consent, requiring doctors to detail all treatment options, along with their potential benefits and risks, and to obtain patient permission before administering care.

“The question now being asked by many medical researchers is whether this line in the sand is too strict,” says Orfali, who is an associate clinical professor of bioethics in pediatrics at Columbia University Medical Center. “I’ve found that patients often need a type of advice and emotional support that only doctors can provide, and which they’re not getting.”

Iyengar, Botti, and Orfali were the first to study how people are affected emotionally by watching over a family member’s removal from life support. They say one implication of their work is clear: U.S. doctors should be having more candid conversations with dying patients and their family members about the range of end-of-life options available to them, such as hospice care, the removal of ventilation, and instructions to avoid resuscitation.

But this is a tricky proposition, Iyengar says, in part because U.S. doctors are paid according to the number of patients they see. In many other countries, doctors are salaried under nationalized health-care systems. “U.S. doctors pack in so many patients,” she says, “they simply do not have the time to dedicate to these types of conversations.”

There’s also the threat of malpractice. “Clearly the litigiousness of U.S. society plays a role,” she says. “I suspect that many doctors would like to tell a patient’s family when they think it’s time to let the person go, but they’re too scared to express their opinions on something like that.”

But there are ways that patients can make these types of traumatic decisions more manageable, according to Iyengar. And in an upcoming study to be conducted in San Francisco, she’ll examine one of the possibilities: the use of advance health-care directives, commonly called “living wills.” Living wills typically leave instructions limiting the use of life support.

Iyengar says her new study will address interesting questions about the culpability felt by family members, who are usually the ones who must inform the doctor of a patient’s living will. “My hypothesis is that family members will feel some guilt about their role in the death, but not as much as when there’s no will,” she says. “If you can tell yourself that you’re merely carrying out that person’s wishes, you should be able to externalize a lot of the guilt.”

The final option

Very few Americans are aware of end-of-life options, such as living wills and hospice care, multiple studies have shown. Another reason why there’s little discussion about these options in hospitals, Iyengar says, is that health-care providers earn lots of money sustaining people on life support and administering expensive tests in their final days. Currently, it costs up to \$10,000 a day to maintain someone in an intensive-care unit. According to a CBS News report aired in 2009, Medicare paid out \$50 billion for doctor and hospital bills during the last two months of patients’ lives the previous year — a figure nearly equal to the total budget of either the Department of Education or the Department of Homeland Security at the time.

A good way to educate people, Iyengar suggests, would be for the U.S. government to distribute information about living wills in the paperwork packages

that all citizens receive when they become eligible for Social Security benefits. She also supported an early version of President Obama’s health-care-reform bill that would have required Medicare to cover doctor consultations about end-of-life options. Some right-wing critics of the bill charged that this would



lead to the creation of “death panels,” or government bodies that would halt care for the terminally ill as a cost-cutting measure. There was nothing in the bill that would have permitted the rationing of treatments, but senators, amid a conservative media uproar, excised the provisions.

“People say in surveys they don’t want to be kept alive for long periods on life support,” Iyengar says. “Yet no one likes to think about dying, so we put off these types of decisions unless we’re encouraged to consider them. Discussing with people how they want to die doesn’t limit their freedom. Failing to discuss it does.” ☞

Adrienne Frank contributed to this article.



Late on the evening of November 2, when Congressman-elect and soon-to-be Speaker of the House John Boehner teared up during his election-night statement, it marked the conclusion of a long and improbable journey by Boehner's Republican Party. The GOP, which had been all but irrelevant after successive defeats in national elections in 2006 and 2008, had now wrested the House of Representatives from the Democrats only two years after Barack Obama's historic election.

It is easy to look at the big Republican victory and conclude that the American people had rapidly tired of President Obama's progressive — or in the eyes of some critics, socialist — policies, and made a sharp turn to the right. Defenders of the president, on the other hand, argue that the president's party often loses seats in midterm elections, and that in this regard, 2010 was not unusual at all.

first term. In 1970, Richard Nixon's Republican Party lost seats in the House but gained one Senate seat. However, the loss of 63 House seats and 6 Senate seats suffered by the Democrats last fall is one of the worst defeats in history. Only Democratic losses in 1938, 1946, and 1994, and Republican setbacks in 1922, 1930, and 1958, were of a comparable scale.

This background suggests that while voters were clearly dissatisfied with the president and his party, the notion that this election represented a significant swing of the ideological pendulum is inaccurate. A better explanation is that 2010, rather than standing in contrast to 2008, actually has a lot in common with the election that sent Barack Obama to the White House in the first place. Although 2008 was a political lifetime ago — when Obama could be said without irony to represent hope and change, the Republi-

A MIDTERM EXAMINATION

THE VOTERS HAVE SPOKEN,
BUT WHAT DID THEY SAY?

COLUMBIA POLITICAL SCIENTIST
LINCOLN MITCHELL '96GSAS
ASSESSES THE 2010 ELECTIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRAIG LAROTONDA

The first explanation reflects an ahistorical understanding grounded more in ideological feeling than in empirical evidence. The second is not so much ahistorical as it is oblivious to the real data from the election, or the extent of the Republican victory.

So what happened, then?

Not surprisingly, the truth lies somewhere in between the two interpretations.

HOW BAD WAS IT?

The 2010 midterms represented a major defeat for President Obama '83CC and his party, but one that differed only in degree, not in kind, from those suffered by many presidents during their first midterm elections, going back to Warren Harding. In the 44 midterm elections since 1922, every president, except for Franklin Roosevelt in 1934, John F. Kennedy in 1962, Ronald Reagan in 1982, and George W. Bush in 2002, saw his party lose seats in both houses of Congress two years after beginning his

can Party was in free fall, and a tea party referred to a get-together involving a kettle and crumpets — many of the same political and economic conditions that framed the recent election framed the last national election as well.

The 2008 and 2010 elections occurred in a time of sharp economic crisis when voters were preoccupied with joblessness, sinking home values, and a bleak economic future. In both years, the country was involved in the unpopular wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, though by 2010 there was a timetable set for ending U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, and the war in Iraq had officially been declared over. For most voters these were distinctions without differences, since in both years the U.S. had hundreds of thousands of troops in these countries, with victory seemingly distant and an exit strategy equally remote.

In this light, the 2010 election begins to look different. Rather than an ideological shift, the Republican victory, like the Democratic landslide two years earlier, is the result of dissatisfied voters opposing the

A MIDTERM EXAMINATION

incumbent party. The same electorate that was so anxious for change in 2008 punished the Democrats a short two years later for failing to turn the country around quickly enough. While Democrats and the Obama administration sought to persuade the public of the difficulty of the problems facing the country and of the value of the work they had already done, voters were unmoved. For the second time in two years, they threw out the incumbents.

NO ROOM FOR REASON

An enduring economic downturn can make life difficult for incumbent politicians, regardless of party. But this only partially explains the Republican victory, and it doesn't explain why the Democrats

gin of victory. The GOP, a defeated shell of a party in 2008, one that was associated with both the failures of the Bush administration and the economic collapse of that year, rebuilt itself largely through seizing on voter anger with the economy and government and channeling it toward partisan goals. This was done not by presenting alternative policies or a rational critique of the Obama administration, but by allowing the most extreme and sometimes downright wacky attacks on the Democrats to drive the Republicans' message.

The charges of socialism (and its apparent counterpart, fascism) aimed at President Obama, the constant talk about how the Democrats were taking away people's rights to own guns, make their own decisions about medical care, or run their own businesses — all dramatic overstatements at best — resonated with many voters. The Tea Party movement, which, despite endless speculation by the punditry about its origins, has never been anything other than a Republican Party faction, tapped into the populist, antibailout mood, while the mainstream media gave voice to far-out accusations aimed at the president: He was planning death panels; he was driven by an "anticolonial" mentality; he lied about his religion; he hated white people; and he probably wasn't really American anyway. The Democrats' initial response to these unfathomably strange assertions was to view them as fringe opinions and ignore them.

On some level, given just how absurd these accusations were, this approach made sense. However, by not pushing back, the Democratic Party made it possible for these charges to gain traction among voters. A constant media repetition of these claims made them seem less strange and more plausible to voters with each passing day.

The Obama administration seemed to assume, in spite of increasing evidence to the contrary, that politics could be based on reasonable debate, and that groundless rumor-mongering had no place in the national discussion. Yet the political environment during the first two years of Obama's presidency showed otherwise. Political debate was replaced by name-calling; any allegation, no matter how baseless, ended up on Fox News and other outlets and Web sites; and epithets like Nazi, fascist, Stalinist, and communist, formerly the refuge of the most marginalized political factions, were more or less accepted as part of the political debate. Rand Paul, the Republican Senate candidate and now U.S. senator from Kentucky, for example, compared President Obama to Hitler apparently because they both came to power during economically bad times and were good public speakers.

While the president should not be expected to have to state that he is indeed a citizen, is not particularly concerned about anticolonial politics, and is neither a Nazi nor a communist, the Democratic Party blundered badly by letting these accusations go unrefuted. And the White House, by not saying enough while these accusations became more frequent, allowed them to be taken more seriously than they should have been. In short, the White



lost so badly. While this loss was essentially unavoidable for the Democrats, it was probably possible to have limited the scope. The Republican Party campaign of 2010 was colorful, exciting, bizarre, or frightening, depending on your political views, but its impact was not unusual. The base was a little more mobilized than in most years, but extremist candidates in Delaware, Nevada, and elsewhere also cost the party a few seats.

The Democrats and the Obama White House, meanwhile, made two enormous mistakes that helped drive up the Republican mar-

House viewed these comments as nutty and assumed that most Americans would share this view.

They were fatally mistaken.

OUT OF TOUCH?

The second error the White House made indicated a political blind spot that is surprising given how well the Obama team both communicated and understood the gestalt of the electorate during the 2008 campaign. Critics and supporters of the current president all recognize that Obama came into office at a difficult time. Whether he has done a good job since then and whether the problems were insurmountable in a two-year period can be argued, but for most voters this debate is moot.

Voters care far more about outcomes, particularly economic conditions, than they do about where blame should be assigned, or how hard a president is trying, or how obstructive either party is being. President Obama's inability to turn the economy around in only two years should not have shocked anyone, but the failure of the administration to develop an appropriate narrative on the subject is puzzling.

As the election approached, communication from the White House, and the Democratic Party generally, seemed to move in two related directions: reiterating the extent of the mess that had been

House did not see that this phrase, and the attitude it represented, was not going to be well received by an angry electorate.

Even as a candidate, Obama was vulnerable to charges of being out of touch and aloof. The White House communications strategy in the months leading up to the 2010 midterms hardly dispelled these perceptions. In times of severe economic problems, presidents who want to survive politically must either solve the crisis or demonstrate their empathy and concern for the people. Obama did neither.

READING THE TEA LEAVES

The midterm election returns Washington to a divided government with one house of Congress controlled by the party that is not the president's. This is not unusual, since a similar dynamic — at least one house falling to the opposition — was in place during the last two years of George W. Bush's presidency, the last six years of Bill Clinton's presidency, and the entire presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush. The difference now is that the partisan rancor is stronger than ever. During the Reagan administration, the Democratic majorities included many Southern conservative Democrats, who frequently voted with the president. No comparable situation exists today. Additionally, with no clear end in sight to the country's economic problems, and even less agreement about how to fix them, the incentive to work together and share the credit for

IN TIMES OF SEVERE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, PRESIDENTS WHO WANT TO SURVIVE POLITICALLY MUST EITHER SOLVE THE CRISIS OR DEMONSTRATE THEIR EMPATHY AND CONCERN FOR THE PEOPLE. OBAMA DID NEITHER.

inherited from the previous administration, and seeking to gain credit for the successes of the Obama administration. But given the problems confronting ordinary Americans — widespread unemployment, a deflated housing market, and ongoing economic fear and uncertainty — these arguments sounded irrelevant and even insensitive.

Beyond that, the extent of Obama's accomplishments is a matter of debate. The White House continues to describe the health-care reform bill, passed into law in March 2010, as a major, even historic, accomplishment, but the bill has been broadly criticized from the left and the right. More important, trumpeting a health-care reform bill at a time when an estimated 59 million Americans are without health insurance (the provisions that cover most Americans don't kick in until 2014) is sufficiently tin-eared to border on insulting. Similarly, while many economists believe that the economic stimulus bill saved the financial system from complete collapse, the argument that things could be a lot worse, a seeming source of great pride in the White House, is cold comfort if you are unemployed or cannot pay your mortgage. This inability to gauge the sentiments of the American people was exemplified last year when the White House floated the term *jobless recovery* as a way of showing that they were turning the economy around. It is baffling that the White

accomplishments will be outweighed for both parties by the inducement to keep the partisan pressure strong and to blame the other party for the inevitable ongoing turmoil.

The biggest strategic danger for both parties lies in misinterpreting the election results. For the Republicans, this would mean viewing their win as a triumph of the radical right-wing ideology that came to dominate their party in 2010. If they aggressively seek to implement policies based on this ideology, their popularity will suffer, along with their party's outlook in 2012. The Republican leadership needs to find a way to temper expectations and keep the more radical members of the new Congress from forcing the party to overplay its political hand.

The Democrats, and the White House, need to significantly recalibrate their message. President Obama must convince voters that he cares about their economic suffering — a tall order given both the failure of the White House to persuade voters of this previously and the continued Republican campaign against the president. But if the White House is able to make the case, the president can reinsert himself into the heart of the political process. If not, the Obama presidency will have substantially ended, regardless of who is sitting in the Oval Office. [↗](#)

1. My father told me to send a postcard. I thought postcards were too cavalier, too jokey. But he said it might help. My father says many buoyant things that I'd like to believe. He says, "Forgiveness is a gift you give to yourself" and "Live in the moment." He is a high school basketball coach who believes in manufactured motivation. I believe in the statistics I found on Wikipedia. I know that almost 70 percent of people own homes. I know that 62 percent of residential burglars commit their crimes during the day. Including you. I know that over 65 percent of convicted felons will be arrested again within three years of their release.

2. I'm in Antigua now. I realized that I forgot to mention where I was. You probably noticed the beach on the postcard and you know that's not where I live. I've gone splotchy with freckles as if I'd been caught in a shower of deck stain. I'm usually pale. Perhaps you remember that from the pictures on my wall. My favorite is the picture on my desk of my father, brother, and me at Itasca State Park when I was seven. We're standing in the headwaters of the Mississippi holding hands. It was the last picture my mother took before she left. That was the first time I remember coming home and trying to figure out what was missing.

3. The great thing about postcards is that you don't have to write back. No one replies to postcards. I suppose you could try to write to my apartment — I imagine you know the address — but I bet you would get in trouble. The yacht on this card is where I had dinner last night. I wore the necklace you took off the hook on my vanity mirror. It took months to get that back, since it was evidence. The detective who arrested you told me I was lucky. He said that because you confessed, I'd never have to see you if I didn't want to. I wish now I'd gone and seen you at the sentencing. I feel like we're uneven.

4. I've been thinking of you. I've decided I know what you look like. I know your name: William Johnson. It's a bland name — the name of a milquetoast man, with milquetoast parents. No one had the verve to call you Beauregard. Still, I know you're tall. You took the silver down from the kitchen cabinet without moving the footstool. If you're tall, you're probably thin and maybe balding. You've got a big, soft nose and small eyes that are close together. They make you look fishy, which is likely how you got off on the wrong foot to begin with. And your mouth is thick and pale, barely any color in your lips at all. Your teeth are straight, though, and when you wear a suit and smile just right people might think you're on the city council.

Thinking of You

Fiction by Emma Aarnes '09SOA

Illustration by Cliff Alejandro



POSTAL SERVICE.

SERVICE.

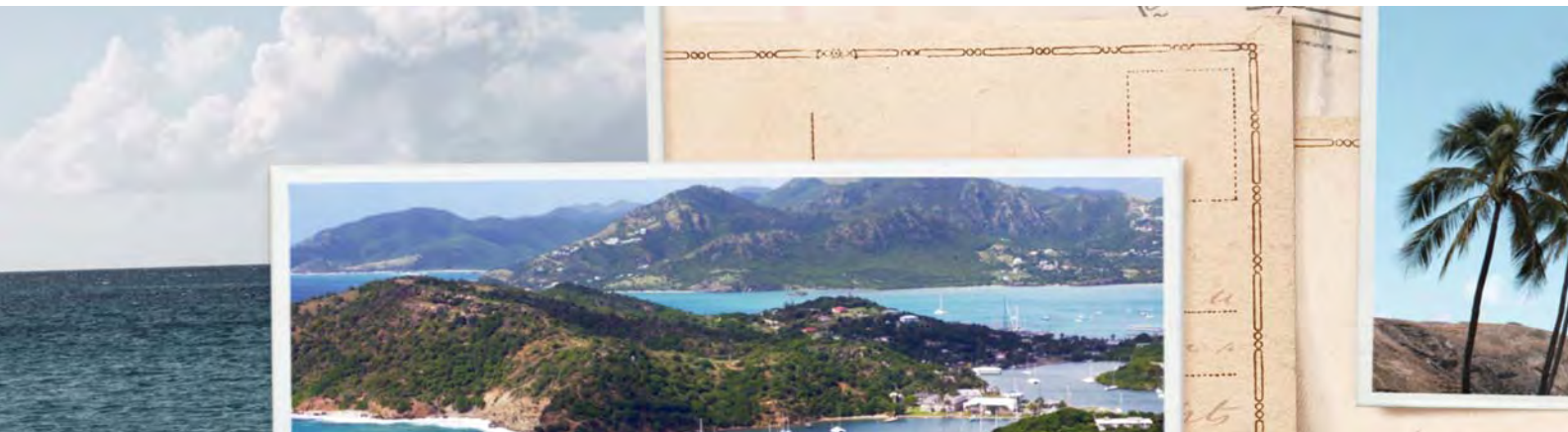
Thinking of You

5. I called my dad today. He wanted to know if I'd written you. I said I hadn't. I didn't want to tell him I'd written you and still don't feel better, but maybe I have improved. I can't remember the complete list of everything you stole anymore, just the highlights. I used to recite it to people, a party trick. That was when I used being robbed as a conversation piece and I would laugh and say how strange it was, not like on TV at all. Then I'd laugh some more. Some people would get uncomfortable and glance around the room — I liked them best.

6. I don't know what to say to you, but that's partially because I never know what to write on postcards. I'm writing you more often than anyone else, but writing you reminds me of writing to Santa Claus, or maybe sending a message in a bottle. It's empty to send mail with no expectation of a return. And what would you say? "It was good to hear from you. Let's keep in touch." Dad said the point is writing them, not sending them, but I bought a dozen postcard stamps. And I pick nice cards, as if they matter. The megaliths on this card were hard to get to, so I didn't go. I just bought the card and slept in.

7. I'm on a cruise ship now, so I'll mail this when we get into port. I'm going scuba diving. You knocked my calendar with the coral reefs off the wall above my desk. I had a dentist appointment the next day that I missed. A few days later I got a voice mail reminding me to reschedule. Their office has the same automated voice system my high school used to call parents and tell them who'd missed class. When I skipped, I would sit next to the phone, waiting, and grab it before my dad could. I'd pretend it was Charlene. That's the closest thing to crime I've done.

8. I told Charlene I was writing you. She said I was crazy. She said Dad was even crazier for suggesting it — that he was insensitive and didn't understand the depth of my violation. Charlene has a lot of ideas. She thinks you will turn into a stalker, but you're not the stalker type. You didn't steal my underwear. Nothing you took was personal: the TV, the silver, Bose speakers I never used, jewelry. I was relieved you'd taken so little — how well you'd focused on expensive items. You're good at what you do, the assessment part anyway. You wouldn't fall for the street vendors here, their paste baubles and "antique" carved figurines. But you're not good at reading people, or you wouldn't have tried to sell my laptop to an undercover cop.





9. I wonder if you're reading these. Maybe you read them after dinner while you have a smoke. I heard they're thinking about banning cigarettes in state prisons. That seems a little Draconian. I had a boyfriend in college who smoked cloves. He smelled like Christmas, sweet and sleepy. I haven't got a boyfriend at the moment — I've been too busy with work and this whole thing. It would be mean if I made a prison-boyfriend joke. I wrote a paper in college about prison culture, the way prisoners try to re-create normal life. It reminded me of children playing house. I was an urban studies major, but now I'm a notary. I'm not sure how that happened.

10. You're probably getting a kick out of my cards, I realize. I guess it is pathetic that I'm writing to you, that I need to address you, but Scandinavians think that prisoners who accept the significance of their crimes are less likely to repeat offend. I read it in the *New York Times*. So I'm telling you, it was significant. It changed my life. I cried for days. I hate a person I've never seen. I don't feel safe in my own home. I don't feel safe in my cabin on this ship. I can't stop picturing you walking through my living room ransacking my apartment for valuables, like some pirate poltergeist. Go ahead and show this to your cellmate, laugh it up. Show him just what you earned.

11. I'm sorry. That last postcard wasn't productive. I've only got two days left of my cruise and then I have to go back. My boss has been patient so far, but I don't think she understands why I took such a long vacation. I bet you can guess. I took it because I wanted to be in the opposite place as you. Here on the ship, which is filled with stupid cruise things, like rock-climbing walls and skull-sized margaritas, I can lie on the upper deck and stare at the sky and only see sky. Nothing between me and the ozone. You have lots of things between you and the ozone: concrete, guards, fences, three to five years. That's why this postcard has a sunset on it. You can put it up on your wall, if you want.

12. I'm mailing this from the airport, which has crappy air-conditioning. There are only white people here, which is a change from the rest of the island. They are all puffy and pink and keep fanning themselves as their clothing wilts. I probably look the same, but I'm not slouching. My mother taught me to have good posture. I have an aunt who was a stewardess back when they were still called stewardesses and she says that airplane food is actually on par with what they serve in prisons. I'll think of you while I eat my half-hot half-frozen macaroni and the tiny packaged cookie. This is my last postcard. When I get home, my father will have moved everything. Charlene is lending him her pickup. I will be in a place you've never been. ✍

The Art of Pleasing

How Arlene Shuler '75GS, '78LAW, president and CEO of New York City Center, awakened the spirit of dance. // By Paul Hond

When the English ballerina Margot Fonteyn made her U.S. debut in New York in 1949, the audience fell at her feet. The ballet was *The Sleeping Beauty*. We know the yarn: A wicked fairy curses a newborn princess to die by a needle prick on her 16th birthday; a good fairy steps in and reduces the hex to century-long slumber; years pass, memory fades, and when Princess Aurora turns 16, the wicked fairy, in disguise, presents the girl with a spindle. The princess jabs her finger, and she and the entire court lapse into a deep sleep. Only one thing can revive this dormant domain: love.

If the story plucked a string in the city's hardboiled heart, one needn't look far for reasons. Who, after all, doesn't like a good fairy tale?

Once upon a time, in Cleveland, Ohio, there lived a bright little ballet student named Arlene Shuler. Like many dancers, Arlene began her training at the age of six. Her mother, a dance lover, took Arlene to see the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo whenever that famous company came to town. And each year, mother and daughter flew east to the mecca of American dance, that empire of stages and skyscrapers and fairy dust, to see what the rest of the world had to offer.

But mostly, Arlene breathed the dust of the dance studio: the wooden barre, the icy

mirror, the metrical point of foot, the lengthening of limb, the flow of line, the bruises, the blisters, the accompanist's waltz, and a taste, upon a *grand jeté* of the aerial world, the realm of angels. She became so good that, at 12, she was accepted to the School of American Ballet in New York, founded in 1934 by the lofty prince of culture Lincoln Kirstein and the ballet master and choreographer George Balanchine, in an effort to install this 19th-century Russo-European art form in the land of the Ziegfeld Girls. And so the Shuler family, in support of Arlene's career, left Ohio and headed for the big city.

Soon after the Shulers arrived, something extraordinary happened. The previous Christmas, in Cleveland, Arlene had watched, live on television, the New York City Ballet's production of Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*. In it, a girl named Clara falls asleep under a Christmas tree, and has the most fantastic dreams. "If I could only be in *The Nutcracker*!" Arlene had thought. Now, in New York, Arlene was picked to try out for Clara. She went to the City Ballet's home, a domed building that resembled a Moorish temple, around the corner from Carnegie Hall. There, she auditioned in front of the great Balanchine himself — and got the role! That Christmas season, Arlene frolicked amid snowflakes and candy canes, helped slay a giant mouse, and danced with a

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALVIN AILEY DANCERS





prince. How strange and wonderful when a dream comes to life!

But little did Arlene Shuler, or even the Sugar Plum Fairy, know just what lay in store for her under that vault of Spanish tiles . . .

II

“I wanted to create something that would benefit the entire dance community,” says Arlene Shuler inside her office at New York City Center. Shuler is bright-eyed, red-cloaked, poised, and precise. “We look for ways to support the art form and the artist.”

The topic is Fall for Dance, the enormously popular annual dance festival that Shuler launched in 2004, a year after she was

ing years later, behind the curtain, in harder shoes and a business suit, with framed vintage playbills on the office walls. Fall for Dance is the apotheosis of Shuler’s twin passions of art and arts advocacy, a 10-day dance party in which a La Guardia-era price of \$10 gets you a rich sampling of performances from among 20 established and up-and-coming companies. The 2010 edition featured the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Bill T. Jones, the Paul Taylor Dance Company, and the San Francisco Ballet, as well as troupes from Brazil, Taiwan, and France. “We sold out in three days,” says Shuler. “In the first day alone, we sold 19,500 tickets. People got in line at 11 p.m. the night before, which, for dance, is pretty remarkable.”

Each night, the crowds surfaced at the 57th Street station, “from the Bronx and Brooklyn, from the far reaches of Flushing and Staten Island, from brownstones and beehive apartments, salesgirls and dowagers and hackies and barmen and garment center stock boys,” as the writer Al Hine described the City Center multitude in 1954. Here, now, was the modern edition of Hine’s jostling wage earners, cramming the sidewalk on West 55th, drawn by a terrific bargain and aroused to civic feeling by the cozy sight of their own diversity. *This* was New York. The people poured into the mosaic-tiled lobby, diffused through the carpeted halls, and filled up all 2753 seats of the maroon-hued theater.

“One of the objectives of Fall for Dance is to bring new audiences to dance,” says Shuler. “Every year, we take surveys of the Fall for Dance audience. We know that a third are under 30, that about 20 percent either have never been to dance or go less than once a year, and that 40 percent, having been to Fall for Dance, go see *more* dance. “And” — Shuler’s eyes brighten another kilowatt — “45 percent actually go see a company they first saw at Fall for Dance.”

For a city-owned venue like City Center, which must compete, for starters, with the deluxe, 16-acre performing arts megaplex 10 blocks up Broadway, the cultivation of new audiences is both a moral and

economic imperative. Shuler points to a history of shifting fortunes: In 1964, City Center’s core companies — City Ballet and City Opera — left their birthplace at West 55th for the paved deserts and soaring glass of the new Lincoln Center.

“City Center had to reinvent itself,” says Shuler. “The Joffrey Ballet came, followed by Alvin Ailey and Paul Taylor in the 1970s. But since it’s a union house it’s expensive to perform here, and in the ’80s and ’90s not as many companies could afford it. [The Joffrey Ballet left in 1995.] Another impetus behind Fall for Dance was to bring new companies to City Center.”

In the past seven years, more than 140 dance companies have appeared at Fall for Dance.

“Many companies that make their debuts here get picked up and go to other venues like the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival or the Kennedy Center,” says Shuler, for whom nothing pleases like a dance company getting donors or a new agent or a gig at another spot after being seen at City Center. “Fall for Dance,” she says, “has been very successful in helping the companies as much as the audiences.”

III

None of it was inevitable.

Not the fever of Fall for Dance, or the swooping, rippling white birds of Matthew Bourne’s Tony-winning *Swan Lake*, or City Center’s Encores! musical-theater series that revives rarely heard works of Sondheim, Berlin, Porter, Weill, Rodgers, Hart, and Hammerstein; not the tile mosaics, the terracotta dome, the three large dance studios with their stucco walls, or the grand old theater itself, with its battery of lights, a proscenium arch inscribed 90 years ago with the Arabic greeting *Es Selamu Aleikum*, and a stage upon which, on a weekday afternoon, the cast of *Swan Lake*, many in sweatpants and T-shirts, rehearsed a dance of the swans: bodies rose and glided along a violin’s hair, then landed, stopped, listened, nodded, laughed at the director’s wit, waited for the next cue, and were aloft again, so that it was impossible,



COURTESY ARLENE SHULER

Shuler as a teenager, rehearsing with the Joffrey Ballet at City Center.

appointed City Center’s president and CEO. Shuler’s ascendance from City Center’s stage to its administrative seat is really a story of reinvention: the performer leaving the footlights (in the late 1960s, at 17, she joined the Joffrey Ballet, a year before it became City Center’s resident company) and emerg-

in that hidden moment of tinkering, on the stage where Balanchine assembled his angels and Stokowski summoned Stravinsky and Robeson played Othello for Hine's shmata workers, not to shudder with a horror of the wrecking ball; not even the Young People's Dance Series, in which artists from City Center's resident and visiting dance companies visit between 40 and 50 schools throughout New York, and the students, in turn, come to City Center for a special matinee performance ("You see those yellow buses lining up on 55th and 56th Streets," Shuler says, shaking her head, and she doesn't have to finish the sentence) — nothing as sweet as that — had any hope of existing, but for interventions of the sort that children know through the stories they hear at bedtime.

The Mecca Temple opened in 1923 as a lodge for the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, or Shriners. The nonreligious fraternal order was cofounded in 1870 by Dr. Walter M. Fleming and an actor and Freemason named William Florence, who got his festive, Arabic-themed notions while touring Cairo and Algiers. After the financial crash of 1929, the Shriners fell behind on their taxes, and the building, designed by architect Harry P. Knowles and the firm of Clinton & Russell (William Hamilton Russell was trained at the Columbia School of Mines in the 1870s), reverted to the city. For the next decade it lay asleep, and in 1941, this ornamented meetinghouse, with its arabesque ceilings and ghosts of fez-wearing revelers, was set to be demolished. Enter Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia, music lover, who envisioned turning the space into an affordable, city-owned "temple for the performing arts." Hizzoner waved his wand and got his wish. Or rather, he got his wish and waved his wand: On December 11, 1943, La Guardia, on his 61st birthday, dedicated the City Center for Music and Drama, and, baton in hand, led the New York Philharmonic in "The Star-Spangled Banner."

After the war, Lincoln Kirstein, who had enlisted, returned to New York. In 1946 he and Balanchine founded Ballet Society, a sub-

scriber-only dance troupe that, like the pair's previous attempts in the '30s to establish a viable American ballet company, struggled to get off the ground. But the excellent quality of the project didn't escape the eye of Morton Baum '25CC, a former city councilman and tax adviser to La Guardia (in the 1930s he formulated the first New York City sales tax), who was now chairman of the City Center financial committee. In 1948, Baum approached Kirstein and offered Ballet Society a residency at City Center. Kirstein, craving fiscal stability and artistic freedom, eagerly accepted. The New York City Ballet was born.

In 1952, Kirstein became City Center's managing director, presiding over a golden period when Balanchine and Robeson played to Kramden and Norton, and all was roses under the tiled dome until another Lincoln popped up. With the rise of the gigantic, Rockefeller-funded palace on West 65th, a rumbling could be heard within the mosaic walls. In 1964, with the approval of Kirstein and Baum, City Ballet and City Opera moved to the new Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and La Guardia's temple, stripped of its angels, lapsed into another dangerous languor. By the late 1970s, there was again talk of the swinging steel ball. And then, at that urgent hour, another fairy stepped in: City Center chairman Howard Squadron '47LAW, an influential lawyer and cultural

For the first two decades of her life, Shuler had never thought about the future.

leader who was able to secure municipal funds to fix up the place. That led to the city's decision, in 1983, to grant the building status as a New York City landmark. A dragon was slain.

But only the building was saved. The institution would soon face other battles.

IV

"I had been doing it for so long that it became who I was," says Arlene Shuler. "My identity was being a dancer."

For the first two decades of her life, Shuler had never thought about the future. There was the barre, the mirror, the stage, the music, the gift of flight. What more could a mortal desire? While others went off to college or started families, Shuler stayed in her slippers, doing what she knew best. This was before dance companies offered programs allowing dancers to take college courses, and by the time Shuler concluded that the future, now so much closer, did not hold greatness, she faced the crisis of purpose known to anyone who does one thing with single-minded effort for many years and then must give it up.

"It is very hard to make that transition," Shuler says, a tug in her voice that suggests a process that never fully ends. "It took me a couple of years after I finished dancing to figure out how I could go to college." Shuler didn't want to be a freshman with a bunch of 18-year-olds, and since she had a life in New York, the School of General Studies at Columbia was a natural fit. As a student, Shuler supported herself with secretarial work, and decided that she would need an advanced degree to do something "more substantial." She applied to law school, thinking it would provide her the most flexibility. The Columbia Law School accepted Shuler a year early: With an inner discipline molded in the dance studio, Shuler regained some time.

After her first year of law school, she got a summer job in Washington, D.C., as an intern at the National Endowment for the Arts. That was the turning point. "I thought, 'I could be an arts administrator.' I realized I could combine my background in the arts and my love for the arts with my education."

Thus began a dancer's second act: Shuler learned and performed the vital function of fundraising, which she characterizes as "another way to enable the arts to happen." For 11 years she worked at Lincoln

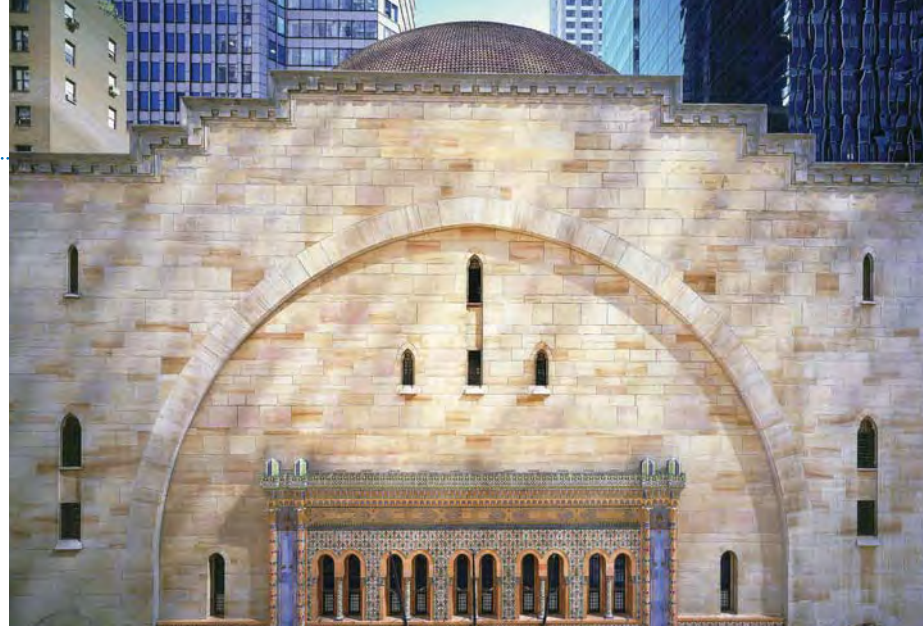
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Center, first as vice president of planning and development, and then as senior vice president of planning and external affairs. After that, she was executive director of the Howard Gilman Foundation, a \$400 million charitable organization devoted to the arts, medical research, and environmental conservation. “Philanthropy is the flip side of raising money,” says Shuler, who has a way of packing big ideas into a nutshell. “It enables artists and organizations to produce their work.” Although she found philanthropy “rewarding,” she feels “most effective and engaged when I can actively build and support programs with which I’m directly involved.”

When Shuler came to lead City Center in 2003, she knew all about the institution’s resiliency. What she didn’t know was that somewhere in the kingdom, another dragon was being born. This development was especially menacing to an organization that relies on private donations for one-third of its operating budget. But when the beast reared up in 2008, and the economy performed its big *tombé* — all in the middle of City Center’s \$75 million capital campaign to raise money for renovations — Shuler had to respond.

“I think the worst thing to do in a recession or time of economic stress, when you still need to raise money, is to cut programs.”

“We began to see the handwriting on the wall in September 2008, right before Lehman Brothers fell. I came back from vacation and I met with our staff and said, ‘OK, let’s come up with a list of things we can cut if we need to cut.’ We didn’t cut any of the core programs because I think the worst thing to do in a recession or time of economic stress, when you still need to raise money, is to cut programs. We are a performing arts institution; what we do is on the stage. So, we tweaked around the edges, in ways that weren’t necessarily apparent



ROBERT KERN / COURTESY CITY CENTER

to the public: costumes, marketing, doing one brochure instead of two. Ways that wouldn’t affect our core operations.”

Not every purse-string holder would have been so faithful. Lincoln Kirstein’s comment that Margot Fonteyn, of all the ballerinas of the 20th century, “most embodies the art of pleasing,” might equally apply to Shuler. The faces in the crowd at Fall for Dance attest to that: Already the festival is a seasonal must-do, one of those events, like Shakespeare in the Park or the unveiling of an iPhone, for which people camp out overnight. The dance world has taken note of Shuler’s vision. In 2009, she received the prestigious Capezio Dance

itself — almost 100 years past — to the point, just months away, of its latest renaissance.

V

On March 16, 2010, City Center unveiled plans for its dramatic restoration. The first phase, completed last year, replaced the stage floor and revamped the dressing rooms. The second phase will occur this year from March to October, while the house is dark, after which patrons will enjoy additional restrooms, a second elevator, a restored and expanded rococo-Morocco lobby, a refurbished lounge, improved sight lines, all new seats, and better wheelchair access.

“The theater will be very beautiful and much more comfortable and will provide an enhanced experience for the audience when we reopen in October,” Shuler says.

Shuler knows a few things about revivals. Certainly, she reinvented herself after she stopped dancing, but it’s tempting to imagine that the seeds were planted long before that. One can go all the way back to Cleveland, when Shuler was a nimble sprig of seven. That year, the Royal Ballet came to town, and Shuler, with her mother’s support, got a tiny part in the production. Her job was to carry the train of the lead ballerina’s cape.

With a grace and sureness beyond that of the average first grader, Shuler lifted the cloak and followed the magnificent and enduring princess onto the stage. Then she lay the fabric at her feet.

The dancer was Margot Fonteyn. The ballet was *The Sleeping Beauty*. ♀

Award, given yearly since 1952 by the dance apparel manufacturer to that individual or institution whose “innovation, creativity, and imagination . . . bring respect, stature, and distinction to dance.” Past recipients include Martha Graham, Jerome Robbins, Alvin Ailey, Rudolf Nureyev, and, in 1953, Lincoln Kirstein.

“It feels like completing a circle,” Shuler has said of her return to City Center. It’s a ripe simile for a purveyor of the *rond de jambe*, but Shuler’s circle encompasses more than her own history. It arcs from the dawn of the temple

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NEWS

Columbia Campaign expands to raise \$5 billion by end of 2013

Today, thousands of undergraduates at Columbia College and at Columbia Engineering receive more financial aid than they used to. And students across Columbia have access to more distinguished faculty, as well as to new science labs, studio art spaces, and academic-advising centers.

These are just a few of the changes that have taken place at Columbia as a result of

In early December, Bollinger announced that the Columbia Campaign, which originally aimed to raise \$4 billion by the end of 2011, is close to surpassing its initial target a full year ahead of schedule. Now the University is expanding the campaign in hopes of raising an additional \$1 billion by the end of 2013. According to University officials, this will enable Columbia to raise money for a

Manhattan. Other key targets for support are the University's global initiatives, which include a growing series of Global Centers that advance Columbia research and teaching in foreign cities; the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation's international network of Studio-X experimental design spaces; and financial aid for international students.

"I think that there's a collective sense right now that if you want to put your resources to good use, there's no better place to give money to than Columbia," says Bollinger. "There are exciting things happening at Columbia today — in areas ranging from neuroscience to environmental development to globalization — and people are responding to that. The success of the Columbia Campaign shows there's more potential than we realized for fulfilling our hopes and ambitions for this University, so we have to keep going."

Big ideas

When the Columbia Campaign was publicly announced in 2006, the goal of raising \$4 billion seemed remarkably ambitious. At the time, no university had ever undertaken a \$4 billion campaign.

However, Bollinger and the University Trustees, including the chair of the board's alumni and development committee, Richard E. Witten '75CC, saw a lot of potential. Columbia for many years had lagged behind its peers in terms of the services it provided to its alumni, as well as in the opportunities it gave them to stay involved in the life of the University. "There was an urban myth that Columbia alumni didn't really want to connect with the University in the way that alumni of other Ivies do," says Susan K. Feagin '74GS, who recently left her post as the executive vice president for university development and alumni relations to become a special adviser to



BOB HANDELMAN

The Columbia Campaign has benefited students and faculty across the entire University.

an unprecedented wave of giving in recent years. Since 2004, more than 160,000 alumni, parents, and friends of the University have donated nearly \$4 billion through the Columbia Campaign, making it one of the most successful fundraising and alumni-outreach efforts in the history of higher education.

"It's amazing that so many people have come forward to meet our fundraising goals, even through the worst recession this country has faced since the 1930s," says President Lee C. Bollinger. "This is an achievement that every person who cares about this institution should take pride in."

variety of unmet needs, as well as for new priorities as they emerge.

The primary goals for the expanded effort are to raise money for financial aid, such as through a major initiative to ensure that the College remains affordable to the best-qualified students; to support faculty, especially through endowed professorships; and to make possible the construction of new arts, business school, and conference facilities in Manhattanville, a medical education building at the University's medical campus, and a sports center at the Baker Athletics Complex in Upper

Bollinger. “But that wasn’t true, as alumni now have proved.”

In 2005, the University, building upon growing alumni-outreach efforts taking place at several of its schools, created the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA). The CAA now encompasses more than 80 regional alumni clubs and affinity groups around the globe. It sponsors exclusive lectures, symposia, and concerts. It also has asked alumni what types of services they want from Columbia; the University has responded by offering more library privileges and online career services to alumni, by creating the Columbia Alumni Center at 622 West 113th Street on the Morningside Campus, and by inviting alumni to more networking events in New York City and around the world.

The percentage of Columbia graduates who say they’re pleased with their alumni experience has increased from 50 percent to nearly 75 percent in recent years. Many alumni are volunteering as guest lecturers

on campus, mentoring students and young graduates, and helping organize social events for their local alumni clubs. And they are donating: Some 88,000 alumni have given to the Columbia Campaign, creating a historic spike in giving.

“Alumni and other donors were apparently waiting for an invitation to get involved with Columbia, and to show their support,” says Fred Van Sickle, who succeeded Feagin as executive vice president for university development and alumni relations on January 1. (See related story on page 45.) “What they’re responding to is the energy and momentum they see at this institution. Our academic programs are clearly among the very best in the world, and now we have a level of alumni spirit and engagement to match.”

“We are incredibly proud that friends and alumni of Columbia have been energized by the University’s momentum under Lee Bollinger’s leadership,” says Witten,

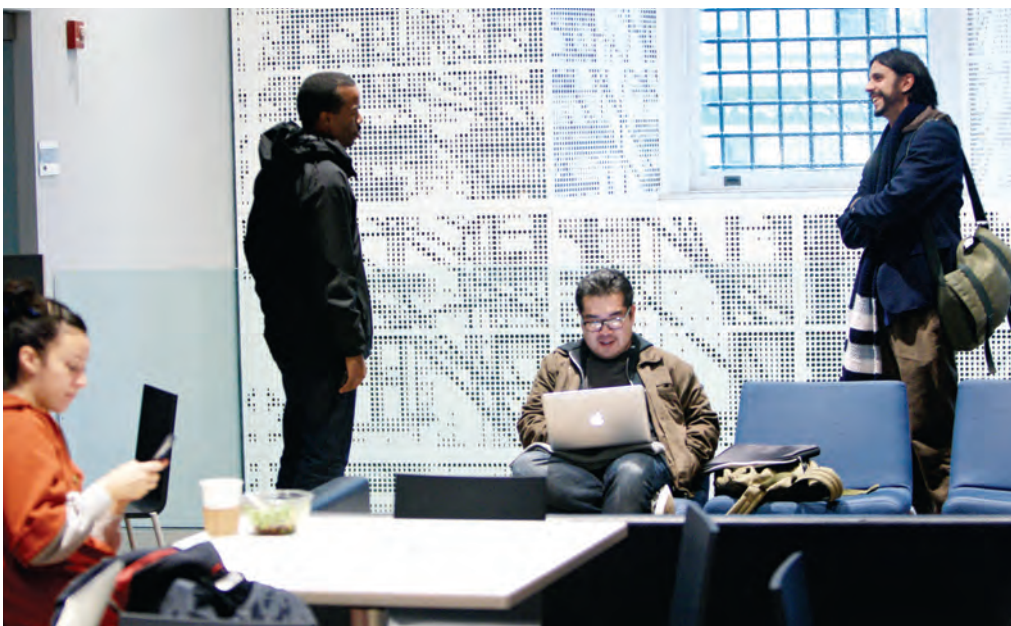
who is vice chair of the University Trustees and a cochair of the campaign. “The financial success of this effort is, of course, extremely gratifying. But equally significant is the fact that more than 160,000 donors have taken part in the Columbia Campaign. Their support and enthusiasm has been infectious and will bring enormous momentum to the years and goals ahead, leading the effort to strengthen Columbia and the world in which we exist.”

William V. Campbell ’62CC, ’64TC, Mark E. Kingdon ’71CC, Philip L. Milstein ’71CC, and Esta E. Stecher ’82LAW, all of whom are University Trustees, and Roy Vagelos ’54PS, ’90HON, chair of the Columbia University Medical Center Board of Visitors, have also served as cochairs of the campaign. In addition, three more alumni have stepped forward to volunteer as cochairs on the expanded campaign: Armen Avanesians ’83SEAS, Jonathan Lavine ’88CC, and Clyde Wu ’56PS. The honorary cochairs are Trustee Gerry Lenfest ’58LAW and Tussi Kluge, wife of the late John W. Kluge ’37CC, ’88HON.

Tradition of access

Providing money for financial aid continues to be a key goal of the Columbia Campaign. This is because the University must perform a budgetary balancing act to control costs for its students: While the College enrolls an unusually large number of low-income students for an Ivy, the University has a much smaller endowment than similarly prestigious institutions, which means that less money is available for student aid.

As part of the Columbia Campaign, the University so far has raised \$716 million for financial aid endowment across all of its schools. This effort got a big kick-start in 2007, when John W. Kluge pledged \$400 million to Columbia, all to support financial aid for undergraduate and gradu-



The Graduate School of Journalism opened the Toni Stabile Student Center in 2008 thanks to gifts from journalist Toni Stabile, PR executive Daniel J. Edelman ’41JRN, and other donors.

BOB HANDELMAN

Continued from previous page

ate students. Kluge allowed part of his gift to be used to create matching programs, thus prompting dozens of others to donate more than \$15 million for financial aid. In addition, the smaller donations that alumni make every year to the annual funds of Columbia's schools support financial aid; about half of the money given each year to the Columbia College Fund goes toward aid packages.

In recent years, an increase in donations for financial aid has helped Columbia replace loans with grants in the aid packages that it awards to College and engineering undergraduates.

"There are only a handful of institutions in the United States that can claim to truly have a need-blind admissions policy, and Columbia is one of them," says Bollinger. "There is nothing more important that people can do for this University than give for financial aid."

Another ongoing priority for the Columbia Campaign is to raise money for faculty. The campaign has raised tens of millions of dollars to support the creation of 134 endowed professorships, for instance. Donors often fund endowed professorships in a field of personal interest while linking their name, or that of a family member, to an eminent professor who holds the chair they created.

"For professors to be awarded endowed chairs is also very prestigious, so these gifts help Columbia reward our best senior faculty and recruit top-notch people," says College dean Michele Moody-Adams. "This has a direct payoff for the quality of our undergraduate education."

Among the campaign's signature gifts for endowed professorships is a donation of \$48 million from Gerry Lenfest, which, by establishing matching programs, is helping to fund 25 faculty positions in the arts and sciences and 10 at the law school. In addition, Arthur J. Samberg '67BUS pledged \$25 million for endowed professorships at Columbia Business School, and Armen Avanesians and his wife, Janette, have given generously for endowed chairs at the engineering school.

The campaign continues to raise money for faculty at various stages of their careers, such as through the Endowed Postdoctoral Core Lectureship program, which supports the College's brightest young faculty teaching in the Core Curriculum.

Bricks and mortar

Space is a precious commodity for urban universities, and especially for Columbia. Among the Ivies, CU has the fewest square feet per student.

But Columbia is planning to build state-of-the-art facilities for some of its most

space-deprived programs in the years ahead. The campaign so far has received landmark gifts of \$250 million from the late Dawn M. Greene '83HON and the Jerome L. Greene Foundation for the construction of the Jerome L. Greene Science Center, which will serve as the home to the University's expanding Mind, Brain, and Behavior Initiative; \$100 million from Henry R. Kravis '69BUS for new business school facilities as part of the University's planned 17-acre expansion in Manhattanville (see related story on following page); \$50 million from Roy Vagelos and his wife, Diana Vagelos '55BC, for a new medical education building at Columbia University Medical Center (see full story on page 44); and gifts for a new sports center to be named in honor of William V. Campbell at the University's Baker Athletics Complex.

The campaign aims to raise additional gifts for each of these projects, as well as for a new conference center and an arts venue in Manhattanville.

"The University's physical expansion is one of the most important ingredients in preparing Columbia for its long-term future," says Bollinger. "Through the generosity of the entire Columbia community, we now have a historic opportunity to create the physical facilities that will allow our programs to reach their full potential."

Visit momentum.columbia.edu.

Marshall Scholar to study Irish poetry's Indian connection

Anna Feuer '11CC has been awarded a 2011 Marshall Scholarship for two years of graduate study in the U.K. An English major who is originally from Los Angeles, Feuer will pursue two consecutive year-long master's programs at Oxford, one in global and imperial history and the second in English literature.

Her research will focus on how W. B. Yeats and other Irish writers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries borrowed concepts and imagery from Indian poetry

— the swan, the lotus, the mirror — to weave a new Irish national mythology.

"I'm interested in the question of why Irish writers, rather than drawing upon the more familiar cultures of Europe, instead looked for inspiration to the other side of the world, to people of an altogether different race, culture, and language," she says.

Feuer became interested in this topic during a semester she spent studying at the University of Hyderabad in India.



Marshall Scholar Anna Feuer

MICHAEL B. SHAVELSON

Kravis pledges \$100 million for B-school's move to Manhattanville

Columbia has received the largest gift ever for its business school: a \$100 million pledge from Henry R. Kravis '69BUS for two new buildings in the Manhattanville section of West Harlem, just north of the University's Morningside Campus.

Columbia Business School will eventually make its home between 130th and 131st Street, west of Broadway. The move is years away and additional money must be raised to develop the site: Kravis's \$100 million gift represents roughly one-quarter of the total funds that the business school aims to raise for the two buildings. One of the buildings will be named for Kravis, a pioneer in the private equity industry who has served on the school's Board of Overseers for 20 years. The search for an architect is under way.

"Henry Kravis clearly understands that Columbia's long-term vitality depends fundamentally on both the financial resources and the physical space needed to support talented students and faculty," says President Lee C. Bollinger.

The business school, in making the move, will nearly double its physical space to 450,000 square feet. The school will also bring together its faculty, staff, and students for the first time in decades. Currently, its facilities are spread across five locations — Uris Hall, Warren Hall, and Armstrong Hall on the Morningside Campus and two office spaces in Midtown. According to business dean Glenn Hubbard, this hardly befits a school that is consistently ranked in the top 10 graduate business schools in the world: "We have the people and programs of a first-rate institution, yet facilities that are second-rate," he says. "The disparity between the two has never been greater."

The two new buildings, to be separated by a lawn and a plaza, will have spacious interiors to promote interaction among faculty and students. "The design of these new facilities will reflect the fast-paced, high-tech, and highly

social character of business practice in the 21st century," Hubbard says. "Business culture has been evolving away from the hierarchies that dominated organizations in the past. Instead, organizations are moving toward more horizontal, collaborative models, which underscores the importance of such social intelligence-based skills as leadership, management, teamwork, and negotiation."

The school's presence in Manhattanville will also benefit the local business community, according to Hubbard. He says the

Kravis, a native of Tulsa, Oklahoma, attended Columbia Business School in the late 1960s. He says the experience "opened a new world" to him. He landed a job on Wall Street while studying at Columbia and subsequently cofounded Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. (KKR), a leading investment firm where today he's co-CEO and cochairman.

Previously, Kravis donated more than \$24 million to the business school for such initiatives as Columbia CaseWorks, an effort to collect case studies of real-



Henry R. Kravis announces his \$100 million pledge on October 5.

school will expand its numerous service programs, which provide guidance and support to entrepreneurs in Upper Manhattan. "These new facilities will enable us to deepen the two-way ties between the school's intellectual capital and business practitioners," he says. "We will be able to connect local entrepreneurs with cutting-edge knowledge and skills, and, in turn, deepen our students' ability to apply what they are learning in the classroom to the real world."

world business challenges that are based on Columbia research and that B-school students can analyze; the Meyer Feldberg Distinguished Fellowship Program; and several endowed professorships.

Regarding his \$100 million pledge, Kravis says: "We're not just constructing a building — we're creating a community of entrepreneurs. What matters to me is what happens in and around that building and the impact it has on our students, this community, our nation, and the world."

CUMC receives \$50 million Vagelos gift for medical education building

P. Roy Vagelos '54PS and his wife, Diana Vagelos '55BC, have donated \$50 million to support the construction of a new medical and graduate education building at the Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC).

The new facility, to be named in the couple's honor, has been proposed for CUMC

like atmosphere at CUMC. The projected cost for the entire project is \$185 million.

"When I first came to the College of Physicians and Surgeons 60 years ago, the facilities were first-rate, as many of them had just been recently built," says Roy Vagelos, a former chairman and CEO of pharmaceutical company Merck & Co., Inc. "Naturally, over time, some of them have aged, and new technologies and teaching resources are now required to provide the best modern education opportunities. We are training the doctors who will deliver medical care, the scientists who will perform groundbreaking scientific research, and the teachers who will help train the future generation of physicians and scientists. It is important that their educational facilities are as exciting as medical science is today."

Roy Vagelos chairs the medical center's Board of Visitors and has served as cochair of the University's fundraising campaign and chair of CUMC's campaign. Diana Vagelos is vice chair of the Barnard College Board. They previously made a naming gift for Barnard College's newest building, a hub of student life called the Diana Center.

"It is clear that whatever the benefits Roy and Diana Vagelos may have gained from attending Columbia and Barnard, they have given back even more to our university through decades of service and support, and

we are enormously grateful," says Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger. "With this latest demonstration of generosity, they are helping establish a new sense of community and campus life at our medical center in Washington Heights that is so important to our attracting future generations of talented medical students and faculty. Roy Vagelos's understanding of the resources required to train today's top medical researchers and clinicians, and his deep and abiding engagement with Columbia, have made him an invaluable partner in our long-term plans to enhance all aspects of life and learning at our medical center."

The Vageloses' \$50 million pledge for the medical education building is the largest gift that CUMC has received as part of the ongoing fundraising campaign it launched in 2004. With its receipt, the campaign for the College of Physicians and Surgeons has raised more than \$1 billion.

Says CUMC head Lee Goldman: "This new education building will ensure that Columbia continues to produce superior doctors and researchers, trained in the latest techniques, as medicine continues to evolve rapidly throughout the 21st century. The building also will allow us to centralize key activities in a state-of-the-art facility that reflects our commitment to world-class education and the quality of student life."



BRANDON SCHULMAN

Diana and Roy Vagelos

property on Haven Avenue. Its planned construction is part of an overall medical center campus revitalization that will create a new front entrance to the medical school, consolidate student services, renovate several existing buildings, and add green space, thus creating a more campus-

Boulez featured in December programs

Pierre Boulez (left) greets fellow composer Elliott Carter at Miller Theatre on December 6 before a concert honoring the French musician, who turned 85 last spring. (Carter is 102.) Boulez, as music director of the New York Philharmonic from 1971 to 1977, tried with limited success to bring contemporary music to classical music audiences. Four of Boulez's compositions — "Dérive 1," "Dérive 2," "12 Notations," and "Improvisations sur Mallarmé" — had more enthusiastic receptions at the Miller concert, which featured the Talea Ensemble under James Baker, pianist Anthony Cheung, and soprano Mary Elizabeth Mackenzie.

The next concert in Miller Theatre's Composer Portraits series is the February 3 program on Julia Wolfe. Visit millertheatre.com.



JON SIMON

Van Sickle succeeds Feagin as head of development and alumni relations

Fred Van Sickle has been named executive vice president for university development and alumni relations, effective January 1.

In his new role, Van Sickle directs the Office of Alumni and Development, which supports a wide range of activities aimed at engaging alumni in the life of the University and raising money to advance Columbia's mission.

Van Sickle succeeds his longtime colleague and mentor Susan Feagin '74GS,

lion by the end of 2013. (See related story on page 40.) During their tenure, donors have given the University more than twice as much money than in the previous eight years.

Feagin also helped to create a renewed sense of community among graduates of the entire University. She oversaw the creation of the Columbia Alumni Association, a world-wide umbrella organization for all University alumni; the opening of the Columbia

participation in activities, and, of course, in their giving. There's an energy and momentum now that I know Fred is going to push forward."

Feagin worked at Columbia twice before her latest stretch: immediately following her graduation in 1974 from the School of General Studies and again from 1982 to 1987, when she led fundraising efforts for the Arts and Sciences. She received the School of General Studies' Owl Award in 1998 for her years of alumni volunteerism.

As a special adviser to Bollinger, Feagin will work on projects related to alumni relations, development, and other University matters. Among her plans, she says, is to reach out to alumni volunteers working on the Columbia Campaign, such as members of the various school-based dean's councils, to hear their suggestions for making the volunteer experience "more enjoyable, productive, and rewarding."

Van Sickle has held leadership positions in alumni relations and development at several institutions of higher education, including at his undergraduate alma mater Lake Forest College, where he was vice president for alumni and development and secretary of the college from 1995 to 2001, and at Princeton, where he was director of principal gifts from 1990 to 1994. Van Sickle earned his master's degree in education from Harvard and his doctorate in education from the University of Pennsylvania.

One of his goals as executive vice president, he says, is to further encourage a sense of alumni connection and commitment at Columbia, across all of its schools.

"Columbia faculty, alumni, and students offer so much to the world, whether by curing disease, finding new solutions to global issues, or creating great art," he says. "It's a privilege for me to support their extraordinary work by amplifying the pride and connection that alumni feel to what's happening here. Today, more alumni are taking part in the life of the University than ever before, and I'm going to work to make sure this continues."



Fred Van Sickle and Susan Feagin

who has served as executive vice president since 2002 and is credited with having successfully overhauled Columbia's alumni outreach and fundraising operations. She will remain at Columbia as a special adviser to President Lee C. Bollinger.

Van Sickle served as vice president for university development under Feagin. They both came to Columbia in 2002 from the University of Michigan, where they had worked for Bollinger when he was president of that university.

At Columbia, Feagin and Van Sickle have led one of the most successful fundraising efforts in the history of higher education: The Columbia Campaign has raised roughly \$4 billion since 2004 and has recently been expanded with a goal of raising \$5 bil-

Alumni Center at West 113th Street; and the relaunch of *Columbia Magazine*. She also coordinated programs surrounding Columbia's 250th anniversary celebration in 2004.

"Susan is admired by her colleagues and staff for her intelligence, warmth, sense of humor, determination and patience, and grace in every situation," says President Bollinger. "The results she has achieved are remarkable by any standard."

Says Feagin: "When Fred and I came to Columbia, the goal we shared with Lee was to create the sort of robust alumni and development program that this University deserved, but which hadn't existed in a long time. The response we've gotten from alumni and friends of Columbia has been incredible, both in terms of their

Columbia hires first librarian for Jewish studies

Columbia has been at the forefront of academic Jewish studies since Salo Wittmayer Baron, the late Columbia historian, pioneered the modern discipline in the 1930s. Yet the University's vast library holdings in Jewish history, literature, and culture are not well organized or easy to search: They're spread out across several libraries, and some aren't even cataloged.

Now Columbia is undertaking a major project to sort through its Judaic materials and make them more accessible. The effort is being led by Columbia's first dedicated Jewish-studies librarian, Michelle Chesner, whose work will result in a Web site showcasing all of Columbia's Judaic materials, including some 1500 Hebrew manuscripts, hundreds of Hebrew books from the 15th and 16th centuries, and thousands of Yiddish titles and Jewish scholarly works in Western and Slavic languages. This virtual library — the Norman E. Alexander Library for Jewish Studies — is to be named in honor of the late College and law-school graduate who died in 2006, at age 92, having arranged to donate \$4 million to Columbia. His gift creates endowments for Chesner's position as well as for the purchase of new materials and rare books relevant to Jewish studies.

Chesner recently began cataloging Columbia's unsorted Judaic materials. She also plans to add keywords to the electronic records of Judaic materials that are already sorted to make them more visible for library patrons. For instance, a student who reviews the online records of the papers of Russian-born translator Mirra Ginsburg soon will see that Columbia also owns an early typescript of *The Manor*, a novel by the Nobel Prize-winning Yiddish author Isaac Bashevis Singer, whom Ginsburg translated.



MICHAEL B. SHAVELSON

Newly appointed Jewish-studies librarian Michelle Chesner gives students a tour of some gems from Columbia's Judaica holdings. In the foreground is a 15th-century copy of Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah*.

Jeremy Dauber, a Yiddishist and the director of the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, hadn't realized that Columbia owned the Singer typescript until Chesner mentioned it. "It's widely known that Singer's papers are at the University of Texas at Austin, so this was a surprise," he says. "I'm sure there are more hidden treasures waiting to be found."
— Joshua J. Friedman '08JRN



VETTA IMAGES

This spring, Columbia alumni will tour sites in Barcelona, Spain, that include architect Antoni Gaudí's flamboyant Parc Güell, whose "gingerbread" gatehouse and ceramic-tiled benches are pictured here.

CAA hosts Barcelona gathering

Alumni from around the world will gather in Barcelona, Spain, from May 19 to 22 to enjoy a weekend of cultural and historical exploration, led by Columbia faculty. The program is one of the Columbia Alumni Association's signature events.

Highlights of the weekend will include walking tours of Antoni Gaudí's modern architectural masterpieces and the Gothic and medieval landmarks in the Ciutat Vella, or "old city," of Barcelona; trips to the Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró museums; a private tour at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; and the second CAA International Club Leaders Conference. The events are being organized in conjunction with the Columbia University Club of Spain. Faculty participating include arts dean Carol Becker, economist Xavier Sala-i-Martin, and architect Jorge Otero-Pailos.

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.

Engineering school to create 20 new endowed professorships

The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science has imminent plans to create 20 new endowed professorships, nearly doubling the school's current total of 23 endowed faculty positions. Engineering dean Feniosky Peña-Mora made the announcement on October 21.

Ten of the new endowments, valued collectively at \$30 million, are being funded by gifts from engineering alumni and their families. These gifts were inspired by a matching program created by a large donation from University Trustee Armen Avanesians '83SEAS and his wife, Janette.

In addition to the 10 professorships being funded through the Avanesianses'

matching program, the engineering school is establishing another 10 endowed professorships using separate funds.

According to Peña-Mora, many of the professorships will be held by newly recruited faculty; others will be given to current Columbia professors in recognition of their outstanding research and teaching. The first recipients will be announced in early 2011.

Peña-Mora says the endowed positions will enable the school to significantly increase the overall size of its faculty. (The engineering school, like many Columbia programs, has long been constrained in its growth by a lack of laboratory and office

space. But starting this winter, many engineering professors are moving into the Northwest Corner Building, Columbia's new interdisciplinary science center at the corner of Broadway and 120th Street.)

"We undertook this expansion of our faculty on an incredibly ambitious timeline, during one of the most challenging economic periods in recent years, making our accomplishment all the more remarkable," says Peña-Mora. "I would like to thank, from the bottom of my heart, our steadfast alumni and supporters for their confidence that a large investment in Columbia's outstanding engineering faculty was truly an investment in the future of the school."

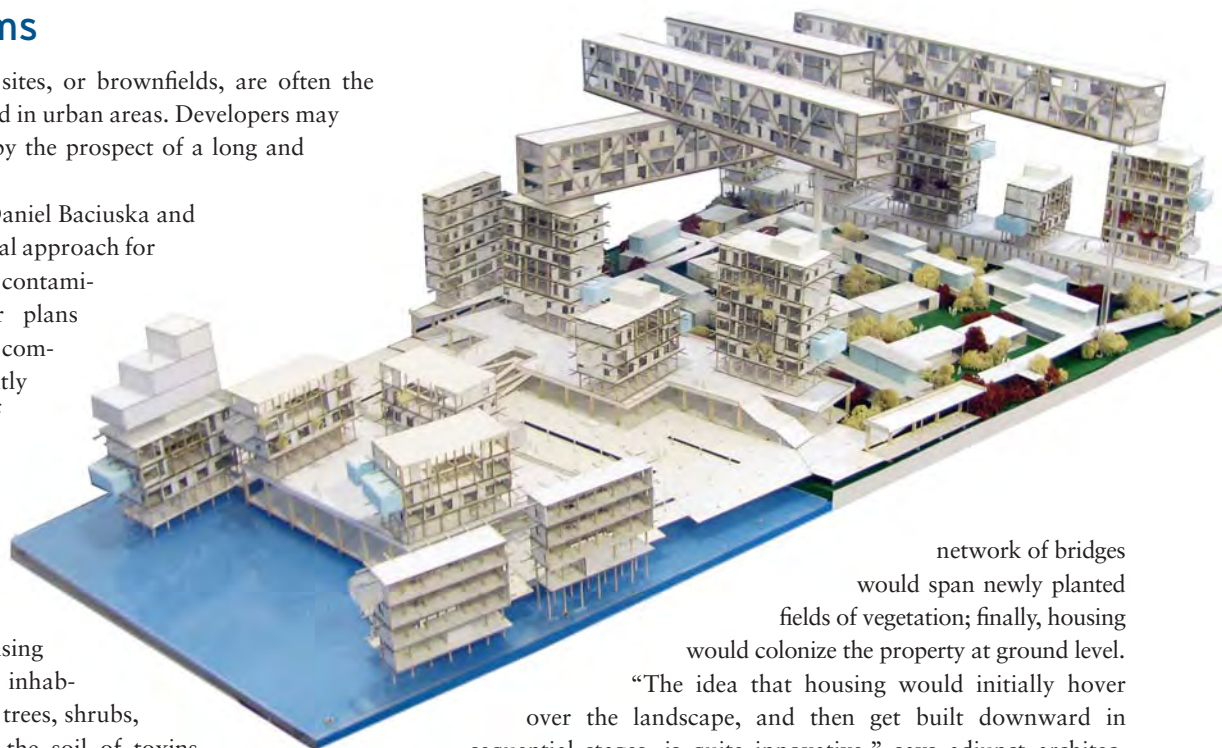
Fields of dreams

Contaminated industrial sites, or brownfields, are often the only available plots of land in urban areas. Developers may get scared off, however, by the prospect of a long and expensive cleanup.

Architecture students Daniel Baciуска and Andy Vann have an original approach for developing housing on a contaminated brownfield. Their plans won first place in a design competition sponsored recently by the Queens chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Baciуска and Vann's chief innovation is to extend bridge-like structures over contaminated land so that housing can be constructed and inhabited at the same time that trees, shrubs, and grasses are purging the soil of toxins — through a slow, organic process called bioremediation. "We thought, how can we remedy this site and also develop it simultaneously?" said Baciуска.

Their imagined development, a futuristic-looking cluster of glass-and-steel blocks, would proceed in three phases over 30 years. First, towers would rise on the outskirts of the property; then a



network of bridges would span newly planted fields of vegetation; finally, housing would colonize the property at ground level.

"The idea that housing would initially hover over the landscape, and then get built downward in sequential stages, is quite innovative," says adjunct architecture professor Robert Marino, who cotaught the course for which the students completed the project. "By giving students the freedom to pursue inventive solutions, interesting ideas are raised that might not happen in practice. These ideas can filter through to the real world. In many ways, that's how progress is made in architecture."

—JFF

In brief

Bollinger's contract extended

University President Lee C. Bollinger recently signed a contract extension to keep his post through 2015.

Since being recruited from the University of Michigan in 2002, Bollinger has focused on strengthening Columbia's finances, heightening its global presence, and creating a 17-acre campus expansion in Manhattanville. "He has done a magnificent job," Trustee Chairman William Campbell told Bloomberg News in October.

A First Amendment scholar, Bollinger holds a law degree from Columbia Law School, where he teaches today.

Good returns

Columbia's endowment posted a 17.3 percent return on its investments for fiscal 2010, University officials announced in September. This outpaced the performance of the major market indexes, was the best among the Ivies, and brought the value of Columbia's total endowment to around \$6.5 billion.

"The successful investment performance over time has become a cornerstone of Columbia's financial strength," Senior Executive Vice President Robert Kasdin told Bloomberg News. "It provides a growing source of operating revenue, and our donors know we take their trust most seriously."

Carnoy joins trustees

Lisa Carnoy '89CC, the cohead of global capital markets for Bank of America Merrill Lynch, has joined the University Board of Trustees. Carnoy previously served on Columbia College's Board of Visitors. In 2007, she cofounded the Women's Leadership Council for Athletics, which is dedicated to raising money for women's sports at Columbia.

The *Wall Street Journal*, when reporting Carnoy's most recent promotion last February, described her as one of the three most powerful women on Wall Street.

Louis Henkin, 1917–2010

Louis Henkin, a Columbia Law School professor who is widely regarded as the father of human rights law, died October 14 at the age of 92. Through his writings and decades of teaching, Henkin argued for the centrality of human rights concerns in legal matters, influencing generations of lawyers, judges, and diplomats.

"Lou's writings sometimes clarified what the law really is, but other times lucidly developed what the law ought to be," wrote U.S. Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg '59LAW in 2006. "Countless times, when struggling with a trying case involving a question of constitutional

law or international law, I looked to his writings for counsel."

Marilyn Laurie dies at 71

Marilyn Laurie '59BC, a University Trustee since 1996, died on July 14. She was 71. A former executive vice president of public relations and brand management at AT&T, Laurie was the first woman to join the company's 10-member executive committee.

AT&T hired Laurie in 1971 to develop environmental-education programs for its employees. That position stemmed from Laurie's instrumental role in organizing the first Earth Day celebration in 1970, as its head of communications.

The University Trustees have created a new student internship program named for Laurie at the Graduate School of Journalism.

Here in spirit

Liu Xiaobo, a Chinese literary critic, writer, and human rights activist currently incarcerated in China, was awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize in absentia on December 10. Liu was a visiting scholar at Columbia when in the spring of 1989 he returned to his homeland to support student protestors in Tiananmen Square. He has spent the last two decades in and out of prison on political charges.

CAA gets creative



DIANE BONDAREFF

More than 400 people attended a panel discussion titled "Unlocking Creativity" with actor Brian Dennehy '60CC, author Asali Solomon '95BC, composer Tom Kitt '96CC, and novelist Kiran Desai '99SOA at Lincoln Center on October 15. The event was part of the Sixth Annual Columbia Alumni Association Leaders Assembly and was moderated by President Lee C. Bollinger '71LAW.

True inspiration, Solomon told the audience, takes many forms. "I think of creativity as anything that makes everyday life more beautiful," she said. "Tend your garden, cook, put together an awesome outfit. Write your novel, too. There are so many different ways to be creative. Cure cancer. *That's* creative."

Alumni can see video at alumni.columbia.edu/creativitypanel.



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NEWSMAKERS

Greener guidance

Howard Slatkin '00GSAPP was named the first director of sustainability at the New York City Department of City Planning in November. Previously, as deputy director of strategic planning, Slatkin oversaw the department's green initiatives. Slatkin's appointment was announced by City Planning Commissioner **Amanda M. Burden** '92GSAPP . . . This past fall, **Mark Mizrahi** '91SIPA became president and CEO of EnLink Geenergy, a California-based developer and installer of geothermal heating and cooling systems.

KIM KYUNG HOON / REUTERS PICTURES



Chun Yung-woo '94SIPA

Patient writer

Rachel Aviv '09SOA has won a 2010 Rona Jaffe Foundation award for emerging female writers. The \$25,000 prize will support Aviv's research on a book about adolescents and young adults in the earliest stages of schizophrenia. Aviv will follow a small group of patients from a Maine psychiatric hospital for a year and write about their lives.

Crossing borders

The UN General Assembly this past summer elected China's **Xue Hanqin** '83LAW, '95LAW to the International Court of Jus-

tice in The Hague, where she is only the second female judge in the court's 64-year history. Xue previously served as China's first ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and as its ambassador to the Netherlands . . . South Korean president Lee Myung-bak has named **Chun Yung-woo** '94SIPA his top aide for foreign affairs and national security. Chun has also been South Korea's deputy foreign minister and, before that, its chief nuclear negotiator . . . **Lisa Anderson** '81GSAS, former dean of the School of International and Public Affairs, has been named the first female president of the American University in Cairo, where she had been provost.

B-schoolers on the case

For the third year in a row, Columbia MBA students won first place in the case-study category of the Turnaround Management Association's student-paper competition in October. The winning case study, which analyzes financial struggles at the shoe company Crocs, was written by **Ronald Schulhof** '10BUS, **Molly Bennard** '10BUS, **Julie Thaler** '10BUS, **Kevin Sayles** '10BUS, and **John Wolff** '10BUS . . . Another team of Columbia MBA students won the American Bankruptcy Institute's annual corporate-restructuring competition in November.

Students from 12 top MBA programs were given a week to solve a real-world case problem involving a timber company on the verge of bankruptcy; Columbia's winning team convinced a mock board of directors that the company should re-finance rather than try their chances in bankruptcy court. The team consisted of **Kevin Van Dam** '11BUS, **Patrick Carey** '11BUS, **Stephen Kavulich** '11BUS, and **Edward Martin** '11BUS.

Film noirs

Former fashion model **Sara Ziff** '11GS directed and produced *Picture Me*, a documentary that alleges young female models are routinely sexually exploited.



ROB BENNETT

Sara Ziff '11GS

The film opened in New York in September . . . **Ethan Downing** '10SCE is currently directing a short documentary about human smuggling in China, based on research he began in the School of Continuing Education's master's program in negotiation and conflict resolution. The film describes the activities of "snake-heads" who transport adults and children from China into the United States at a high cost, often leaving them to work off enormous debts in abusive conditions.

Great interpretations

Alex Zucker '90SIPA recently won the 2010 National Translation Award from

COURTESY INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE



Xue Hanqin '83LAW, '95LAW

the American Literary Translators Association for bringing into English the young Czech writer Petra Hůlová's celebrated first novel *All This Belongs to Me* . . .



Alex Zucker '90SIPA

Abigail Deutsch '09JRN won the Poetry Foundation's 2010 Editors Prize for Reviewing for articles she published in the May and September issues of the organization's prestigious magazine, *Poetry*. Deutsch has also published reviews in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Village Voice*, *n+1*, and *Bookforum*.

Better-serving bankers

Rita Soni '01SIPA was named CEO of the NASSCOM Foundation, the social-development arm of the Indian software industry's trade organization, in November. Soni previously worked at India's Yes Bank, where she was in charge of loan programs that benefited socially and environmentally sensitive business ventures . . . **Adhil Shetty '05SIPA**, the CEO of BankBazaar.com, was recognized this summer by the Indian magazine *Business Today* for running one of India's

"hottest start-ups." BankBazaar.com, which Shetty cofounded with his brother and sister-in-law in 2007, allows customers to comparison shop for loans and insurance.



Rita Soni '01SIPA



"For the majority of us who will not be creating or collecting rare books for future generations, planned giving to Columbia Libraries is a meaningful way to support their sacred role in the continuum of education, research, and collection at our University."

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THE 1754 SOCIETY

REVIEWS



A Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker makes its way through the now-passable Northwest Passage.

White Space on the Map // By Samuel McCracken

The Man Who Ate His Boots: The Tragic History of the Search for the Northwest Passage

By Anthony Brandt (Knopf, 441 pages, \$28.95)

The human spirit, when pushing the limits, is often spurred by intelligent purpose. But sometimes gross folly works just as well. This is manifest in Britain's 19th-century quest for the Northwest Passage.

The passage, a shortcut water route between the Atlantic and the Pacific around the top of North America, which navigators assumed *must* exist, obsessed explorers ever since Columbus found the Americas rudely blocking the way from Europe to Asia. The English made a specialty of looking for it, and the Canadian Arctic is dotted with the names of seagoing Elizabethans: John Davis, William Baffin, Martin Frobisher, Humphrey Gilbert, and

Henry Hudson, who lost his life in the great bay that bears his name after his crew mutinied rather than proceed farther. He was only the first of many Europeans to find that along the route to the passage there was often a terminal detour.

All this we learn from Anthony Brandt '61GSAS, who skillfully tells the complex tales in *The Man Who Ate His Boots: The Tragic History of the Search for the Northwest Passage*. Brandt, the editor of the National Geographic Society Press Adventure Classics series, tells us especially about the 19th-century English missions — varying parts of madness and gallantry.

The drama was played out in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, some 36,000 islands north of the Canadian mainland. The majority are tiny and uninhabited; the largest loom implausibly over the mainland when viewed through the distortions of a Mercator projection. West of Hudson Bay, most of the water around the islands is frozen all year.

John Barrow — in effect the executive vice president of the Royal Navy from 1804 to 1845 — was the commanding figure who made finding the Northwest Passage a British fixation. He gave the Royal Navy a new role post-Waterloo by sending expedition after expedition to the Arctic. Early failures did not discourage Barrow, who believed that open sea water did not freeze and that ice formed only on coasts. The top of the world was covered by water with a thin rim of ice, he insisted: Find the weak spot and crash through to Asia.

Barrow's project culminated in the lost 1845–48 mission of Sir John Franklin, the boot-eater of the book's title, who, with his men, had been reduced to eating shoe leather two decades earlier on his first attempt.

Barrow's successors commissioned a series of rescue expeditions, first after Franklin's party and then after their remains. These were intermittent — both for exploration and rescue — financed by others, including the Hudson's Bay Company and Franklin's indomitable second wife Jane. It was on one of these, led by Robert McClure from 1850 to 1854, that the passage was found, though it was frozen shut and had to be crossed by sledge. McClure was honored for the discovery, but the Crimean War had begun, shifting the interest of the public and the Royal Navy to other regions.

No one actually sailed the passage until Norway's Roald Amundsen took three seasons to do it, starting in 1903. (Amundsen was the man who in 1911 reached the South Pole.) In 1944 a Canadian police ship made it through in a single season.

But this was all in the future for Barrow's explorers. The challenge they confronted was made to order for a people who had kept the sun from setting on their empire. The longer the search for the passage failed, the more it became a Forlorn Hope — that is, the impossible task that English gentlemen routinely accepted and generally achieved, often with a knighthood or a peerage to follow. The English gentleman might not always achieve a Forlorn Hope, but where he failed none was likely to succeed. Barrow's men frequently encountered Indians, most often the Inuit, and they seemed to have found them not bad chaps, for savages. One group of these, very short of rations themselves, turned over most of their food to a starving band of Englishmen specifically because the Inuit were much better at doing without. It did not seem to occur to the English that the Inuit had survived for centuries in the Arctic and had mastered traveling light. English

parties traveled very well equipped, and sometimes died hauling their impedimenta.

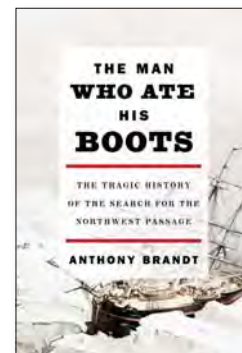
Brandt tells all this with sure narrative control and admirable clarity. He has a good instinct for character, including that of the Inuit, but particularly that of Franklin, the kindly commander who literally could not kill a mosquito; he told the astonished Inuit that the mosquito had as much right to live as he. Franklin was corpulent, genial, and brave, going back for one more try at the passage at an age when he was entitled to a peaceful retirement at Bournemouth or some other unfrozen harbor. He took 128 others with him to a death that eventually included “the last dread alternative,” which is to say cannibalism, although that happened after he had passed beyond command.

Brandt relates this astonishing account about as well as anyone is likely to, but he is not without minor fault. He is inclined to supply unneeded details about members of the British royal family, and get them wrong. He reports, for example, that the explorer William Edward Parry was much lionized by high society and was invited to dinner by Queen Victoria's father, one Prince Leopold, and that Victoria told Parry that she had read all his books. As it happens, Victoria's father was named Edward and had been dead for seven years at the time of the dinner; Victoria was all of eight. Prince Leopold was Victoria's uncle — the future Leopold I of Belgium — and the Princess Victoria of Brandt's account was not the future queen but her mother, Leopold's sister Victoria. Brandt also persists in calling Franklin's second wife Jane “Lady Jane”; it should be Lady Franklin.

Lately, climate change has taken a hand in the fortunes of the passage. For several years it has been open two months for cruise ships, among other vessels. This year, the season ran into September. On present trends, the passage may become all that Sir John Barrow could have wished, and having become practical, it is now a bone of contention. (Canada regards it as part of its internal waterways, as if it were the Saint Lawrence. The United States and other maritime nations beg to differ.)

Brandt is a global warming pessimist. “Perhaps by the end of this century,” he writes, “ice will have vanished from the world altogether.” If he is right, there will come a generation of readers for whom his tales of frigid heroism and folly will seem more fantasy than history.

Samuel McCracken is a critic and essayist living in Boston.



Interpreters of Dreams // By Julia M. Klein

How to Read the Air

By Dinaw Mengestu (Riverhead, 320 pages, \$25.95)

Girl in Translation

By Jean Kwok (Riverhead, 304 pages, \$25.95)

Most of us trace our roots to other places, remembered or forgotten or never known. For the first generation, adrift in a new language and culture, obliged to abandon old occupations and family ties, mere economic survival can be difficult. Immigrant children have their own set of challenges. They pay the wages of adaptation and assimilation, struggling with being outsiders while trying to fit in.

Two recent novels by Columbia graduates — *How to Read the Air* by Dinaw Mengestu '05SOA, and *Girl in Translation* by Jean Kwok '97SOA — tackle this subject with originality and grace. Both works read like memoirs, with narrator-protagonists intent on sloughing off the past and entering the American mainstream.

To start with, that means achieving both an advanced education and career success — enough to justify parental sacrifice, or redeem parental indifference. Mengestu's American-born protagonist, Jonas Woldemariam, the son of Ethiopian immigrants, aspires to finish a doctorate in modern English literature — if only he can get around to it. Meanwhile, he dabbles in fiction of various sorts. (Mengestu himself was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1978,

came to the United States two years later with his family, settled in the Midwest, received degrees from Georgetown and Columbia, and now lives in Paris.)

How to Read the Air is a chronicle of family dysfunction, reminding us that time and distance won't blot out a legacy of violence. We are what our history has made us, even in the land that promised to wipe everything clean. We may pretend otherwise, and the pretense may be healing. "There is nothing so easily remade as our definitions of ourselves," Jonas

declares at one point. This masterly novel turns out to be a metaliterary commentary on the art of fiction and how we invent our lives and identities — like our stories — from scraps of hope and memory.

Mengestu's justly lauded debut, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (2007), was a sensitive exploration of the lives of African immigrants marooned in Washington, D.C. *How to Read the Air* is even more ambitious, embracing two generations and a wide swath of the country.

Employing flashbacks and flash-forwards, Mengestu juggles four principal story lines without sacrificing momentum. First is the tale,

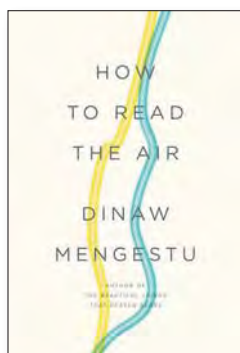
part true (in this fictive world) and part imagined (even more than fiction normally is), of how Jonas's father, Yosef, made the arduous journey from his native Ethiopia, via Sudan, to America, curled up in a box. His journey recalls the feat of Henry "Box" Brown, the Virginia slave who, in 1849, escaped by mailing himself north in a crate to Philadelphia abolitionists.

The second narrative involves Yosef's disastrous vacation trip from Peoria, Illinois, to Nashville, Tennessee, with his secretly pregnant wife, Mariam. The two were married in Ethiopia, shortly before he emigrated. After three years, she has rejoined him in the United States, a move she quickly realizes was a mistake. The book's title refers in part to the charged air of violence that exists between them.

At the heart of the book is Jonas's own crumbling marriage to a lawyer named Angela, also the daughter of African immigrants. Angela, more focused and financially responsible than Jonas, alternately enjoys and recoils at his abundant capacity for invention. Jonas's first job, in a refugee resettlement center, involves embroidering refugee accounts of distress and persecution to make them seem more pitiable. It turns out that writing fiction suits him. So does relating it. In his next job, a part-time teaching position at a high school he calls only "the academy," he spends several class hours concocting his father's immigration saga.

Finally, there is Jonas's visit to his mother at a housing complex two hours from Boston, and his retracing of his parents' fateful trip — the culmination of his attempt to piece together the narrative of their lives.

As Jonas and Angela struggle to connect emotionally and to make ends meet in their tiny New York basement apartment, Jonas decides that another fiction can only help: He informs her that he has been offered a permanent position at the academy, and that he will at last be starting graduate school. That audacious lie, quickly exposed, is a blow from which their marriage cannot recover. But the novel's denouement is softened by its redemptive embrace of the past. "We do persist, whether we care to or not, with all our flaws and glory . . .," Mengestu writes. "If there is one thing that has to be true, it's this."



Kwok's often mesmerizing *Girl in Translation* is a simpler, more linear novel, blessed with a vivid central character and tremendous narrative drive. Like Kwok, 11-year-old Kimberly is an emigrant from Hong Kong — and, unlike Jonas, she is passionately driven to succeed.

She is also more embattled by external forces, facing not just a language barrier but a decrepit Brooklyn apartment crawling with roaches and mice, and an endlessly spiteful aunt who exacts every dime she can from Kim and her mother. We shiver with mother and child in that unheated apartment, where the cold was “like the way your skin feels after it's been slapped,” where it “crept down your throat, under your toes and between your fingers.” We feel the blistering heat in the garment sweatshop where both Kim and her mother work, as waves of steam roll off the presses.

School offers an escape route from poverty and isolation. At first, Kim's academic efforts are hindered by her struggles with the language, as well as hostility from classmates and teachers. Her widowed mother, who was a violinist and music teacher in Hong Kong, is supportive but astonishingly helpless, and Kim assumes a quasiparental role. She also finds, in classmate Annette,

a loyal, loving friend, and Kim's exceptional math and science talents quickly become apparent. A full scholarship vaults her into private school, and her dreams begin to seem within reach — until romantic complications threaten to drive her off course.

Kwok's reading of the segregated, insecure immigrant life is powerfully authentic. She does less well with her love story, though, which shades into melodrama. Kim falls for a fellow garment worker, who is sweet, smart, handsome, and crazy for her. But, having sacrificed an education to earn money, he seems confined to the working class she is determined to leave behind. Can this possibly end well?

“Sometimes,” Kim's mother tells her, “our fate is different from the one we imagined for ourselves.” But for Kim, brains are destiny, and the burden of marriage is a potential distraction. “I had an obligation to my ma and myself,” she explains. “I couldn't have changed who I was. I wish I could have.” Life won't be easy for her, but she, too, will persist, in all her flaws and glory.

Julia M. Klein, a cultural reporter and critic in Philadelphia, is a contributing editor at Columbia Journalism Review.

Stranger in a Strange Land // By Elizabeth Day

The Woman Who Fell from the Sky: An American Journalist in Yemen

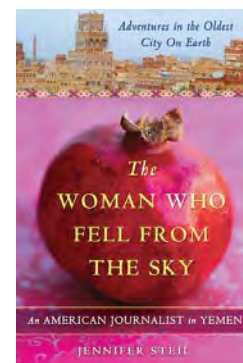
By Jennifer Steil (Broadway Books, 322 pages, \$26)

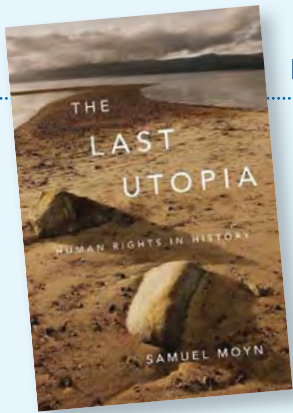
Jennifer Steil's parents, friends, and bartender were understandably baffled when, in September 2006, she left New York to become editor in chief of the English-language newspaper the *Yemen Observer*. At the time, she was in her late 30s and had been working as a senior editor at *The Week* magazine. By her own admission, she had spent years entangled in a series of hopeless love affairs and was not opposed to drink and sexy dresses. Why on earth would she choose to live in a poor, strict Muslim country in the Middle East where alcohol was prohibited, women wore the hijab, and the threat of terrorism was ever present? At her going-away party, Tommy the bartender summed up the general mood: “The next time I see you, you will be in a kidnap video.”

Judging from her lively memoir, *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky*, Steil '97JRN has never been one to worry too much about making a decision. Instead, having been to the Yemeni capital Sanaa for all of three weeks earlier in the year to run a training course for journalists, she breezily dismisses her parents' concern and packs her bags, driven by a liberal zeal to make the world a better place. “I imagined writing pieces that would trigger policy

changes, reduce terrorism, and alter the role of women in society,” she writes. “Oppressed peoples all over the world would beg me to come and transform their own press!”

It didn't quite turn out like that, of course, and Steil's writing is at its best when relating the jarring disconnect between her idealism and the frustrations of life in an ancient city. On her arrival, Steil is confronted with writers who can barely speak English, let alone understand the rigors of journalistic clarity, fact-checking, and objectivity. Her efforts to reform the paper are hampered by a proprietor who cares more about maintaining friendships with government cronies than cultivating an independent press. “It is difficult to pin down exact deadlines,” she writes, because when she asks a reporter if he can file his story by 1 p.m., “the answer is ‘*Insha'allah*. If God is willing.” The main reason for





Human Rights: Newer Than You Think

The book: *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Harvard University Press)

The author: Samuel Moyn, Columbia professor of history

Columbia Magazine: *The Last Utopia* is less a history of human rights than a history of the idea of human rights, which you date to the 1970s. That was the decade of the Helsinki Accords and Jimmy Carter's inaugural address, in which he declared America's commitment to human rights. But what about the Old Testament, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, and the antislavery movement?

Samuel Moyn: It's not that there weren't early sources, but at the level of common speech, the idea of international human rights doesn't become widespread until the 1970s. I resist the temptation to anchor it more securely to those old sources and movements.

CM: Was the civil rights movement in the U.S. not part of this continuum?

SM: It is true that some people in the human rights movement had been part of the civil rights movement or the antiwar movement. But one climaxes in the mid- to late '60s and the other by the early '70s. The international human-rights movement — at first organized around victims of totalitarianism behind the iron curtain and authoritarianism in the Southern Cone — doesn't achieve true prominence until 1977–78.

CM: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948.

SM: "Human rights" enters the language a little earlier with a couple of Franklin Roosevelt's speeches. I think FDR had in mind not international human rights, but a kind of welfarism. In the Atlantic Charter, the Allies tell the world they are fighting for a new model of society that would turn its back on 19th-century liberal economics and make room for freedom of speech and religion, and for social welfare. That is why the phrase doesn't take: There are

so many alternatives, like "welfare" or "social democracy."

The big question for the postwar world was: How do you construct a social welfare state? There is the communist option, and there is the debate about how to modify capitalism.

CM: Self-determination and anticolonialism were part of postwar thinking.

SM: That's right. Preceding the idea of human rights was the Wilsonian promise of self-determination in the Atlantic Charter. But the Allies' promise to end empire was dropped, and human rights emerge as a consolation prize.

CM: Human rights went up as self-determination went down? That sounds odd.

SM: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights doesn't include self-determination as a right. In the 1950s, when new states joined the UN and rose to authority in the General Assembly, they made self-determination the first right, over the objection of America and the West. There is an alliance between the new states and the Soviets on self-determination.

The late Columbia law professor Louis Henkin, in his one article on the matter in the 1960s, critiques the UN for having subsumed individual human rights into collective self-determination. In the North Atlantic world, the worry is that self-determination won't protect individuals.

CM: Some of the most dreadful abusers of human rights are former colonies.

SM: Yes. Many people say self-determination needs to be re-separated from human rights, or that we need to set human rights *against* self-determination.

CM: When did the Human Rights Commission, and Council, become so politicized?

SM: This is the story of the new states versus the U.S. and the old Allies. The old states have power in the Security Council. But the new states become hegemonic in the General Assembly, where they drive the project, very progressively in some ways: Without them, there would have been no human rights covenants.

But there is a double standard: When they think about human rights they think of anticolonialism and Israel. They rarely think about themselves.

CM: This year's Nobel Peace Prize went to one-time Columbia instructor Liu Xiaobo. The ham-fisted reaction of the Chinese government reminds me of the old Soviet Union.

SM: Human rights are an effective tool in cases of repressive or authoritarian regimes. In 1978, when Carter traveled to China, his association of the U.S. with human rights norms helped spark the formation of the first Chinese human-rights dissident group, which was inspired by earlier groups in the Eastern bloc. You could say that was the beginning of the tradition that led to the 2010 Nobel.

CM: Who grants human rights? Are they God-given, or are they granted by the state?

SM: That is a religious or philosophical question. We find commitments to justice and compassion in the Levitical commands and in Greek philosophy, and we cherish these values. But what is their grounding? The power of human rights since the 1970s has relied on our ability to champion rights without requiring that everyone agree on their sources. As Jacques Maritain said in 1946, "We agree about the rights but on condition that no one asks us why." — Michael B. Shavelson



JENNIFER STEIL

An editorial meeting of the *Yemen Observer* newspaper.

missed deadlines, aside from a casual attitude toward work, is that her male reporters spend their days chewing qat, a locally grown plant with amphetamine-like effects.

Steil's dedication and professional experience do manage to improve the *Observer*, however. The writing gets tighter and more accurate, reporters cover some real stories, and the paper even comes out on time.

Still, there are the tiresome daily problems for an unveiled Western woman: constant catcalls in the street, masturbating taxi drivers, and Yemeni men who fail to grasp that Steil's unmarried, childless status does not automatically make her either a whore or a freak of nature. Invited over to eat by her elderly neighbor Mohammed, Steil recalls: "They ask if I have a husband and I lie. They ask if I have children and I tell the truth. 'But maybe I would like some,' I say. This sends Mohammed's wife into fits of laughter. 'Maybe!' she says. 'Maybe!'"

Steil recounts such episodes with humor and verve, but perhaps her greatest asset is her ability to interweave the personal with the political. She uses her experience as a springboard into an examination of Yemeni culture and history, and as a result the prose is never dry, the narrative always engaging. She is particularly good on the treatment of women as second-class citizens: As a Westerner, Steil is at first impatient with their acquiescence to a highly patriarchal society. At the same time she finds that her female reporters are by far the most reliable and devoted members of staff. "This is partly because the women don't have the same sense of entitlement that the men do," she writes. "They feel fortunate

to have the opportunity to work." While the women generally have less training than the men — and can't even go to university, take a job, or stay out after dark without permission of a male relative — "they have the requisite will. . . . They arrive promptly and do not disappear for three or four hours during lunch."

Interestingly, Steil's perceptive analysis of other people's behavior does not seem to extend to her own. When, toward the end of the book, she falls in love with the British ambassador Tim Torlot, the discovery that he is already married barely seems to give her pause for thought. Instead, she is mesmerized by "the sparkliest blue eyes I have ever seen" and kisses him "full on the lips" at a party. His wife is given only the briefest of mentions, despite Steil's frequently decrying the unfairness of Yemeni men taking second spouses. When her friend Zhura — who is about to become a second wife — points out the parallels in their respective situations, Steil replies blithely, "Tim isn't keeping his first wife."

It is unfortunate that *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky* ends on this note. To conclude the book in the grip of an adulterous love affair seems to demean the rest of Steil's writing, shoehorning it into the traditional narrative arc of chick lit when it actually has much more to offer. Steil has produced an affectionate, insightful, and enlightening pen-portrait of modern-day Yemen. It did not need the addition of those sparkling blue eyes.

Elizabeth Day is a feature writer at the Observer newspaper in England. Her debut novel, Scissors Paper Stone, was just published by Bloomsbury.

The Country of Lost Things // By Steven G. Kellman

Sunset Park

By Paul Auster (Henry Holt and Company, 320 pages, \$25)

Paul Auster '70CC is contemporary literature's foremost connoisseur of missing persons. If this author, who titled his last novel *Invisible* (2009), were a biographer, he would be tracking the enigmatic exits of Jimmy Hoffa, Amelia Earhart, and the Roanoke colonists. In Auster's *The Book of Illusions* (2002), a filmmaker named Hector Mann fakes his death and secludes himself for 60 years within a compound in the New Mexico desert. The narrator of *The Locked Room* (1986) seeks to learn why his best friend vanished, abandoning a wife and child. Anna Blume, the protagonist of *In the Country of Last Things* (1987),

goes off in quest of her missing brother. In *Ghosts* (1986), a character named Black tells Blue the story of "Wakefield," Nathaniel Hawthorne's account of a man who walks away from his wife and his life and returns 20 years later.

Auster's latest runaway is 28-year-old Miles Heller. At the outset of *Sunset Park*, the author's 16th novel, Miles has been living in self-imposed exile for more than seven years. He bears heavy guilt over the death of his stepbrother, whom he pushed into the path of a car

when both were in their teens. That event caused Miles, a brilliant student and gifted athlete, to abjure everything he loved, including baseball. He eventually drops out of college and hits the road, wending his way to Florida, where he gets a gig making foreclosed houses habitable for new occupants. He pares his existence down to essentials, sans TV, computer, or radio. But he still peruses *The Baseball Encyclopedia* for Kabbalistic patterns, in the belief that "baseball is a universe as large as life itself, and therefore all things in life, whether good or bad, whether tragic or comic, fall within its domain." And he falls in love with Pilar Sanchez, a 17-year-old Cinderella with three wicked sisters and a love for literature.

Meanwhile, in Sunset Park, a working-class neighborhood in Brooklyn, an old friend of Miles named Bing Nathan lives as a squatter in an abandoned house across from the Green-Wood Cemetery. Described as "the warrior of outrage, the champion of discontent, the militant debunker of contemporary life who dreams of forging a new reality from the ruins of a failed world," Bing operates a shop in Park Slope called the Hospital for Broken Things. It's "a hole-in-the-wall storefront enterprise devoted to repairing objects from an era that has all but vanished from the face of the earth: manual typewriters, fountain pens, mechanical watches, vacuum-tube radios, record players, wind-up toys, gumball machines, and

rotary telephones." Bing convinces Ellen Brice, an artist specializing in erotic nudes, and Alice Bergstrom, a graduate student in English, to join him in his underground urban Brook Farm.

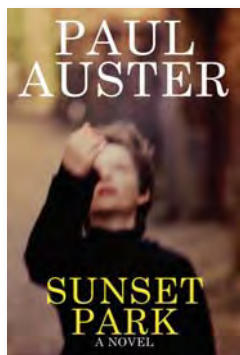
When the threat of prison for pedophilia persuades Miles to flee Florida until his beloved Pilar comes of legal age, he heads to Brooklyn and becomes one of the Sunset Park Four, a sodality of lost souls who have discarded more conventional lives.

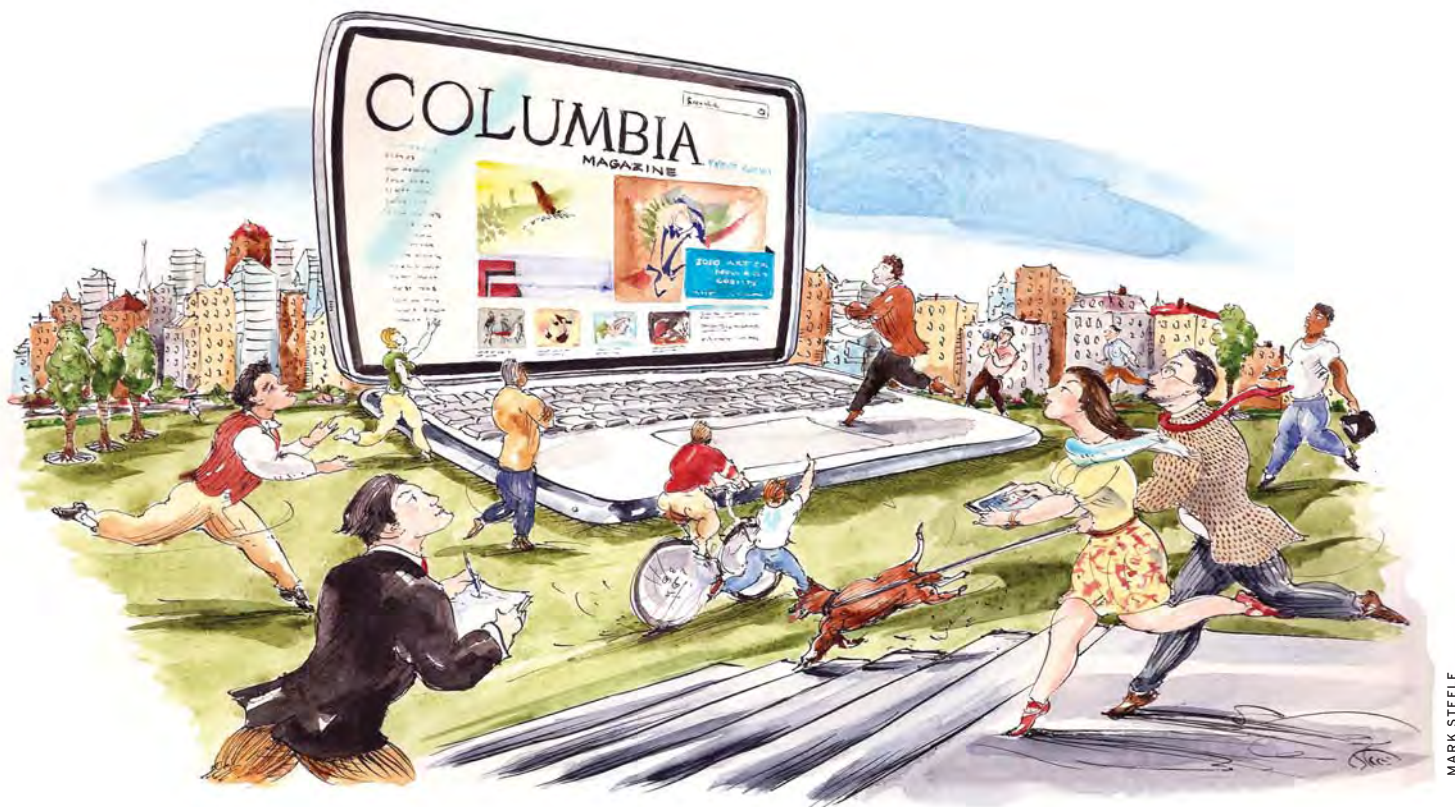
Though the novel is presented in third person through the perspective of each of the principal players, it is Miles, a charismatic but elusive figure whom Bing calls "one of the anointed" — and with whom everyone, including Bing, is in love — who dominates the book. Still, Miles's 62-year-old father, a book publisher, also demands the reader's attention. Amid the industry's slide into commercialism, the perpetually insolvent publishing house that Morris Heller founded 35 years ago continues to champion works of literary merit. One of Morris's writers is his friend Renzo Michaelson, who has been publishing with Heller Books since its first list appeared, when he was struggling to pay his rent and make his mark. Renzo is now a prolific and illustrious author who is translated and honored throughout the world. Yet, weary of fame, Renzo echoes the novel's themes when he declares: "I just want to disappear."

But Auster refuses to let him disappear, assigning Renzo a position that magnifies his own prominence: the vice presidency of PEN American Center. Alice, the most grounded of the Sunset Park Four, gets a job with that organization's Freedom to Write program, helping coordinate a campaign to free Liu Xiaobo, the real-life imprisoned Chinese writer who was named this year's recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, surely after Auster's novel went to press.

Auster's work is celebrated — and sometimes slighted — for its formal innovation. He is a master of metafiction, cunningly self-conscious novels with multiple layers that fold back into themselves. However, dispensing with postmodern intricacies, *Sunset Park* demonstrates Auster's power as a storyteller and creator of character. Ellen Brice, a practitioner of kinky art and sex, is Auster's least successful creation, but she articulates the ambition that *Sunset Park*, populated by virtuosos of disappearance and shifting identity, wondrously fulfills: "to convey the miraculous strangeness of being alive — no more than that, as much as all that."

Steven G. Kellman is a professor of comparative literature at the University of Texas at San Antonio and vice president for membership of the National Book Critics Circle.





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LETTERS

Continued from page 5

capsizing more than a century of court-blessed censorship.”

Stephen F. Rohde '69LAW
Los Angeles, CA

WARMING WAR, CONT'D

I am surprised that you did not provide a rebuttal to James T. Quattlebaum and James R. Ashlock (Letters, Fall 2010). The two took exception to Lee Bollinger's Commencement statement that students should confront the “denial of expertise” of those who “reject the consensus of the scientific community about human-induced climate change.”

I am sure that Bollinger was not speaking just on his own behalf, but on behalf of the scientists and researchers at the Earth Institute, the business school, and other University centers that not only are part of that scientific consensus, but have partnered with many thousands of academics and scientists around the world to bring this global economic and environmental challenge to the attention of the world.

In fact, recent studies by noted economists such as Nicholas Stern, professor at the London School of Economics, former chief economist of the World Bank, and economic adviser to the Bank of England, indicate that ignoring man-made climate change could lead to a reduction of 5 to 20 percent of annual GDP, whereas managing and mitigating it would only cost 1 to 2 percent of GDP and result in a much more energy-efficient and effective global economy.

In terms of the consensus of other scientists, the American Geophysical Union, which includes 50,000 earth, ocean, and atmospheric scientists, among others, and whose first mission is to value the scientific method (rational skepticism), has stated since 2003 that “human activities are increasingly altering the Earth's climate. These effects add to natural influences that have been present over Earth's history. Scientific evidence strongly indicates that natural influences cannot explain the rapid increase in global near-surface tem-

peratures observed during the second half of the 20th century.”

I would also point out that Bollinger and his administration are leading a major effort to make the University's physical plant more energy-efficient, thus combating climate change impacts and reducing future operating costs significantly, so more of Columbia's budget can be spent on education rather than on energy/fuel purchases.

John L. Cusack
Partner, Energy Harvest Partners
Eastchester, NY

LEARNING TO READ

Nemesis, Philip Roth's newest book and one of his darkest, made me think about my freshman reading of the Greek plays, especially the *Agamemnon* section of the *Oresteia* trilogy. When I read those plays I was an innocent 16- and 17-year-old with a flimsy understanding of how random tragedy could befall anyone. The concept of hubris leading to nemesis was an abstraction that I could barely grasp. But the exposure to ideas that at the time were beyond my experience or clear understanding equipped me to identify many as universals as I matured. It is education such as one is privileged to experience at Columbia College that enables one to attach a proper significance to experience of all sorts. Evaluation of literature, music, art, and, above all, personal experience are all enhanced.

I remember Lionel Trilling saying that if you don't live in your time, you live in no time. This may be true, but to understand your own time you have to be equipped to evaluate it, and in order to do this you must have a broad and deep education.

I shall always look with affection and gratitude upon the propitious beginning of this process at Columbia College, which equipped me to see the line from Oedipus to Lear to Bucky Cantor, the protagonist of *Nemesis*.

Anson K. Kessler '47CC
Hendersonville, NC

MERCURY UNMASKED

In his informative article “Autism, Unmasked” (Summer 2010), David J. Craig winds down

by claiming that the theory regarding measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccines leading to autism is now widely dismissed by scientists. A moment later Craig contradicts himself by stating that, according to Columbia researchers, there's better evidence to suggest that autism results from “exposure to heavy metals like mercury and lead” and other toxins.

I'm astonished that Craig failed to mention that mercury has been used as a preservative in children's vaccines for decades. Of course it's not the MMR vaccine that causes autism, but it may very well be the mercury in the vaccine that causes autism. The correlation between the two is still a major suspect among many respected scientists and researchers. Even the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which shares board members with pharmaceutical companies, now states on its Web site that “in July 1999, the Public Health Service agencies, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and vaccine manufacturers agreed that thimerosal should be reduced or eliminated in vaccines as a precautionary measure.” (See www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Concerns/thimerosal/index.html.)

The precautionary measure they agreed to is probably in anticipation of the endless civil and criminal lawsuits that will be filed once the truth comes out. It took years of legal battles, and an army of autistic casualties, just to force the CDC, Food and Drug Administration, and American Dental Association (ADA) to lower the mercury levels in vaccines, and to warn us, through caution labels, about mercury toxicity. Yet vaccines with mercury are still mercilessly administered to children in third-world countries. Mercury was used in some of last winter's swine flu vaccine.

There is also a barrage of litigation through citizen-health activists (www.ToxicTeeth.org) against the ADA, which is slowly changing its mercury guidelines while continuing to insist that there is nothing wrong with mercury-amalgam fillings. To the contrary, I know the evidence of the danger is out there. It's also in me.

I am an extremely healthy, active 57-year-old male who lost his thyroid at age 50 after

having nine mercury fillings removed over approximately a half year. It took an array of specialists more than two years — along with my own detective work on the Web — to figure out that the mercury entered my thyroid and was cannibalized by my own healthy immune system. It will take a few more years for the scientists to prove the cause of autism, as the parents of autistic children continue to push past the obfuscation of the medical establishment.

I must fault Craig for leaving out the most important tidbit that his article should have informed us about.

Zev Lewinson
Teaneck, NJ

David J. Craig responds:

The CDC insists that there is no evidence to support the idea that the trace amounts of mercury found in MMR vaccine contribute to autism, and it cautions parents against forgoing the vaccination of their children. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Concerns/Autism/Index.html.

DON'T ASK, DO TELL

In August I attended a wonderful brunch put on by Montse Ferrer '06CC and the Columbia University Club of Washington, D.C., for local students starting Columbia this fall.

All the students impressed me with their intelligence and enthusiasm. But I was also struck by the frequency with which many of them voiced their declarative sentences as questions: "I'm excited about going to Columbia?" "The professors sound great?" (I hasten to add that from none of the students did I hear anything like, "I'll major in, like, math.")

Why would such accomplished, lively students inject gratuitous doubt into their speech? Say, don't ask. That speech standard would make Columbia students much more powerful and engaging.

Still, with whatever inflection, I'm sure they'll voice cogent ideas at Columbia without question.

Hank Wallace '70LAW
Washington, DC



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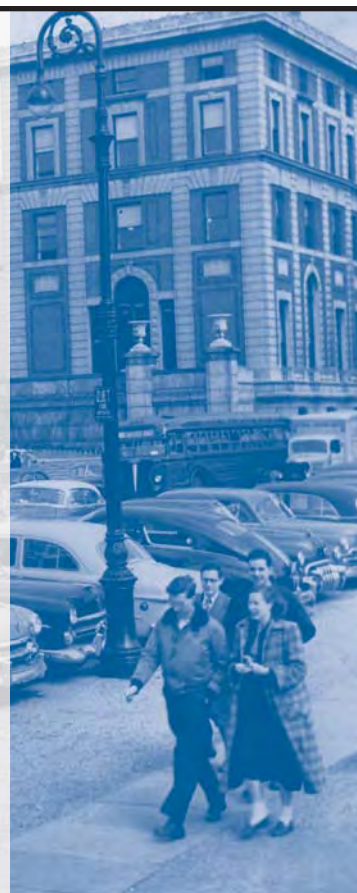
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College Intrigues



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Ah, for those pre-Internet days, when students mocked their professors in crude four-panel cartoons. From the moment Robert Harpur arrived at King's College in 1761 as a professor of math and natural philosophy, he became an object of student scorn, and, inevitably, the subject of a piece of mischief drawn in color and hung for public consumption in College Hall. This naughty satire, made in 1766, is one of dozens of items to be showcased in a yearlong exhibition called *Columbia University: 100 Years of Collecting*, beginning February in Butler Library to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the University Archives.

The cartoon's title, "College Intrigues, or the Amors of Patrick Pagan," reflects the disparagement found in the picture: bigotry (references to Harpur's Irish birth), sexual corruption (Harpur furnishes a certain Miss Myng with spruce beer — "You need not fear, Mistress, the Juce is verrey weak and simple" — and gets her into bed), high scandal (a pregnancy, credited to the beer), and crowning disgrace, as Harpur arranges for an abortion, and the stricken Miss Myng,

in bed, cries to the doctor, "That pale face man has ruined me."

Yikes.

According to David C. Humphrey in his book *From King's College to Columbia, 1746–1800*, the College governors identified the main culprit as a senior named John Vardill. The governors demanded that Vardill and his collaborators produce evidence to support their claims against the professor. They couldn't, and were duly punished. But Harpur, the lone Presbyterian on an Anglican faculty, and a stern disciplinarian, continued to suffer verbal abuse from students. Nine months after the cartoon incident, he resigned his professorship.

The exhibition will be presented in three installments inside the Chang Octagon in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library in Butler. The first, on display from February 1 to May 27, will highlight the growth of King's College to Columbia University, says university archivist Susan Hamson. Alongside the rendering of Harpur's alleged extracurricular activities will be such artifacts as a matriculation book bearing the names of Alexander

Hamilton (a student of Harpur's), John Jay, and Gouverneur Morris, and the *Book of Misdemeanours in King's College, 1771–1775*, a compendium of student infractions, such as stealing teacups, absenting oneself from prayers, and spitting on the cook. (There is no equivalent register for wayward professors.)

The University Archives was officially established in 1991, when the University Secretary's office merged its records with the historical collection known as Columbiana, which was housed in Low Library. In 2007, the archives were moved to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library in Butler.

It might surprise Harpur that his brush with John Vardill should be remembered 250 years later, but his reputation survived the travesty. After leaving the classroom in 1767, Harpur stayed on at the College as a private tutor, and later became a regent and trustee. He was also the College's first librarian.

Vardill, a devout Anglican and staunch Loyalist, joined the faculty of King's College in 1773 — while spying for the British.

Now that's college intrigue.

— Paul Hond

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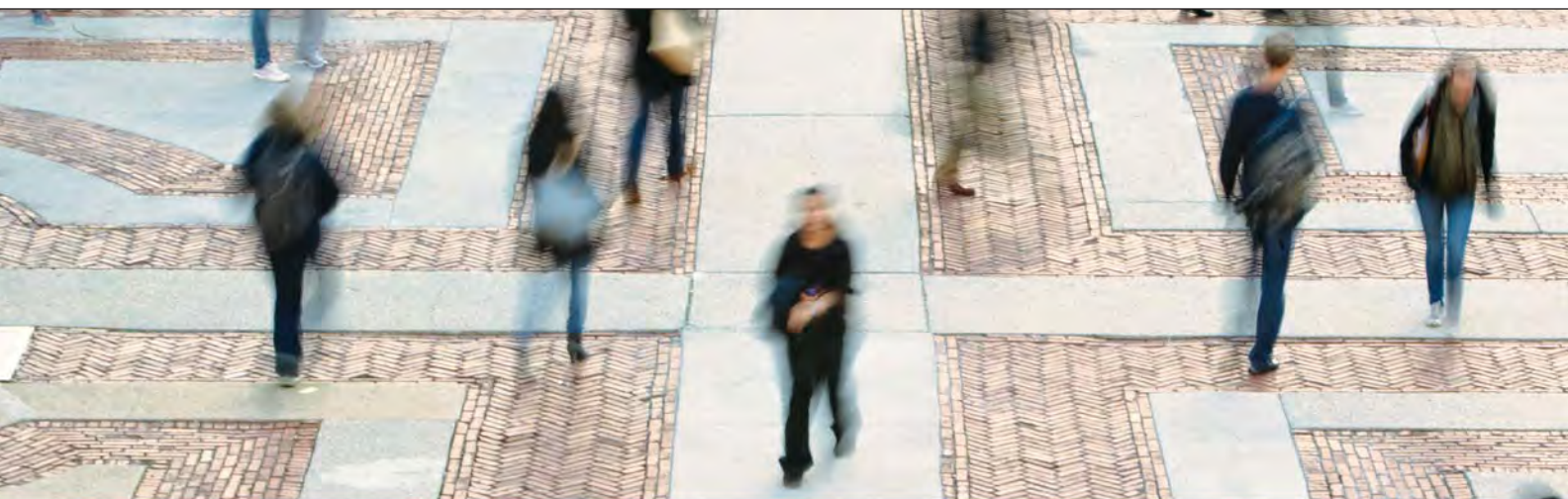
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