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Jean-Christophe Cloutier '10GSAS is completing his PhD in English and comparative literature at Columbia. His essays, reviews, and translations have appeared in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, *Cinema Journal*, *Public Books*, *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels*, *A Time for the Humanities*, and *Umbr(a)*.
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Paul Elie '91SOA, for many years a senior editor at Farrar, Straus and Giroux, is a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. His first book, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own*, was a 2003 National Book Critics Circle Award finalist. **>> Page 58**



Nalini Jones '01SOA is the author of the short-story collection *What You Call Winter*. Jones, a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship and a Pushcart Prize, teaches in the graduate writing program at Fairfield University. Her fiction has appeared in *One Story*, *Elle India*, and *Ontario Review*.
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Katie Orlinsky '12JRN is a photographer who works regularly for the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and nonprofit organizations around the world. She won a 2011 Emerging Vision Incentive award from the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute for her work documenting Mexico's drug war. **>> Page 26**



Basharat Peer '07JRN is the author of *Curfewed Night*, an account of the Kashmir conflict that won India's Vodafone Crossword Book Award. He has written about South Asian politics for the *New Yorker*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Granta*, the *Financial Times*, *n + 1*, and the *Guardian*. **>> Page 54**

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Executive Vice President for University
Development and Alumni Relations
Fred Van Sickle

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Tim McGowan

Chief Editorial Adviser
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Contributing Editor
Eric McHenry

Art Director
Eson Chan

Assistant to the Editor
Nicole Williams

Editorial Assistants
Michelle Marchese, Elisabeth Sherman

Mailing Address
Columbia Magazine
Columbia Alumni Center
622 W. 113th Street, MC 4521
New York, NY 10025
Tel. 212-851-4155
Fax 212-851-1950
magazine@columbia.edu
www.magazine.columbia.edu

Address and Archive Assistance
assistmag@columbia.edu
212-851-4155

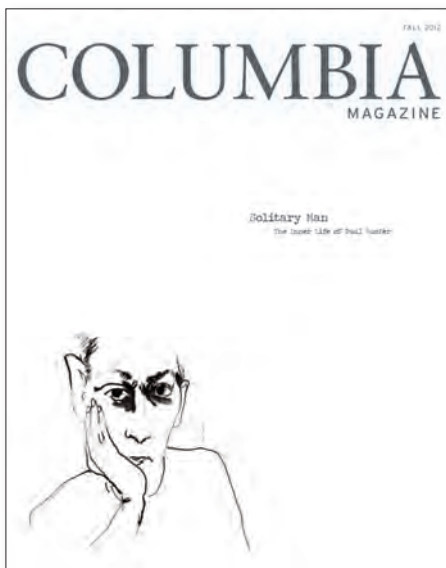
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letters

THINK TANK

Congratulations on David J. Craig's excellent story, "The Brain Trust," in the Fall 2012 issue. Put into that context, I was awed by the boldness of President Lee Bollinger's vision: buying up seventeen acres of prime real estate next door to the Columbia campus; razing the apartments, warehouses, and auto-repair shops; erecting an elegant nine-story, 450,000-square-foot office building with sixty laboratories devoted to neuroscience; and filling those laboratories with the best minds in America.

I'm even more awed by how brilliantly President Bollinger implemented that vision in just a short decade on the job. The first half is accomplished, and the second half seems to be proceeding right on schedule.

In the decades to come, Bollinger's legacy will be to have established Columbia University as one of the world's leaders in neuroscience.

Eric Newhouse '72JRN
Charleston, WV

"The Brain Trust" reminded me how scientific marketing has evolved from thought leadership based on ingenuity, hard work, and unassailable integrity to a world of hyperbole and showmanship equal to any P. T. Barnum enterprise.

This article, however, transcended even this new standard. What caught my eye in particular was the narrative of Charles Zuker. Now, there is no question in my mind that Zuker is an outstanding human being and an illuminating teacher who is a beacon for Columbia's efforts to unravel the nexus of human intelligence. But do we really need to know about his spectacular oceanfront home in Del Mar? And do we really need to know that it was featured on the cover of a marketing brochure? What all this adds up to is boiler-room marketing of what should be an impeccable research effort; we are talking about the greatest initiative in history to unravel the complexities of the human psyche, after all — and we all know how pure the human soul is.

Attila Mady '92PS
Santa Rosa, CA

As a retired scholar of neuroscience and behavior, I was delighted to read David J. Craig's "The Brain Trust" in your Fall 2012 issue and to learn about Columbia University's Mind, Brain, and Behavior Initiative (MBBI).

MBBI reminded me of the NRP (Neurosciences Research Program) at MIT, created in 1962 by MIT professor Francis O. Schmitt. In 1963, Schmitt hired me, then a

founding editor of *International Science & Technology* in New York, as the NRP's director of communications, primarily to help him edit the proceedings of a month-long intensive study program planned for 1966.

Schmitt hoped that the book's broad scope, from mind and brain down to cell and molecule, along with its rare interdisciplinary nature, would significantly advance the understanding of the human brain by helping to synthesize the finding of leading investigators in the various disciplines, who did not communicate much at that time. To help him prepare the intensive study program, he recruited a dozen experts from around the world as nonresident NRP associates, who met at MIT several times a year and who, in the intervals between those meetings, chaired two-day workshops held at the NRP with a dozen or so vanguard specialists on hot topics of research.

To the three codirectors of the MBBI, I suggest, as I did to Schmitt, that they not only sponsor such occasional workshops, but also publish summaries of them, written by the workshop chairmen, in order to make available the state of the art to others. Schmitt agreed, and I then became the founding editor of the *Neurosciences Research Program Bulletin* (the first publication to use "neurosciences" in its title).

LETTERS

The four to six issues per year were, for two decades, very popular around the neuroscience world. During those years, three more books were also published that reported the proceedings of further NRP intensive study programs, and one of the MBBI's current co-directors, Eric Kandel, was one of the NRP's later associates, along with other Nobelists like Francis Crick and Gerald Edelman.

Theodore Melnechuk '48CC
Amherst, MA

THE BROAD VIEW

Regarding your news article "Mailman School introduces new broad-based curriculum" (Fall 2012), I wish to respond that this is not new at all. Rather, it is the way it used to be when I attended the school from 1973 until 1975. I was a health-administration major and had a wonderful mentor in Lowell Bellin. I was a doer, and wanted to learn everything I could. Yes, I took vital statistics, biostatistics, epidemiology, and systems analysis; but I also had training in the history and philosophy of public health, emotions of the life cycle, public-health writing, health insurance, financial-resource management in hospitals, health-facilities planning and design, and long-term care. After a first career as a public-welfare social worker in Connecticut, I did my residency at HIP and LaGuar-

dia Hospital, which prepared me well for a second career as an auditor, manager, and policy writer in the New York State Social Services Department, Health Department, and Office of Medicaid Inspector General. The many principles I learned helped me to work with lawyers, doctors, administrative-law judges, and health-care providers. I understood laws and regulations, and was able to formulate policy. As an auditor, I was able to deal effectively with hospitals and long-term-care institutions.

The school provided me this wonderful education, although the facilities were meager. We used the Presbyterian Hospital's library and had our classes on 178th Street in an old building that also housed City Welfare. Most of my studying was done at home.

I imagine the curriculum is new to the incoming classes, and intimidating, as Mailman professor Melissa Begg says. But jobs require versatility. He who gets too compartmentalized is the one who will get passed over for promotions or even be let go.

Robert A. Shapiro '75PH
Slingerlands, NY

OCCUPY ROBOTS

Surely a man of Joseph Stiglitz's learning is aware that the reason productivity is going up during the current recession ("Of the 1%, for the 1%," Reviews, Fall 2012) is not that the wicked employers are wringing more work out of the desperate workers. Rather, it is because of the increasing use of computerized technology in both offices and factories. The latest factories are using computers and advanced robots to do the work once done by blue-collar laborers. This is a trend that will continue and accelerate here and abroad. The factory workers of the future — the very near future — will have to have advanced skills in math and engineering and not just big muscles and strong backs, and far fewer of them will be needed. That is the real problem: to give the proper training to those entering the work force and to find new ways to employ those no longer needed in factories. What to do with all the blacksmiths and stable

boys now that the automobile has replaced the horse and carriage?

Carol Crystle '64GSAS, '70TC
Chicago, IL

FRACK ATTACK II

It is interesting to note that the visceral attacks against Paul Hond's article about Josh Fox (Letters, Fall 2012) are coming from entrenched and biased people in the energy field.

I suppose that the earthquakes in Ohio and Texas attributed to fracking are not an adverse environmental consequence of this procedure, nor are the contamination of water supplies and the increased asthmatic attacks of the nearby residents.

David B. Gross '63SEAS
Morganville, NJ

Kudos to *Columbia Magazine* for "The Gas Menagerie," by Paul Hond, (Summer 2012).

Although burning natural gas as an energy source has distinct environmental advantages versus the use of oil and coal, fracking as an extraction technique is ugly both for its visual impact and environmental legacy. Aggressive federal, state, and local regulation of this industry is long overdue.

Of those who wrote letters complaining about the article, as presented in the subsequent issue, it appears nearly all are financially benefiting from the fracking industry. One can safely assume there are no drilling rigs operating in proximity to their residences.

On behalf of those who look beyond short-term profits, I thank *Columbia Magazine*, Josh Fox, and Paul Hond for their reporting efforts.

Richard Brown '82BUS
Scottsdale, AZ

I set aside the Summer 2012 issue while I considered submitting a comment about "The Gas Menagerie," and while I was procrastinating, the article yielded at least eleven letters to the editor. Of those, only two express concern about fracking, the natural-gas extraction process currently

Questions? Comments?

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under review in New York State, i.e., high-volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing (a process developed within the past twenty-five years and which should be distinguished from older forms of geological fracturing).

I would like to add to the concern about hydrofracking by offering excerpts from two texts. One is very recent. The other is several decades old.

In its 2011 statement regarding hydrofracking and related proposed regulations, staff of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) suggested that “the watersheds associated with unfiltered water supplied to the New York City and Syracuse areas . . . should be off-limits to surface drilling for natural gas using high-volume hydraulic fracturing technology.” Clearly, NYSDEC staff recognize that mishaps related to hydrofracking can be devastating. Perhaps the potential benefits of fracking do not outweigh the risks to the welfare of the citizenry in any part of New York State.

That brings me to the older statement. In his 1962 book *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, Harry M. Caudill deals with the predatory practices of the Kentucky coal industry. Writing at a time when coal production had been nominally under federal and state regulation for decades, Caudill still could warn: “And we just can’t afford to sit back and watch all that [land] be destroyed so a few people can get rich now. One of these days the dear old federal government is going to have to come in and spend billions of dollars just to repair the damage that’s already been done. And guess who will have the machines and the workmen to do the job? The same coal operators who made the mess in the first place will be hired to fix it back, and the taxpayers will bear the costs.”

Just substitute “gas” for “coal” and New York’s Southern Tier for Caudill’s Cumberland Plateau.

Leo S. Levy ’64CC
Albany, NY

I am responding to Bob Getty’s letter on fracking, and specifically to his comment

Key to Abbreviations: Each of the following school affiliation abbreviations refers to the respective school’s current name; for example, GSAS — for Graduate School of Arts and Sciences — is used for alumni of the Graduate Faculties, which became GSAS in 1979. The only code not associated with a particular school is HON, which designates that person the recipient of an honorary degree from the University.

| CODE | SCHOOL |
|-------|---|
| BC | Barnard College |
| BUS | Graduate School of Business |
| CC | Columbia College |
| DM | College of Dental Medicine |
| GS | School of General Studies |
| GSAPP | Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation |
| GSAS | Graduate School of Arts and Sciences |
| JRN | Graduate School of Journalism |
| JTS | Jewish Theological Seminary |
| KC | King’s College |
| LAW | School of Law |
| LS | School of Library Service |
| NRS | School of Nursing |
| OPT | School of Optometry |
| PH | Mailman School of Public Health |
| PHRM | School of Pharmaceutical Sciences |
| PS | College of Physicians and Surgeons |
| SCE | School of Continuing Education |
| SEAS | Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science |
| SIPA | School of International and Public Affairs |
| SOA | School of the Arts |
| SW | School of Social Work |
| TC | Teachers College |
| UTS | Union Theological Seminary |

that “global-warming theory and all the other unprovable social/political myths” are “an Al Gore joke on our country.”

Global warming is real. A substantial human contribution is demonstrable with available data. Al Gore is largely correct on the facts. Columbia scientists are among the contributors to the research. And we regard the issue as so important that global climate change has featured regularly as a theme in *Frontiers of Science*, Columbia’s Core Curriculum science course that since 2004 has been a requirement for all Columbia College students. If Getty and others holding his views wish to learn more on this topic, I shall be happy to correspond.

Nicholas Christie-Blick
Professor of Earth and
Environmental Sciences,

Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory

I enjoyed reading the Fall issue of *Columbia Magazine* but was greatly disappointed by several of the letters to the editor. They reflect the increasing polarization in society, with its accompanying lack of reasoned

discussion of issues. The typical posture appears to be that if you don’t agree with my (often doctrinaire) position, you must be a left-wing nut or a right-wing conspirator. From either vantage point, this reeks of the McCarthy era and is hardly conducive to substantive dialogue. Neither side is immune from the virus of selective use of data, overreaching interpretation, and blanket accusations. Whatever has gone wrong with the education they presumably received at Columbia?

Eugene Davidson ’55GSAS
Boynton Beach, FL

CORRECTION

In the Fall issue, a news article entitled “Mailman School introduces new broad-based curriculum” inaccurately stated that the school’s curricular changes apply to all Mailman students: in fact, they apply only to those in the school’s master of public health program. The article also incorrectly reported that former Mailman professor Ian Lapp left the school in 2012; he actually left in 2011. *Columbia* regrets these errors.



March Madness

It's been said of the Columbia Lions that if they didn't have Sid Luckman '39CC, they'd have no luck at all. But with the arrival of new head coach Peter "We Will Not Be Defined by the Past" Mangurian, who led the improved 2012 Lions to a 3–7 record, the team has received its marching orders. The goal is excellence.

Will the band follow suit?

Tough call. Sure, the Columbia University Marching Band has made its share of fumbles, incompletions, and last-second scrambles. Sure, when the Lions lost to Cornell in 2011, giving the team an 0–9 record that threatened to produce its first winless season since 1987, the band performed a send-up of "Roar, Lion, Roar" that began, *We always lose lose lose / By a lot and sometimes by a little* — leading the athletics department to ban the band from the final game against Brown. But don't say this group can't find the end zone: after nearly four years of research, the Columbia

University Band Alumni Association has compiled a comprehensive database of its hundreds of living graduates and is establishing a nonprofit foundation to provide financial support for the students' antics.

What took so long? "We just never got our act together," said association president Samantha Rowan '96BC.

On October 19, Homecoming eve, more than seventy-five active band members, former ones ("bandcestors"), and friends gathered for the first time in the Columbia Alumni Center. The evening's festivities were set against the backdrop of a display-case exhibition of marching-band memorabilia curated by Dan Carlinsky '65CC, '66JRN; J. Donald Smith '65CC; and Stephanie Tarras '10BC. Among the clippings and posters and pictures was a 1904 photograph of the eight young men — seven undergraduates and a high-school clarinetist — who founded the band that year. Surely those gentlemen could not

have anticipated that their humble ensemble would someday create such socially engaged spectacles as the 1979 birth-control show, immortalized in a newspaper photo showing the band in the formation of a chastity belt. Steve Holtje '83CC recalled a tribute to the rhythm method in which he and his compatriots formed a calendar. "Given the band's geometric skills, it probably wasn't recognizable," he said.

Former head manager Stan Adelman '67CC remarked that the band stopped marching in precise formations and began its familiar "scrambling" technique in 1964 when they got to the Yale Bowl just fifteen minutes before the half. There was no time to drill. "The drum major blew the bugle call, we went on and off in five minutes, and that was the beginning of the scramble," Adelman said. "It worked so well we kept it in. We knew we couldn't take the field with a two-hundred-piece band, so we decided we had to do something different."

"It's a unique sense of humor," said band member Alison Murdoch '16CC, who uses a drumstick to beat a pot adorned with stickers advocating the legalization of another kind of pot. (She chose this particular vessel, she said, because of its "very good diversity of sounds.") This is a group that plays such other quasi instruments as the washboard and the "world-famous len-thopipe" (as in "length of pipe") and celebrates touchdowns by performing pushups under the whip of head manager Peter Andrews '14CC. Yes, the whip.

Perhaps a strain of sadomasochism is to be expected, given the gridiron history, but bandcestors can also point to a tradition of insufficient funds, a paucity of instruments, inadequate rehearsal space, and poor togs, which at one point included discarded Coast Guard outfits. Once, in the late 1980s, just three band members — on violin, kazoo, and cymbals — showed up to play and form a "C" at halftime. "The three of us lay down in staple shape," said violinist Catherine Censor '90CC. "I broke two strings."

The high jinks of the self-proclaimed "cleverest band in the world" have long extended beyond Baker Field (now the Robert K. Kraft Field). In 1994, the band played outside the Ed Sullivan Theater, demanding admission to the *Late Show with David Letterman*. That got the host's attention. "You know how in your heart of hearts," Letterman told the audience, "everybody really hates marching bands."

He was just kidding. He let the band march through the studio, and, seeing its mismatched attire, which included an inner tube and a cow outfit, he delivered a \$2,500 check (the money went toward new sweat-ers). Every April 15, members serenade last-minute income-tax filers at the main New York post office across from Penn Station. And, of course, the band noisily storms Butler Library twice a year on the night before the organic-chemistry final in what the *Spectator* this semester called one of the "best Columbia arts traditions."

A rich legacy, sure, but one not always appreciated. A 1951 report issued by concerned alumni declared, "There is absolutely no incentive for a student in Columbia College to become a member of the band." And though the athletics department reversed its decision to bar the band from the 2011 season finale after band manager Jose Delgado '12CC apologized for "the incident" involving "Roar, Lion, Roar" (the Lions, blessedly, won the game, to finish 1–9), the charges of poor taste were nothing new. In 1968, in a letter to the athletics department, Joseph Lang '19CC assailed the players for calling Vice President Hubert Humphrey a "soda jerk," suggesting that "last Saturday's garbage might well have been composed by the SDS, so vicious and vile was the content, and perhaps it was." He concluded, "Do what a band is supposed to do: MAKE MUSIC!"

The day after the Alumni Center reception, at the Homecoming game against

Dartmouth at Kraft Field, the Lions took a 10–7 lead into halftime. Then something else peculiar happened. Figures in blue-and-white rugby shirts darted onto the field and raced chaotically around each other, while the announcer paid tribute to the visitors from New Hampshire:

"This year the rush yield was higher than expected, meaning that an estimated 99.99999 percent of the Dartmouth population decided to go Greek! Of course, this has nothing to do with Hanover's social scene. Everyone knows that Dartmouth students rush frats because a constant flow of cheap beer is the closest thing Hanover has to running water!"

Then, "in honor of all the Dartmouth pledges who will be blackballed," the scurrying members congealed into a pentagonal structure somewhat resembling a frat house. Then they played Michael Jackson's "Beat It." (Then Dartmouth beat Columbia, 21–16.)

According to Peter Andrews, today's bandcestors applaud the current group's edginess. "A lot of the alumni want us to push the envelope even more," he said. "They say, 'In *my* day, we burned Baker Field to the ground.'"

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

View a slideshow of band memorabilia.
www.magazine.columbia.edu/band



Inherit the Wind (and Rain)

Newborns, welcome to planet Earth. We're sorry for the mess.

Here's the situation: seven million children under the age of five die of preventable causes each year. One-third of humanity lives in countries where drinking-water supplies are under stress. Carbon emissions are

at an all-time high, and Arctic ice cover is in rapid retreat. Last year, 2011, was a record year for floods, droughts, and wildfires. And in a mere dozen years, Earth's human population will increase by one billion.

These were some of the facts imparted by the speakers at the 2012 State of the

Planet Conference, held by Columbia's Earth Institute before eight hundred people (and another two thousand by webcast) in Lerner Hall on October 11. The four-hour program took a hard look at the many threats now staring down humanity, Earth, and life as we know it.

For Jeffrey D. Sachs, the Earth Institute's director, the day's topic may have felt particularly personal.

"Jeff Sachs became a grandfather last night," said keynote speaker Jan Eliasson, deputy secretary-general of the United Nations. "I say it not only to congratulate you," Eliasson continued, addressing a grinning Sachs in the front row, "but to remind us what this is all about: our grandchildren. They're the reason we have to make life acceptable, and even pleasant, and in the best case wonderful for Siena and her colleagues and friends when she takes over and sits in this hall some years from now."

Throughout the day, speakers did their best to find upsidesto desperate situations. Christiana Figueres, the executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and one of many speakers to appear via video, said that melting ice, droughts, and wildfires are raising public awareness of the climate crisis.

"Now we have 70 percent of the population in the United States that recognizes

that climate change is occurring," Figueres said. The proportion of believers is higher in the rest of the world, she reported: 89 percent in Europe, 86 percent in India, and 93 percent in China.

On a day when technological solutions were in the spotlight, Figueres fell prey to technical glitches: seemingly unable to hear anyone in the hall, she continued speaking for five minutes after the moderator, *BBC World News* anchor Laura Trevelyan, asked her twice to conclude her remarks, prompting nervous laughter from the audience. But mostly, the technology worked, allowing speakers from as far away as Nigeria, Kazakhstan, and Brazil to talk about sustainability efforts in their regions.

James Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies at Columbia, found a silver lining to America's rising gasoline prices.

"As long as fossil fuels are the cheapest energies, we'll keep burning them and we won't solve the problem," he said. "You have to get people to understand

that it's in their interest to have an honest price on fossil fuels so that the alternatives can compete."

As for Sachs, he didn't share any thoughts about his granddaughter with the audience — at least not explicitly. But he drew the day's most enthusiastic applause with a diatribe against the fossil-fuel industry, lobbyists, and the op-ed page of the *Wall Street Journal*.

"So, who runs the show?" he said, his voice rising. "The companies. What drives the companies? Of course their profit motive. What underpins what the companies do? Their technologies. If the technologies can be made sustainable, we can find a happy solution." He stated that the whole economy is based on a fossil fuel-based energy sector, "and there is no lobby in the world more powerful than Big Coal, Big Oil, and Big Natural Gas. We face that in the *Wall Street Journal* pages every day.

"We need new technologies, we need practical solutions, we need the corporate propaganda to stop," he said.

For the sake of our grandkids.

— Douglas Quenqua

The Real McKay

Our detective story concerns not Clouseau and the Pink Panther, but Cloutier and the Pink Palace — the nickname for the pink-walled rooms of Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library. It was there, in the spring of 2009, that Jean-Christophe Cloutier, an intern archivist, was helping to organize the papers of renegade publisher Samuel L. Roth. As Cloutier catalogued another of Roth's floppy, flaking black binders, he paused, struck by the white card pasted on the cover. The card bore an author's name and a title. Inside the folder was a yellowed manuscript.

Cloutier was familiar with Claude McKay, the manuscript's apparent author

and a leading light of the Harlem Renaissance. In 2000, Cloutier, a Québécois Canadian, had spent a summer volunteering in a library in Linstead, Jamaica, where he read *Songs of Jamaica*, McKay's first book of poetry. Later, in grad school at SUNY-Buffalo, he encountered McKay's prose, including his most famous work, the 1928 novel *Home to Harlem*. But the manuscript in his hands, titled *Amiable with Big Teeth: A Novel of the Love Affair between the Communists and the Poor Black Sheep of Harlem*, rang no bells.

Cloutier knew immediately that he might have uncovered a diamond. "It was exciting, it was great, but it was also a moment

of uncertainty, because Samuel Roth — well, he did some things in his career." Roth was best known for publishing, in 1930, a pirated edition of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in violation of federal obscenity laws. "He'd been convicted of crimes and had done some jail time," says Cloutier. "You don't know what this guy might have been up to." Roth, who attended Columbia briefly before the First World War, had also serialized Joyce's *Ulysses* without permission, and published a fraudulent Nietzsche memoir, *My Sister and I*.

Cloutier was better acquainted with Roth and McKay than your average intern archivist. That's because he was also a doctoral



GARY KELLEY

candidate in English specializing in twentieth-century American literature, hired by Rare Books as part of a program begun in 2007 in which graduate-student interns process Columbia's archive backlogs, an arrangement that exposes students to primary sources while lending the archives the benefit of their scholarly sensitivity.

Now Cloutier had to determine if this manuscript was what it appeared to be: an unpublished McKay novel.

By day, he continued organizing the collection, only offhandedly mentioning the discovery to a coworker ("Hey, there's a Claude McKay novel in here." "Oh, yeah, what is it?" "Well, it's *Amiable with Big Teeth*." "I haven't read that one."), while keeping an eye out for related materials. By night, he searched for signs of *Amiable* in biographies, on the Library of Congress website, and on the wider Web.

Nothing.

The archive, however, held some clues: two letters between Roth and McKay, and a book contract dated 1941 — though for a different title. With this evidence, Cloutier went to his adviser, Brent Hayes

Edwards, a professor of English and comparative literature and an expert on the Harlem Renaissance. Edwards was, of course, intrigued — he'd always wondered why McKay had stopped writing fiction. The scholars photocopied the manuscript and took a weekend to read it. The following Monday, they compared notes. The manuscript bore several stamps of McKay's writing, among them the use of the term "Aframerican," the theme of labor agitation, and a character type that Cloutier describes as "a streetwise guy with political wisdom." Cloutier and Edwards agreed that it was likely the real thing.

In July 2009, they approached McKay's estate, seeking permission to publish a scholarly edition of the manuscript. But the estate's lawyers demanded firmer proof of the novel's authenticity. Their request was not unusual: the myriad frauds and forgeries in the art world have led to a more rigorous authentication of all art, including rare books and manuscripts.

Cloutier and Edwards began a quest for McKay correspondence that led them to archives across the country (Indiana,

Emory, Syracuse), and soon more clues began to appear. They saw references to a new novel McKay was writing in the early 1940s — the right time frame. They learned of a contract between the publishing firm E. P. Dutton and McKay for a book that was never published. And finally, at Yale, they found their smoking gun: a letter from writer Max Eastman to McKay. In the letter, Eastman gives McKay feedback on his latest novel, pulling out specific lines for comment that Cloutier and Edwards then found in *Amiable*. This was, as Cloutier puts it, "hard archival evidence" that the novel was McKay's.

In late 2011, two and a half years after the initial discovery, Cloutier and Edwards returned to the estate lawyers with their additional proof. The estate sent the manuscript out to three McKay experts. In May 2012, all three gave their final verdict: the manuscript was authentic. *Amiable* is likely the novel McKay had under contract with Dutton. Cloutier and Edwards found no letter or other document explaining why the company never published it. According to Cloutier, McKay's sales record wasn't great at the time, so it's possible that Dutton might have feared a flop.

But that was seventy years ago. "McKay's posthumous reputation has never been higher," says Bill Maxwell '84CC, an English professor at Washington University in St. Louis and one of the experts consulted by the estate. "This manuscript couldn't have chosen a better moment to come to light."

One reason McKay's work might be particularly resonant now is because he was, Cloutier says, a "transnational figure." Born in Jamaica, McKay traveled the world, writing and making connections in leftist circles. In fact, McKay largely missed the Harlem of the Harlem Renaissance because he was out of the country.

Cloutier finds parallels between McKay's works, with their transnational characters, and those of contemporary writers Junot Díaz and Zadie Smith. Though *Amiable* is set in 1936 Harlem, it's very much about the world, a satire that takes on Commu-

nism and explores the impact of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia on African-Americans and showcases Harlem life in a documentarian style.

“I’d say it’s McKay’s most mature novel, in which he makes his famous problems with plot work for his narrative rather

than impede it,” Cloutier says. “The novel is wonderfully memorable satire and McKay’s most realized literary expression of his desire for greater group unity among African-Americans.”

A dozen years after reading *Songs of Jamaica* in a Jamaican library, Clout-

ier finds his life bound to McKay’s: the unearthed novel merited a chapter in Cloutier’s dissertation on authors and their archives, and he and Edwards will be jointly writing an introduction to a scholarly edition of *Amiable*.

— Maya Rock

High to Low

It’s cringe-worthy yet also pleasing
when our host at lunch — someone I don’t know
and whom I’m only meeting the first time —
sends back a bottle of expensive wine,
for no real reason. It’s not just to show
his seasoned taste, a hard-won cultivation
taken shape
over a lifetime studiously teasing
savors from the grape.

A total creep, in fact, this guy,
a boor — he clearly doesn’t give a rat’s
who gets burned. (The waiter seems amused,
since after all these years he’s gotten used
to jerks like this, and every bottle that’s
returned he sips in secret at the back station.)

This guy won’t stand
for it: when life offends his nose or eye,
he takes the upper hand.

His victories are mostly Pyrrhic,
but so what? Sure, he’s obtuse but not blind
to the ways his huffy, prima-donna poise
is oddly winning, even as it annoys.
Decorum is a thankless double bind,
a game for schmucks, an over-complication.

Who ever bothers,
when no one cares for him (so goes the lyric),
caring about others?

And would it make a difference
if he did? Not terribly. So, after lunch
he strolls down 43rd Street to Times Square.
A crane shot pulls back till he’s barely there
amid the horn-blasts and the traffic-crunch,
a worker ant lost in an anthill nation.

And from a window
ten stories high, another man makes sense
of all the to-and-fro.

In his lofty, godlike view,
the city assumes a manageable scope.
The air conditioning hums. Pressed to the glass,
his forehead feels the cool as people pass
beneath him, each one with a private hope
of getting his, by market calculation
or avid reach.
He, too, will do whatever he must do,
each self for each.

Pull back again and there is me
and you, watching this guy as his eyes light
on the man just come from lunch. His mild disdain
for something — jacket, hat — is what remains,
after he casually blinks him out of sight.
And who, by further ghostly iteration,
takes stock of
us, is gauging us? And can they see
us only from above?

— David Yezzi ’95SOA

Yezzi’s new collection,
Birds of the Air, will be
published in February.

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The remains of
the boardwalk at
Rockaway Beach,
New York.



Columbia scientists have long been
sounding the climate-change alarm.
WILL WE LISTEN NOW?

SANDY'S WAKE

BY PAUL HOND

THE STORM MADE LANDFALL. The Hudson rose and rose. Klaus Jacob went to bed.

"I knew what was going to happen," he says with a shrug in his voice.

Of course he did.

On the evening of October 29, Superstorm Sandy, a weather event so gigantic and freakish that the word "hurricane" was insufficient, whipped the New York area, which lay to the right of that gargantuan white spiral in the satellite picture, the windier side. The Atlantic, plowed by winds, piled up high and rushed toward the coastline.

At around 9:00 p.m., New York harbor was a churning, brimming tub. Waves heaved and crashed. One wave measured thirty-two feet.

At 9:24, a storm surge of 13.88 feet, breaking the record of 10.2 feet set by Hurricane Donna in 1960, breached the seawalls of Lower Manhattan, flooding subway tunnels and knocking out power.

Twelve miles north of the city, up the wooded banks of the Hudson River, on a swollen tributary in Piermont, New York, behind a stand of marsh grass, in an old Dutch settlement, inside a white clapboard house, Jacob, a seismologist at Columbia's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, climbed the steep wooden staircase.

THE AWAKENING

Sea level rise will eventually inundate low-lying areas permanently if no mitigation or adaptation measures are taken, and may also accelerate saltwater intrusion in some areas.

So it had come, the Big One that Jacob and his colleagues had imagined when they produced the now-famous 2011 report

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JÖRG MEYER

Responding to Climate Change in New York State, known as the ClimAID study. Chapter 9, written by Jacob and civil-engineering professor George Deodatis '87SEAS, focused on transportation, and what the city could expect from a hundred-year storm — what the authors likened to “a non-direct but nearby hit of a category 1 or category 2 hurricane.”

For most transportation facilities, the increased coastal storm surge hazard will dominate over these permanent inundation hazards for most of this century.

The state-funded study was led by Cynthia Rosenzweig, a senior research scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies at Columbia; William Solecki '84CC, director of the CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities; and Art DeGaetano of Cornell.

If existing infrastructure is not upgraded and adapted to the new demands posed by climate change, it will put the neglected regions, their economies, and, in the worst cases, lives in jeopardy.

Jacob awoke at dawn. The winds that had rocked him to sleep still rattled the dark house. The night before, Jacob had shut off the circuit breakers and disconnected the gas. Now he smelled the usual ocean smell that comes with living by a tidal river, only maybe

it was nearer than usual. He knew, lying there, that the water had entered during the night, risen, and receded with the tide.

He knew, too, that the press would want to talk to him about all the things he knew. In September, the *New York Times* had published an article by Mireya Navarro '04JRN titled “New York Is Lagging as Seas and Risks Rise, Critics Warn.” In the article, Jacob, noting how the storm surge of Hurricane Irene a year before had come within one foot of flooding New York subway tunnels and highways and knocking out power to commuter rail lines, said, “We’ve been extremely lucky. I’m disappointed that the political process hasn’t recognized that we’re playing Russian roulette.”

That quote got picked up as Sandy approached.

Now they’d be calling him “prescient.” They’d get mileage out of that word. *New York* magazine would ask, “Is Dr. Klaus H. Jacob the Cassandra of New York City Subway Flooding?” A rhetorical question, presumably. Still, any of the study’s authors would say that it was a straightforward analysis that hardly required powers of prophecy.

Jacob, white-bearded and nimble, got out of bed and went down the stairs to deal with the inevitable.

THE AFTERMATH

The storm left some two hundred people dead, with at least forty-three deaths in New York City. In New York State, Sandy damaged or destroyed 305,000 homes and 265,000 businesses. Millions of people lost power. In Manhattan, outages caused misery for thousands of residents of public-housing high-rises. The subway flooded. A major hospital failed, prompting the heroic evacuation of hundreds of patients in seventy-mile-an-hour winds, while lab mice drowned and years of medical research was destroyed.

Columbia’s campuses escaped damage, and faculty and students mobilized for an aftermath filled with endless opportunities for assistance and study. The Mailman School of Public Health organized a relief effort in the Rockaways. Journalism students covered Sandy stories in print and video. And researchers at Lamont-Doherty, the Earth Institute, and the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science continued to collaborate to produce climate-research data for decision makers, residents, farmers, businesspeople, and urban planners.

At the political level, Governor Andrew Cuomo (“Climate change is a reality, extreme weather is a reality”) and Mayor Michael Bloomberg made some of the strongest statements by any US official in acknowledging climate change as a fact. Bloomberg, in an editorial, called on elected leaders to take “immediate action.”

But what sort of action? At what cost? And where, and for whom, and on what?

GAMES OF RISK

“Here is a critical issue of the highest importance,” says George Deodatis in his Mudd Hall office, three weeks after the storm.



KLAUS JACOB
The Battery



GEORGE DEODATIS
South Street

Deodatis speaks with a sonorous Greek accent and a measured cadence. “Hurricane Sandy: is this something that is really out of the ordinary, or something we should be expecting on a more regular basis?”

The question carries the deep echo of a riddle: we are in the dark caverns, the deep fog, of probability.

“If this is the event that happens once every thousand years, then probably the measures we have to take should be less drastic than if this were a hundred-year event,” says Deodatis, whose research areas include probabilistic mechanics, risk and reliability, and hazards analysis. “Design codes are based on the hundred-year or five-hundred-year event, not the seven-hundred-year or thousand-year event. The idea of a seven-hundred-year return” — a figure offered by some scientists — “is based on the climate having been pretty much stationary over the past two thousand years or so. *However*. In my opinion, and in others’ opinion, something is changing in the climate.”

His “something is changing” has a wistful note of wonder, of well-fed suspicion, like a scientist with a finger on his chin.

“This is now most probably not going to be the seven-hundred-year event,” Deodatis says, “but one we will be experiencing at much shorter intervals. And we have to do something about it.”

THE URGENCY OF NOW

Here’s what Deodatis sees as our options for defending New York City against future floods.

In the short term — measures that could be implemented within two years — we could build floodgates at entrances to tunnels and subway stations, cover ventilation grates, and build seawalls or dikes in front of vulnerable communities. “That would be a small investment,” Deodatis says, “and the least controversial.”

For the medium term — within two decades — we could raise infrastructure (“a raised highway will create a nice levee”) and construct barriers to New York harbor at three locations: the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, the Arthur Kill between Staten Island and New Jersey, and where the East River meets the Long Island Sound. Deodatis calls that “a major investment,” adding that “spending \$20 billion or more to protect a relatively small percentage of the population is something that will have to be debated.”

“Hurricane Sandy: is this something that is really out of the ordinary, or something we should be expecting on a more regular basis?”

— GEORGE DEODATIS

The long-term option, which would take more than fifty years, is, to Deodatis, the most contentious and costly: moving entire communities farther inland — what the climatologists call “planned retreat.”

“But *all* measures,” says Deodatis, “should be considered from a cost-benefit point of view.”

They should also be considered quickly.

“My opinion is, if no decision is made within a year, then nothing will happen,” Deodatis says. “This is the experience gained from past natural disasters: immediately after, there’s a lot of talk about doing something. But then people start saying, ‘OK, let’s postpone it,’ then something else more important comes in, and people’s attention is diverted.”

TREMORS

At 2:07 p.m. on August 10, 1884, an earthquake struck off Coney Island. The shocks toppled chimneys in New York and New Jersey, knocked dishes off shelves, swayed chandeliers in Midtown hotels. Seismologists place that pre-Richter scale event at a 5.5.

In the early 1990s, Klaus Jacob, more conversant than most in the fault lines beneath New York City and near the Indian Point nuclear power plant, was chair of the scientific advisory committee to the New York State Office of Emergency Management.

“I always said, ‘Look. We have to find out what happens during an earthquake,’” Jacob says. A Columbia-led group of investigators persuaded FEMA to fund a study.

“Using computer models, we placed a magnitude 5, 6, and 7 in the location of the 1884 earthquake in Brooklyn,” Jacob says. One of his coauthors was George Deodatis.

In the late 1990s, Jacob presented their results at an Earth Institute event at Columbia. The audience included some “climate people,” Jacob says, who approached him and asked if similar loss estimations could be made for climate-related events. “We don’t know,” Jacob told them, “but we can try.” Those trials were incorporated into what became *Climate Change and a Global City: An Assessment of the Metropolitan East Coast Region*, known as the MEC study, published in 2000. Jacob covered infrastructure, anticipating, just as he would do in the 2011 ClimAID report, the vulnerabilities exposed by a catastrophic storm surge.

In August 2001, Jacob went to Seven World Trade Center — the forty-seven-story building that would collapse hours after the fall of the Twin Towers — to share the earthquake findings with the mayor’s Office of Emergency Management.

What really impressed the audience that day, Jacob recalls, was the amount of debris that a magnitude 6 or 6.5 would produce. In that scenario, Jacob told his listeners, New York’s brownstones would crumble throughout the city. Brownstone was a poor earthquake performer.

“Then 9/11 occurred,” says Jacob, “and you couldn’t talk about earthquakes, hurricanes, or anything about natural disaster. For five years it was all terrorism. We lost ten years of preparedness for natural disasters in this country.”

THE A-WORD

It’s hard to catch up to Cynthia Rosenzweig. She moves fast. She’s co-chair of the New York City Panel on Climate Change, convened by Mayor Bloomberg, she develops and designs major climate-change assessments, she organizes and leads, she runs and runs. Maybe you’ve seen her on TV, in a dark-blue North Face fleece pullover, saying, in her soft voice, “We have to learn how to be more resilient, because climate change is already occurring, and is projected to continue to worsen,” a message she’s been evolving since her first peer-reviewed paper, “Potential CO₂-Induced Climate Effects on North American Wheat-Producing Regions,” was published in 1985.

Today, twenty-seven years and billions of tons of carbon dioxide later, and a week after Sandy, Rosenzweig is in Philadelphia, at Drexel University, leading the second annual meeting of the Consortium for Climate Risk in the Urban Northeast (CCRUN). The consortium, one of eleven regional research units established by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to study climate risks, includes Drexel, the University of Massachusetts, Stevens Institute of Technology, and the City College of the City University of New York.

“We have this group of researchers who are already in place and have been studying these exact risks of climate extremes,”



CYNTHIA ROSENZWEIG
Upper West Side

Rosenzweig says during a break. “Now we’re organizing to do the research needed to understand the problems and create the best solutions.”

Rosenzweig is joined by Robert Chen, director of the Earth Institute’s Center for International Earth Science Information Network. Chen, who studies the interaction between human and environmental systems, promptly drops the A-word.

“People are aware of the immediate event, but they may not be aware of longer-term issues of adaptation,” Chen says. “Adaptation isn’t just engineering; it’s education, it’s adoption of new building standards that take climate change into account, it’s ecologically based policy, it’s environmental justice. And since climate change is not completely predictable, you need adaptive social learning so you’re not just proposing solutions good for the next fifty years, but ones that will allow continuous flexibility.”

“We look at what we call ‘pathways to climate resilience’ in a very holistic and integrated way,” says Rosenzweig. “There are three main areas in this approach: engineering projects, like subway gates and storm barriers; the ecology; and planning and design policies for our communities. We can’t just pick one engineering solution or one ecologically based solution or one policy.”

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

The first report that Klaus Jacob and the climate people assembled was the 2000 MEC study, which looked at climate-change impact on the New York metro area. Jacob, assessing infrastructure, quickly came up against a barrier.

“The MTA, which runs the subway system, wouldn’t cooperate,” he says. “I was mostly interested in the MTA because I already had a hunch that the subway would be a problem. So we did the study as well as we could.” Luckily, they found an old FEMA study from 1995 — the *Metro New York Hurricane Transportation Study*, which gave the lowest critical elevation for each subway line. Somewhere, that line would flood.

“From that study we knew that we had to have the MTA’s cooperation. Where does the water go? How far? How big is the volume of the tunnel?”

In August 2007, a rainstorm caused flash flooding in the subway system, disabling or disrupting every line. The next month, the MTA set up a blue-ribbon commission on sustainability, aimed at making the MTA more ecologically friendly. The next year, the mayor’s office convened the Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, which included the MTA and all the other key transportation providers in the region.

Jacob and Rosenzweig gave talks to MTA officials about climate change, risks of damaging saltwater intrusion into the subway system, and the need for adaptive measures. The officials were ready to listen, if not to act. “They didn’t want to hear bad news,” Jacob says — that is, they didn’t want to spend more money.

In 2008, the MTA invited Jacob to sit in on a meeting of the sustainability commission, as an observer. Jacob listened as the commissioners discussed their green initiatives: reducing water consumption for washing subway trains, converting gasoline-burning buses into hybrids, putting solar panels on the roofs of aboveground stations.

When the meeting was over, Jacob raised his hand.

“This is all fine and good,” he said. “You are all very good at thinking about mitigation. You’re talking about spending tens of millions for mitigation. But you’re not talking about spending a few billion to save *many* billions, through adaptation.”

The commissioners, Jacob recalls, were a little baffled. For one thing, they didn’t know who Jacob was. Perhaps they were surprised when they saw him at the next meeting. Toward the end of that session, Jacob spoke up again.

“What about adaptation?” he said. “The elephant in the room!”

“Would you explain what you mean?” they said.

“Give me twenty minutes next session,” said Jacob, “and I will tell you what I mean.”

The commissioners agreed to hear him out. At the next session, Jacob took the floor.

He told the commissioners that, in the event of a hundred-year storm, the subway tunnels will flood, and that the problem will

worsen as sea levels continue to rise, with losses in the tens of billions of dollars.

When he was done, the commissioners said, “We can’t make you a commissioner, but we can have you write a chapter in the blue-ribbon commission report on sustainability.”

Jacob, with help from Rosenzweig and Earth Institute research scientists Radley Horton ’07GSAS and Vivien Gornitz ’69GSAS, wrote a chapter on climate-change adaptation, with an agreement from the MTA that it would publish an online white paper explaining the study’s technical details.

“The MTA engineers were wholeheartedly on board with the risk assessment,” Jacob says. “But they had difficulty bringing it up to the board of directors, and therefore laying the groundwork for change in Albany. The MTA always struggles with not having enough money from Albany. The fares don’t cover it, and each time you spend money on something like flood protection, you can’t spend money on new trains or hybrid buses, and the public gets up in arms.”

In 2009, New York State, witnessing the city’s efforts, asked for its own climate-impact study. Rosenzweig formed a team of

“We look at what we call ‘pathways to climate resilience’ in a very holistic and integrated way. We can’t just pick one solution or one policy.”

— CYNTHIA ROSENZWEIG

colleagues, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority provided a grant of around \$1.5 million.

“NYSERDA collects money from you and me each time we pay our utility bills,” Jacob says. “A small percentage goes into a fund, and that has to be spent, and they realized it ought to be spent meaningfully, and foresightedly. So they funded this study.”

FROM THE OCTOBER 30, 2012, STATEMENT BY MTA CHAIRMAN JOSEPH J. LHOTA

The New York City subway system is 108 years old, but it has never faced a disaster as devastating as what we experienced last night. Hurricane Sandy wreaked havoc on our entire transportation system, in every borough and county of the region. It has brought down trees, ripped out power, and inundated tunnels, rail yards, and bus depots.

As of last night, seven subway tunnels under the East River flooded. Metro-North Railroad lost power from 59th Street to Croton-Harmon on the Hudson Line and to New Haven on the New Haven Line. The Long Island Rail Road evacuated its West Side Yards and suffered flooding in one East River tunnel. The Hugh L. Carey Tunnel is flooded from end to end and the Queens Midtown Tunnel also took on water and was closed. Six bus garages were disabled by high water.

SO IT WAS WRITTEN

“When this NYSEDA funding came through,” Jacob says, “and we had enough money and time to really focus on a detailed study, we were ready.”

That study became Chapter 9 of the 2011 ClimAID report, in which much of Sandy’s havoc on transportation was foretold.

“George Deodatis put several of his undergraduate and master’s-level students on it,” Jacob says. “We got the dimensions of the tunnels, of the surfaces of the ventilation grates in all the flood zones of New York City, square foot by square foot. With the help of those students, we crunched the data and put the right physics formula in to find out how fast the water flows through grates. We calculated forty minutes to flood the tunnels under the East River and the Harlem River.”

That was pretty much on the nose.

“The students really worked their butts off. It was twenty years of work in two years.”

Chapter 9 did help guide the MTA in its attempts to secure subway entrances and grates with plywood barricades and sandbags.

“But of course,” says Jacob, “these were Band-Aids. They somewhat reduced the impact, but Sandy was too overwhelming.”

DE WATERSNOODRAMP

In the winter of 1953, over the North Sea, a powerful windstorm drove a shelf of water toward the Netherlands at the time of highest tides. The storm surge came with little warning, at night, while many people were asleep. It breached dikes and swallowed houses. More than 1,800 people died. The Dutch called the event *Watersnoodramp*, meaning “flood disaster.”

“After that storm,” says Klaus Jacob, “the Dutch pulled themselves together politically and financially and rebuilt their flood-control system for a ten-thousand-year storm. They called it the Delta Project, and they worked on it for decades. Of course, keeping the ocean out is a job that never ends.

“By the 2020s, because of sea-level rise, the defense will be good for a one-in-a-thousand-year storm. By the end of the century, it will be good for a one-hundred-year storm. So they have decided to not necessarily raise the levees, except in a few places, but to harden them, so that the water can overtop the levees and dikes without eroding them. That way, the whole ocean doesn’t come in, only the water that goes over.

“They will now rezone their terrain behind the dikes and levees to build catch basins, green parks, and soccer fields to absorb the water. Behind this they will raise their cities — they are building entire city blocks practically on barges that go up and down with the tides in those catch basins. Where there is old infrastructure and old cities, like in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, they internally secure them.

“They take a very integrated approach, and I think New Amsterdam should learn from Old Amsterdam. I want a sustainable New York City, not one that’s doomed two hundred years from now.”

A STRANGE TURN

It was one of the most destructive natural events in recorded history. On August 26 and 27, 1883, the fuming volcanic island of Krakatoa, located between the islands of Sumatra and Java in what is now Indonesia, erupted in earnest. The explosions were heard two thousand miles away in western Australia. Shock waves circled the globe seven times. Black ash shot fifty miles into the sky. Ash and stones rained down, killing hundreds. Chunks of the shattered island collapsed under the sea, triggering tsunamis that flooded coastal villages. The Dutch colonial government blamed the tsunamis for most of the 37,000 deaths linked to Krakatoa.

The eruption also changed the weather. Sun-blocking ash caused global temperatures to cool. There were blood-red sunsets and green moons. But weather followers noticed something else in the sky: clouds of high-altitude volcanic dust moving at high speeds. The patterns indicated previously unknown wind currents in the upper atmosphere. These winds would become known as the jet stream.

Radley Horton has his eye on that ribbon of west-east wind. A normal jet stream, he says, would have blown Sandy out to sea; instead, the jet stream was weak, with steep north-south dips. That weakness allowed the storm to stagnate over land.

In an office at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, on West 112th Street, Horton, who wrote the climate chapter of the 2011 ClimAID study, describes what made Sandy extraordinary: the nearly thousand-mile diameter of the tropical-storm-force winds that “got more of the Atlantic Ocean spinning than usual, so the surge was able to pile up”; its passing over water that was up to three to five degrees warmer than average; the timing of the surge with high tide; and the interaction with another storm passing west to east.

“But the other element that’s interesting — and disturbing — is the unusual track the storm took,” Horton says. “Turning west after it was pretty far north. Normally, in late October, any storm that gets as

“New Amsterdam should learn from Old Amsterdam. I want a sustainable New York City, not one that’s doomed two hundred years from now.”

— KLAUS JACOB

far north as Delaware and New Jersey is generally going to get caught up in the jet stream, which by then is usually blowing strong. In this case, we had a meandering jet stream, very wavy, with a real kink in it that enabled the storm to take more of an east-to-west path.”

Horton has been investigating whether this wavier, weaker jet stream could be influenced by the loss of Arctic sea ice.

“We’ve lost about 70 percent of the volume of September sea ice compared to three decades ago,” he says. “No climate models, when you provide them the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the last three decades, have been able to predict that rate of decline. That raises some questions: when the com-



RADLEY HORTON
The Rockaways

munity does climate projections, are we capturing the full range of possible outcomes?

“As for the jet stream, the issue is this: if, in the fall, you’re warming the polar regions by a lot and you’re only warming the equator a small amount (about one degree), you’re making the temperature gradient — the difference between the equator and the pole — a lot less. The jet stream is to some degree driven by that temperature gradient. If we’re warming the polar regions a lot, the pressure gradient high in the atmosphere isn’t going to be as strong, the deflective force is not as strong, and you end up with a weaker jet stream. And a weaker jet, the reasoning goes, will meander, just like a weak-flowing river. You’re prone to getting those north-south dips.

“It’s early research, and if we try to link all this to Sandy it’s even more challenging, because this is one storm, and we’ve only had the sea ice really being dramatically reduced for five or six years. So it’s early.

“But we did have a very wavy jet stream at the time of Sandy.”

BUILDING TO FLOOD

When Sandy hit New York, Vishaan Chakrabarti was with his students in a city where the canals are higher than the street. He was in Rotterdam.

“The Dutch learned long ago that you don’t fight the water, you learn to live with the water,” says Chakrabarti, the Marc Holliday Associate Professor of Real Estate Development at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and former director of the Manhattan office of the New York City Department of City Planning. “They have parks designed to flood and hold water, parking garages designed to flood and hold millions of gallons of water. You can build parts of the city so that they flood. It’s not just a question of building those giant sea gates. It’s going to be a mix of solutions that include the capacity of the city to flood.”

Chakrabarti, who lives in Lower Manhattan, looks around his neighborhood and sees lessons. “Some buildings are OK, some buildings are out for months,” he says. “What that tells me is that there’s a way to retrofit these buildings so that they’re more flood-proof and flood-resistant. We can move critical building systems well above a newly established flood plain, improve pumping systems, waterproof the fuel tanks of backup generators. I don’t think that’s rocket science.”

CLIFF NOTES

The MTA got hit for an estimated \$5 billion of damage. In December, Governor Cuomo went to Washington to request \$42 billion in aid, while New Jersey governor Chris Christie said that his state, its battered coastline changed forever, would need \$36.8 billion. President Obama, in a budget battle with Republicans, has asked Congress for \$60 billion, about a quarter of which — \$13 billion — would go toward mitigation projects.

YOU DON'T NEED A WEATHERMAN

It’s a week after Sandy, and Jacob is still stranded in boat-tossed, waterlogged Piermont, in his white clapboard house, cleaning mud from his furniture. Both of his cars were destroyed in the flood. Jacob is among the fortunate.

Living by the water, he says, was his wife’s idea. He had agreed to buy the house on the condition that he could raise it. When he sought to raise it higher than the FEMA flood zone — which was based on data that didn’t take into account rising seas and climate change — he ran into local zoning laws limiting the house’s height. So he remained at the FEMA threshold. Sandy’s waters exceeded that by almost two feet.

Up the wooden stairs, in Jacob’s office, on his desk, lies the FEMA-funded earthquake study from the 1990s, with its own ominous predictions. Nearby is the eerily accurate 2011 ClimAID study.

As for prophecy? You might say that a prophet came fourteen months before Sandy. Jacob isn’t very impressed, then, when he hears politicians, post-Sandy, talking about the “new reality” of severe weather and rising seas.

“They should have woken up after Irene,” he says. “How many wake-up calls do we need?”

Watch video of a November 19
Columbia forum on Sandy.
www.magazine.columbia.edu/sandy



THE LAST

STUDENT IS SILENT ON SLAYING FRIEND

Held Without Bail After He
Listens Lackadaisically to
Charge in Stabbing Case

Clasping a copy of "A Vision," a philosophic work by W. B. Yeats, under one arm, Lucien Carr, 19-year-old Columbia sophomore, listened lackadaisically to the proceeding as he was arraigned yesterday morning before Magistrate Anna M. Kross in Homicide Court. He was held without bail for a hearing on Aug. 29.

The pale, slender youth showed little interest as Detective James O'Brien presented a short affidavit charging him with homicide for having fatally stabbed on Monday David Kammerer, 33-year-old former instructor at Washington University, St. Louis, with whom he had been friendly. His attorney, Vincent J. Malone, told the court that the defendant had nothing to say.

Court Asks Psychiatric Test

Magistrate Kross asked Mr. Malone whether he had any objection to having Carr sent to Bellevue Hospital for psychiatric observation at this time. Mr. Malone replied that he did object and would prefer to have the case fol-

Exclaiming that "we in the great State of New York still proceed under the early theory of eighteenth century justice," Magistrate Kross declared that this procedure would result in "a great loss of time." She said that the procedure she had suggested would be valuable in bringing out "the social background" of the defendant.

After ordering Carr held without bail, Magistrate Kross started for her chambers and motioned to Mr. Malone to accompany her. Mr. Grumet also started in but the magistrate informed him that he had not been asked. Mr. Grumet remained without but announced that he wanted it noted in the record that he objected to the court's conferring with defense counsel without the presence of a representative of the district attorney.

Witness Held in \$5,000 Bail

Later in the day John Kerouac, a 23-year-old merchant seaman and former Columbia student, who had been arrested Wednesday night as a material witness in the case, was held in \$5,000 bail at a proceeding in the chambers of Judge John J. Sullivan of General Sessions.

Mr. Grumet told Judge Sullivan that after the slaying Carr went to Kerouac's room at 421 West 118th Street and told him what had happened. He said that Kerouac then went to Morningside Park with Carr and helped him bury Kammerer's eyeglasses.

"I only watched him bury the glasses," Kerouac interjected. "You came very near becoming an accessory after the fact," the prosecutor replied.

HELD FOR HOMICIDE



Lucien Carr as he was arraigned yesterday.
The New York Times

day. Appearing greatly concerned at the high bail set, he pleaded with Judge Sullivan to reduce it to a point that his parents, who live in Ozone Park, Queens, might be able to meet.

"They'll take very good care of him in city prison," Judge

BEAT

A murder in Riverside Park changed the lives of a group of Columbia undergrads. Did it change literature as well?

They would become legends — their names etched on the syllabuses of literature classes everywhere, their books reprinted and shoved in the back pockets of teenagers ripe with wanderlust, their words devoured, memorized, heeded, imitated.

But before the night of August 14, 1944, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg '48CC, and William S. Burroughs weren't the three principals of a literary movement — at least, not one that existed outside their own heads. They were simply roommates, friends, and confidants, who shared books and booze and sometimes beds. And, as history would largely soon forget, there was a fourth.

Lucien Carr was a recent transfer from the University of Chicago who seemed to attract admirers wherever he went. Uncommonly handsome, charismatic, and well-read, he was the force that initially united the group: he bonded with Ginsberg in a Columbia dorm over a shared love of Brahms, befriended Kerouac through his girlfriend at a nighttime painting class, and renewed ties with Burroughs, an old acquaintance from his hometown. Independent friendships formed between members of the quartet, but Carr was always at the center.

While his friends wrote books and became revered cultural and literary figures, ringleaders of the Beat movement, though, Carr lived most of the next sixty years in relative obscurity, quietly building a career and raising a family, and avoiding even the reflected glow from the spotlight on the others. Since his death

in 2005, interest in the Beats has grown even more, at last illuminating the lost member.

This past March, Da Capo Press released Jack Kerouac's previously unpublished first novel, *The Sea Is My Brother*, written when he was a twenty-year-old merchant mariner the summer before he met Carr. In April, the New York writer Aaron Latham debuted his play *Birth of Beats: Murder and the Beat Generation*. In September, Joyce Johnson released *The Voice Is All*, an intimate biography of Kerouac, with whom she had a long romance. A film adaptation of *On the Road* — the first, despite years of failed attempts — premiered at Cannes in May, with wide release in December. And in 2013, Carr will take center stage as the subject of *Kill Your Darlings*, a recent entry to the Sundance Film Festival, which was filmed largely on campus last spring and which stars Daniel Radcliffe as Allen Ginsberg.

Carr was the last of the four to die, and with all of them gone, it seems like the world is finally ready to ask two questions: Had Lucien Carr not killed a man, would he have been the greatest of what we now call the Beat Generation? And, perhaps more important, had he not killed a man, would there even have been a Beat Generation at all?

It was just after midnight when Kerouac got up from his table at the West End, where he'd been drinking with Carr, and went out into the sweltering, sleepless night.

By David J. Krajicek

With his athletic gait, he quick-stepped across Broadway, through the 116th Street gates, up the Low Library steps, and toward Amsterdam Avenue, on his way to his girlfriend's apartment, when he saw a familiar figure walking toward him in the dark: a tall, bearded, auburn-haired man named David Kammerer, who asked after Lucien. Kerouac directed Kammerer to the West End.

"And I watch him rush off to his death," Kerouac later wrote in his autobiographical novel *Vanity of Duluoz*.

Kammerer, who was thirty-three, had known Carr years before in their native St. Louis, where he had been Carr's scoutmaster, as well as a kind of life coach and literary beacon, recommending books that helped nurture the boy's literary talent. But Carr was more than Kammerer's protégé. He was his obsession. For years, Kammerer had trailed Carr to a series of schools, the latest being Columbia, where Carr, nineteen, had just completed his freshman year.

Kammerer wanted a sexual relationship with Carr, and while Carr was ostensibly straight and dating a Barnard student (which only further fueled Kammerer's jealousy), his feelings were clearly complicated. Ginsberg later said that while Kammerer craved Carr, Carr craved the attention. James W. Grauerholz, a friend of William S. Burroughs's and his literary executor, would describe Kammerer as Carr's "stalker and anything, his creator and destroyer."

At the West End, Kammerer caught up to Carr. The two men drank until after 2:00 a.m., then headed down to Riverside Park. As they lounged on the grass at the foot of West 115th Street, Kammerer made what the *New York Times* would call an "offensive proposal." Carr "rejected it indignantly," and the men grappled. As Johnson writes in *The Voice Is All*, "Perhaps Lucien had never hated Kammerer more; perhaps he had never felt closer to yielding to him."

Losing the struggle, Carr withdrew a small folding knife and twice jabbed the blade into Kammerer's chest. As Kammerer's life drained away, Carr rolled the body to the river's edge, bound the limbs, weighted it with rocks, and watched his old scoutmaster sink into the Hudson. Carr was anxious to report his deed, but not to police. Instead, he headed straight to the apartments of his trusted friends — first Burroughs's, then Kerouac's — breaking the news with a macho, film noir-style quip: "Well, I disposed of the old man last night."

That Carr had been at the West End at all was something of an accident: the previous day, he and Kerouac had hatched a scheme to sail as merchant mariners to Europe, where they planned a wartime visit to Paris to retrace the steps of the French poet Arthur Rimbaud, a literary hero whose volatile relationship with the poet Paul Verlaine had culminated, in 1873, in Verlaine shooting Rimbaud in the arm. But Carr and Kerouac arrived at the dock too late.

Now, instead of sailing the Atlantic, they took a macabre walk through Manhattan. They stopped in Morningside Park to bury Kammerer's eyeglasses, then went north to 125th Street in Harlem, where they ditched Carr's old Boy Scout knife — an apt tool — down a grate. Then, delaying the inevitable, they wandered down to Midtown. They stopped at the Museum of Modern Art, ate hot dogs in Times Square, and ducked into a movie house on Sixth Avenue, where they watched Zoltán Korda's 1939 remake of *The Four Feathers*, a British war adventure about cowardice and redemption.

After a twelve-hour odyssey, Carr finally walked into the district attorney's office, where he confessed. Authori-

Jack Kerouac and Lucien Carr on campus, 1944.



© ALLEN GINSBERG / CORBIS

ties wondered whether the skinny student, who cradled a dog-eared copy of W. B. Yeats's *A Vision*, was a lunatic. They doubted that he had the gumption to kill someone.

In the fashion of that era, journalists were invited to have a look at Carr as he sat in the DA's office. They found a "slender, studious youth" who was "peacefully reading poetry," as the *New York Times* put it. The *Daily News* called Carr "refined and erudite." Nicholas McD. McKnight, a dean of Columbia College, spoke out for Carr, declaring him "definitely a superior student."

A front-page account published in the *Times* on August 17, 1944, began, "A fantastic story of a homicide, first revealed to the authorities by the voluntary confession of a 19-year-old Columbia sophomore, was converted yesterday from a nightmarish fantasy into a horrible reality by the discovery of the bound and stabbed body of the victim in the murky waters of the Hudson River."

"The Beats were a complicated group of people, with Lucien Carr directly at the center," says Ann Douglas, the Parr Professor Emerita of English and Comparative Literature, who has long taught a popular course on them. "Understanding the murder, and the reasons behind it, is instrumental to understanding them."

The day after Carr confessed, both Kerouac and Burroughs were arrested as material witnesses. Burroughs's father came to New York to post his bail, but Kerouac's family refused. Instead, his girlfriend Edie Parker came to his rescue, though the judge would not allow her to bail him out unless the pair married, which they did in a short ceremony on August 22, setting the course of Kerouac's next several years.

Though Ginsberg was the only one who escaped arrest, it was on him that the murder arguably had the gravest impact. Deeply in love with Carr, he had also developed a close friendship with Kammerer and was struggling with his own homosexuality. Johnson suggests in *The Voice Is All* that, while Carr denied it, Ginsberg may have experimented sexually with both men before the murder. And in August, she writes, Ginsberg "spent some intensely lonely weeks mourning the loss of Lucien and 'wonderful, perverse Kammerer,' twice drafting suicide notes in his journal."

The greatest change, though, was that their leader was gone. In Carr, the friends found an attractive iconoclast who harangued them with profane oratories about creativity drawn from Yeats and Rimbaud. In his journal, Ginsberg called Carr "my ideal image of virtue and awareness." In *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their*

Tanks, a roman à clef co-written by Kerouac and Burroughs, Burroughs describes the Carr character as "the kind of boy literary fags write sonnets to, which start out, 'O raven-haired Grecian lad . . .'" To honor Carr's beauty, as well as his snobbishness, Ginsberg and Kerouac invented an alter ego for him, a withering French aristocrat they named Claude de Maubris.

But Carr wasn't just the muse; rather, Johnson suggests, he was quickly becoming famous across campus as something of a literary prodigy. "His verbal brilliance impressed professors and led admirers to believe he might well become 'another Rimbaud,'" she writes. Kerouac referred to him in *Vanity of Duluo* as "Shakespeare reborn almost." To his new friends, Carr's intellectual prowess was as compelling as his striking good looks: it was with poetry that he wooed Ginsberg, late-night intellectual sparring that won over the often stoic Kerouac, and his precocious worldliness that lured Burroughs uptown from his Greenwich Village apartment.

"Carr was really important in getting the group together," says Aaron Latham, who features the Kam-

"Perhaps Lucien had never hated Kammerer more; perhaps he had never felt closer to yielding to him."

merer slaying in his play, *Birth of Beats*, and who also wrote a 1976 *New York* magazine article about the then-forgotten case. "One key part of the Beat phenomenon was the group dynamic they had. Carr was the one friend that bridged them all."

Or, as Ginsberg famously put it, "Lou was the glue."

The most direct literary result of the murder was *Hippos*, a thinly veiled mystery novel told in alternating voices, which Burroughs and Kerouac produced almost immediately, completing a final version in 1945. They made repeated attempts to publish it over the years, though Burroughs later claimed that "it wasn't sensational enough to make it [commercially] . . . nor was it well-written or interesting enough to make it [from] a purely literary point of view." (Near the alcohol-induced end of his own life, Kerouac readapted the material for *Vanity of Duluo*.) When Grove Press eventually released *Hippos* in 2008, after all central parties were dead, the *New York Times* called it "flimsy" and "flat-footed," noting that "the best thing about this collaboration between Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs is its gruesomely comic title."

But the bloodshed also clearly inspired, in some senses, the tortured-soul narratives in the three elemental Beat masterpieces: Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems* in 1956, Kerouac's novel *On the Road* in 1957, and Burroughs's novel *Naked Lunch* in 1959.

Oblique references to the event are perhaps most evident in "Howl," which was initially dedicated to Carr. Hinting at a unity forged among the Beats through the slaying, Ginsberg wrote, "Breakthroughs! over the river! flips and crucifixions! gone down the flood! Highs! Epiphanies! Despairs! Ten years' animal screams and suicides! Minds! New loves! Mad generation! down on the rocks of Time! / Real holy laughter in the river! They saw it all! the wild eyes! the holy yells! They bade farewell! . . . Down to the river! into the street!"

Lucien Carr was charged with second-degree murder. But the sympathetic narrative of an intellectual fighting off a homosexual predator made it easy for prosecutors to offer a plea of manslaughter. A psychiatrist

judged Carr "unstable but not insane," and Judge George L. Donnellan opted to send Carr to the more genteel Elmira Reformatory rather than to Sing Sing.

"I believe this boy can be rehabilitated, and I would recommend that he have the attention of a skilled psychiatrist," Donnellan said.

It was this narrative that, decades later, inspired *Kill Your Darlings* director John Krokidas to tell Carr's story. He was initially moved by Beat literature as a gay teenager. Reading Ginsberg and Kerouac, he says in a 2009 interview, "introduced me to the idea that the idea of wanting to live outside the boundaries of society was a perfectly acceptable choice." But ironically, he says, it was society's rejection of that choice that spared Carr a harsher sentence. "I was furious when I discovered that in 1944 you could literally get away with murder by portraying your victim as a homosexual. They called [Kammerer's murder] an 'honor slaying' or the 'homosexual panic' defense."

Carr, photographed by Allen Ginsberg, 1986.



there was a chance for the rehabilitation of young Carr by sending him to the reformatory rather than to Sing Sing, where he could not avoid coming in contact with hard-

STUDENT SLAYER SENT TO THE REFORMATORY

Similarly, the Beats had mixed feelings about the academy coming to Carr's rescue. Johnson writes that "soon Allen Ginsberg . . . would be explaining to tabloid reporters the importance of the New Vision. During the pretrial hearings, Mark Van Doren and Lionel Trilling, the leading lights of Columbia's English department, would appear as character witnesses for Lucien." But while the portrayal of Carr as an Ivy League scholar helped garner a lenient sentence, he and his friends were constantly questioning the role of traditional education in their intellectual development. Kerouac had dropped out of Columbia, and Carr himself was ready to abandon the pending semester to join the merchant marine. After the trial, Columbia was also a convenient antagonist, says Ben Marcus, a novelist and associate professor at the School of the Arts. The young writers needed an enemy, Marcus says, and "they took a lot of energy from their subversion of the university."

Carr spent eighteen months at Elmira, and initially, even behind bars, the haughty Count de Maubris seemed alive and well. "Lucien has changed somewhat since you last saw him due to various vicissitudes which he has undergone," Carr, referring to himself in the third person, wrote to Ginsberg. "Still the introspective, he will never cease to see, like Thoreau, all of life in a drop of water . . . And he has begun to see a little more clearly along the ascendant paths of self-consummation!"

But soon that also began to waver. Johnson writes that "the last they heard from Lucien for the next couple of years was a coded letter forwarded to Allen but addressed to 'Cher Breton,' in which he wrote that he was undergoing some changes in prison that were leading him to wonder whether the power of the intellect was less important than the 'spirit.'"

After his parole, Carr returned to New York and began a long career in a field that many would regard as the occupational opposite of brooding self-examination: he became a wire-service newsman, with United Press, which would later become United Press International.

A trove of correspondence to Carr from Ginsberg and Kerouac in Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library demonstrates that although their paths diverged, they remained close friends. They chatted about everything, from world politics to Carr's "awful" mustache. Writing from Paris in 1957, Ginsberg quoted Burroughs: "I mean, having a mustache like that to keep oneself from being pretty is like knocking out a couple of teeth or sticking in a nose-plug or some other such barbarous self-mutilation, in

fact it's worse, it's a crime of self-desecration to try to make yourself ugly, to please a lot of jerks down at the UP & be one of the boys is terrible."

Ginsberg added, "Jack & I agree." The advice didn't take hold. Carr spent much of his adult life behind a mustache and full beard — perhaps to spite his old friends.

Carr distanced himself publicly from his Beat pals, initially because he feared being drawn into a parole violation by their recklessness and later because he preferred to erase the homicide from his biography. He even demanded that Ginsberg remove his name from the dedication of "Howl."

Although Ginsberg and Kerouac occasionally visited Carr at UPI headquarters, in the Daily News Building at 220 East 42nd Street, Carr's UPI colleagues tell me he rarely talked about his old Beat associations. Were he alive, they say, Carr would cringe at the notoriety that the upcoming film might bring.

"Lou" Carr, the UPI man, seemed to have little in common with the dreamy young Beat sage. He was

"I believe this boy can be rehabilitated, and I would recommend that he have the attention of a skilled psychiatrist."

a rough-hewn, tabloid-tinged editor who encouraged writers to tug at readers' emotions. "Make 'em horny," he would say. "Make 'em cry." Like many journalists of that age, Carr was a heavy drinker. Unlike some, he quit before it killed him.

A 2003 history of UPI describes Carr as "the soul of the news service" who "rewrote, repaired, recast, and revived more big stories on UPI's main newspaper circuit, the A-wire, than anyone before or after him."

When UPI moved its headquarters from New York to Washington, DC, in 1982, Carr moved, too — from a loft apartment in SoHo to a boat moored in the Potomac. He died of complications from bone cancer in 2005.

Carr's former UPI colleague Wilborn Hampton crafted an apt epitaph in a *Times* obituary. He called Carr, the former freethinking Columbia freshman, "a literary lion who never roared." 🦁

David J. Krajicek '85JRN, a former professor at the Graduate School of Journalism, is the author of five books. He writes the "Justice Story" feature for the New York Daily News.



A migrant couple who met en route (he is Nicaraguan; she is Honduran) wait to hop a train, Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz.



The Passage

Central American
migrants risk
their lives on the
journey north
through Mexico.

BY KATIE ORLINSKY '12JRN

On an unseasonably cold summer night in the Lecheria rail yard, outside Mexico City, I sat under a bridge with a group of young people in their late teens and early twenties. Some tried to sleep, despite the deafening rumble of the trains as they passed. Others lay awake chatting, flirting, and keeping an eye out for robbers. Spirits were high. These young men and women were migrants from Central America, and they had just survived the worst of the perilous journey through Mexico.

When Americans imagine the treacherous paths of undocumented immigrants, they likely picture the Texas-Mexico border. Crossing the Rio Grande or the Sonoran Desert is indeed dangerous, and many people end up deported, imprisoned, or dead. But for thousands of undocumented Central American migrants each year, the US-Mexico border is merely the home stretch. The deadliest part of the journey starts at Mexico's southern border with Guatemala.

Migrants generally begin their journey on foot in the Mexican states of Chiapas or Tabasco. They continue aboard freight trains collectively known as *la Bestia* — the Beast — because of the hundreds who are maimed or killed each year falling from them or unsuccessfully climbing onto them. Along the way, migrants must pay off guides, thieves, gang members, immigration officials, railroad workers, and police. Because train schedules are unpredictable, they often spend days or weeks waiting in train yards, where they are prey to robbery, assault, and kidnapping. The risks are even higher for women: rape along the route is so widespread that many start taking birth control months before they embark.

My interest in migration as a humanitarian issue began when I was in college in Colorado. I majored in Latin American studies and worked with migrant activist organizations on the US-Mexico border. After college, while living in southern Mexico, I would see freight trains pass



Lecheria rail yard,
State of Mexico.



through town. They carried mostly timber, steel, and other building materials to the country's northern industrial zones. Yet at least once a week, groups of young, dirty boys would appear in the town center, carrying nothing but small backpacks and plastic bags. They would buy water and food and use pay phones. They generally kept to themselves, although sometimes they would ask restaurants for their day-old tortillas. At night they slept under the trees that lined the periphery of the train yard. As soon as the next train came, they were gone.

I wanted to learn their stories but was always warned off by the locals. Talking to them would be unsafe, I heard, but there was also a stigma attached to it. Some Mexicans saw all Central American migrants as delinquents, or even "Maras" — members of the infamous Salvadoran Mara Salvatrucha gang. It took me a long time to build up the courage to approach them. I wanted to do it right, not just take photos and leave. I would visit migration centers along the route, mostly set up by church groups so that migrants would have a place to shower and rest for a night. Sometimes I would talk to people at these shelters and follow them to the rail yards. Other times center workers or local journalists would accompany me there.

I could get scared. On a few occasions I left the rail yards immediately because of a bad look or an uneasy feeling.



La Esperanza, Veracruz.



Twelve-year-old Honduran migrant, Lecheria rail yard, State of Mexico.

At least once a week, **groups of young, dirty boys**
would appear in the town center, carrying nothing
but small backpacks and plastic bags.

Men wait for a train,
Lecheria rail yard,
State of Mexico.





Honduran migrant,
Lecheria rail yard,
State of Mexico.


Central American migrants are the
most vulnerable community in all of Mexico,
and the drug war has threatened them further.



Migrant shelter,
Coatzacoalcas, Veracruz.

But generally the migrants I met were kind and curious. Some didn't want their photos taken, but most were happy to participate — to show Americans what they go through to make it to the other side. I worked to capture their feelings of hope and uncertainty, fear and anticipation. For me, the experience was as much about psychology as action.

Central American migrants are the most vulnerable community in all of Mexico, and the drug war has threatened them further: human trafficking has become a lucrative business, largely controlled, according to the Mexican government, by the notoriously brutal Zetas cartel. (I was fortunate to have taken these photos in 2008; a year or so later, to walk along some of the same tracks would have been a death sentence.) And while the drug war holds the attention of the news media, economic refugees from countries such as Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala continue to leave their homes and risk their lives in search of work.

Despite these hardships, many of the young people I met in the rail yards were brave and generous. They took care of one another. People shared food; they took turns keeping watch. They felt safe with one another, and I felt safe with them, too. 

Lecheria rail yard, State of Mexico.



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TWENTY CENTS

JUNE 11, 1956

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

**America and the Intellectual:
The Reconciliation**



JACQUES BARZUN

Formidable and exacting, Jacques Barzun was one of America's greatest public intellectuals and a presence at Columbia for fifty years. On the occasion of Barzun's death at 104, a fellow critic remembers him.

By John Simon

The Unedited Man

I knew Jacques Barzun '27CC, '32GSAS mostly from the Mid-Century Book Society, the second book club he headed with the poet W. H. Auden and the Columbia professor Lionel Trilling '25CC, '38GSAS (with whom Barzun taught a renowned graduate seminar from 1946 until 1972). I was associate editor and in charge of the society's magazine, in which books offered to the members were reviewed by the editors, and later by an occasional guest as well. Of course, one had to *sell* these books, in both senses of the word; but that was neither too hard nor dishonest, given that they were really good books we all liked.

It fell to me to edit this illustrious triumvirate for the magazine, a very different task with each writer. Auden, who was jovially insouciant, handed in smart but sloppy stuff that needed a lot of editing, which he readily and gratefully accepted. Trilling was more difficult. Always by telephone, one went over proposed changes, some of which, after some discussion, he accepted, some not.

Barzun, however, one was not allowed to edit. Everything, down to the last comma, had to be left as it was, even where — an admitted rarity — improvement was possible. When we spoke on the phone, I could conjure up my interlocutor. He was undoubtedly smiling his frosty smile, one part convivial and two parts condescending. Since he was tall, the smile, when delivered in person, would literally descend upon you, accompanying an elegant diction that itself had a sort of smile in it.

His figure and posture were excellent, and he wore his well-tailored clothes with an aura more diplomatic than academic. His accent was upper-class American, without a trace of his French childhood. I always wanted to address him in French, to hear how he would sound in that language, but I lacked the guts to do so.

Even though he generally spurned what I would call human warmth, his eyes had an encouraging glitter when the conversation was about one art or another — or history, or philosophy — which, in my presence, it almost always was. Baseball,

In its June 11, 1956, issue, *Time* selected Jacques Barzun to symbolize — and answer — the question, "What does it mean to be an intellectual in the U.S.?"

too, with those who shared his interest. Often, though, the conversation turned to the art of correct and appropriate language, which was one of his passions, and about which, happily, we were invariably of the same opinion.

I had not then and, I'm ashamed to say, have not even now read most of his books, not really even those I owned. The two-volume *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* never left my shelf before I sold it along with a number of my books, all of which I came to miss.

Barzun was not, like Auden, someone to feel warmly about, but he was certainly one to respect. He produced a steady stream of ex cathedra utterances that one could not help admiring. (It was he who taught me, for example, that "could not help but" was redundant.)

He was always, like Auden, reciprocally respectful of me (which Trilling never overtly

was, although he several times said he envied my wardrobe). Here is Barzun's blurb for my book *Singularities*:

Not because he is violent in expression but because he feels strongly and thinks clearly about drama, about art, and about conduct, I think John Simon's criticism extremely important and a pleasure to read. And by the way, who has decreed that violence in a playwright is splendid and violence in a critic unforgivable?

Only two book reviews in my long career have I been unable to deliver. One was of a biography of the Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne-Jones that I read in galley form, only to wait so long for the finished book, with its all-important reproductions, that by the time it arrived, I had forgotten much of what I wanted to say about the text.

The other was of Michael Murray's 2011 *Jacques Barzun: Portrait of a Mind*, which comprises, with comments, profuse and lengthy extracts from Barzun's writings. I tend to run penciled lines in the margins along the passages I wish to quote; here, however, the lines were near ubiquitous. I struggled unsuccessfully with triage but finally gave up in despair. Barzun's output — on literature, history, philosophy, biography, and cultural criticism, and also music, teaching and research, English style and usage, and crime fiction, not to mention masterly translations of major French fiction and drama — was copious and all of the highest quality. The authorial portrait of a mind boggles the reader's.

I recall Murray's last chapter, "Late Years," which deals with, among other subjects, the very hefty *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present*. The book was published in 2000, when Barzun was 92, and it ran some 700 pages. In it, Barzun stated his firm belief that our culture has become decadent and is in unarrestable decline, but that, in an as yet unforeseeable future, a fresh culture would arise.

A very different Barzun from the one I knew emerges in "Late Years" — more modest and adaptable. Concerning *From Dawn to Decadence*, Barzun writes to his editor, "I want every

Barzun, left, at his graduation from Columbia College, June 1927.



COURTESY OF THE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY / HAROLD SWAHN

Left: Barzun with John G. Palfrey, dean of Columbia College from 1958 to 1962.

Right: Barzun, photographed by Lionel Trilling, Westport, Connecticut, 1950.



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opportunity to improve my work through the remarks of choice readers. And I mean comments of every sort: clumsy wording, too much on one topic, risky generality about our own time, dull stuff — the lot.”

In a 2004 letter to the historian John Lukacs, he writes, “If I did let go . . . I would exceed all bounds and be put down as a mad professor, fit only to associate with helpless students . . . I long ago learned to curb the spontaneous Ciceronian invective I might enjoy discharging from time to time.” There are gems in these late letters, as, for instance, when he lectures the language guru William Safire about the difference between a ship that is moored and one that is merely anchored. Heaven only knows how he came by such nautical intelligence.

There are charming aperçus. “We live longer, it is true, but often without much enjoyment of old age.” And: “One should not live to so advanced an age. One tends to become indifferent to things one should not be indifferent about — manifestations of good and evil in the world, for example, or the obligations . . . incurred when people ask something of one.” And: “I think that in the 19th century and much of the 20th it was quite normal for gentlemen . . . not to talk about the ladies they took an interest in, epistolary or amorous or even marital as distinct from amorous. I get the impression, from letters and biographies, that to

discuss or even mention a new ‘interest’ would be indelicate, for if precisely specified it would sound egotistical, even boastful, and if left vague, would lead to regrettable speculation.” How wonderful from a man ninety-four years old.

“I keep thinking that I’ve been enormously lucky,” he writes, and avers that he has no regrets

Since he was tall, the smile would literally descend on you, accompanying an elegant diction that itself had a sort of smile in it.

about his life choices, even though becoming an academic was “a kind of Why not? instead of a Yes, by all means.”

He was certainly right about our dumbed-down age, and that a “dégringolade” (a French word signifying a catastrophic downward hurtling) is taking place. May he also be right about the better future, which, to be sure, not even a child just born and living to be 104 will necessarily live to see. But hope and striving for it are not small potatoes either, and in this disciple of William James and Bernard Shaw they were always there. 🍷

John Simon has been a critic for more than fifty years and is the author of several books. He currently writes for the Westchester Guardian.

For more on Barzun’s life and career, read the *Living Legacies* profile and view a video tribute.
www.magazine.columbia.edu/barzun



next exit

Fiction by
Nalini Jones '01SOA

The children needed school uniforms, Marian said. They would have to go downtown.

This was the third year that she and her family had lived in Ohio. They had a small house near the college where her husband Daniel taught.

She looked at her father. “We could take the bus into the city.” It sounded more like a question than a suggestion.

Francis had arrived a month before, his first trip to the States. “The train is costly?”

“Four of us . . .” Marian said. “Or I suppose we could drive.”

Her father’s visit had catapulted her back into an uneasy space, between having daughters and being one. She could not clap her hands and say, hurry up, let’s go. She could not buckle the girls into the car with any certitude. Her father — she could not prevent herself from feeling — must be consulted, his authority guarded, his preferences laid bare. But what did he know of buses? What did he know of the six-lane expressway, its confusing loops of exits, the trucks that made her nervous? How could he predict the way her daughters would behave if the outing lasted too long and they were overtired? Six and eight years old, too big to carry, pulling at her arms as they waited for a bus. There would be shopping bags, she considered.

“You do want to come along, right, Dad? We can get you a few shirts.”

Was he enjoying himself? He would go back to India in another fortnight, his suitcase filled — everything that was easier to get in the States, cheaper or better-made, tinned foods that weren’t available in Bombay, gifts for her mother. Essie had stayed behind because she had come three times already, and the house could not be left unoccupied, even for six weeks. But she was constantly evoked, conjured between them in what Marian bought and her father would carry home.

“Should we go now, you think? Are you ready?” Her father had finished his tea, she saw. “We can drive, okay? That way the girls can sleep in the car on the way back if they’re tired. Or we can stop somewhere if there’s anything you want to see.”

But she would have to tell him what he might like to see.

“Yes, yes. Good,” he said. “Driving is better.”

“We won’t get tired,” announced Marian’s elder daughter, to whom the idea of rest had become an insult. Nicole was usually in motion. When she stood completely still, as she did now in the doorway, she seemed to her mother as solid and unmovable as a goat. Tara was quiet, generally willing to wait and see what understanding her mother and sister would hammer out. “Mom! We won’t get tired.”

“I’m glad,” said Marian. She wished her daughters had not picked up this *mom*, this slow, lolling American way of referring to her. She wished, in front of

Illustrations by Anna and Elena Balbusso





her father, that they still called her *mum*, as they had before they went to school. “These American accents!” she said to her father, laughing so that he would laugh too. Then she sent both girls, quick, quick, to wash their hands and faces and climb in the car.

She was, Francis thought, a competent but slightly distracted driver. She accelerated in quick bursts and did not always leave enough time for smooth braking. She memorized routes without quite knowing the logic of where she was going. But the roads were good, the traffic laws respected far better than in Bombay, where driving was a matter of nerve and horn blasts. He had grown accustomed to her way of drawing to an intersection. He sat in the front seat and twisted around occasionally to revel in the sight of his granddaughters. They sat with books open on their laps, looking out their windows and alerting one another when they saw dogs, cats, the sort of car they called a bug, the rare good luck of a horse. Tara sang to herself.

They had reached the highway when he noticed a light flashing red on the dashboard.

“What’s that? We need fuel?”

Marian eyed the gauge. “Oh, shoot, we’ve passed the gas station. Should we turn back? We’d have to get off at the next exit and turn around, I’m not sure where. Or there’s one where we get off for Sears . . .”

She changed lanes with a worried glance in the rear-view mirror. Large green signs hung over the highway and Francis read one aloud. “Is that the one you want? You know the route from there?”

“No, but I can ask.” The red light, which flickered once as they crested a hill, was again solid. Marian laughed, a nervous sound, and spoke with false cheer. “What do you think, girls? Will we make it?”

Had she been nervous as a child? He didn’t think so. Obedient. Cautious, perhaps. Francis wished he could remember better. When he thought of her he saw a tall, thin schoolgirl, long legs, dusty socks and shoes, a watchful expression on her soft, young face. He had wondered sometimes what she was thinking but without any notion of asking; their conversation did not follow such courses. Even now, overhearing the lively talk of his grandchildren, it did not occur to him to feel regret. It had been enough, in those days, to see her with her brothers or sitting at the table reading. She had worked hard at her studies. Sometimes, when Essie had gone out of the room, he used to put a hand on Marian’s shoulder and tell her: *Enough. Go and rest your eyes*. In such moments, roused suddenly from

her books, she looked up at him with no sign of guardedness, none of her usual reserve, and he was shocked to see how beautiful his girl had become. *Go and run in the garden*.

“What do you think, Dad?”

He peered at the fuel gauge. “Better to be safe.”

The girls slid closer together. They seemed both smaller and older, staring. Tara had stopped singing and her round face was grave — an echo of her mother’s face at that age, Francis realized.

“How long has it been on?” Marian asked.

He could not tell her.

They had nearly reached the exit ramp, but another car had drawn up alongside them on the passenger side.

“Should I go?”

“This fellow is blocking you,” Francis said. “There, go!”

But she hesitated and missed her chance.

“Never mind, Dad, we’ll make it to the next one. There’s always a little extra. Cross your fingers, girls!”

Nicole bounced up and down on the seat. “We’ll make it!”

First came the noise like a knocking inside a pipe; then came a hill. Tara imagined riding her bicycle up such a painful grade, training wheels jutting to either side behind her, legs aching as she pedaled. The car felt quiet beneath them, suddenly powerless. Nicole threw her body forward, as though to help the car reach the crest. Tara looked at her grandfather, who was shaking his head so slightly that she could not tell what he meant by it. Her mother’s face was strained, her voice thin. “Oh, God. I’ve got to get over.”

They trailed to a stop in the breakdown lane just below a road that crossed overhead. A stretch of dun-colored concrete sloped sharply up to where the overpass began. There were pairs of thick, round pilings at the top and bottom, and the slope itself was smooth and shaded.

Her mother tried to start the car once, then again.

“It won’t go. We’ve run out,” her grandfather said.

“One more try . . .”

Her mother turned the key in the ignition again. Instead of rumblings came a flat-sounding click, like something final locking into place.

“It’s empty,” her grandfather said. Her mother said nothing. She withdrew the key and let her hand rest heavily in her lap.

“What will happen?” Nicole asked.

For a moment her mother didn’t answer. Cars careened past, rocking their own in tremors and making a windy noise that reminded Tara of planes. The road looked dif-

ferent now that they were still, foreign and menacing. On the pavement she could see bits of black and white and dark, oily spots on the roughened surface instead of a smooth, unbroken stream of gray. The white lines that swam together in motion had split into discrete lengths. The whole world seemed flattened, elongated, full of new distances, and Tara herself felt taut and hollow, like the cat's-cradle tricks that Nicole had shown her, string looped around fingers, hooked and crossed and woven into figures; all lines stretched tight with nothing in between. Where was her father in his office at school? she wanted to know with sudden urgency. How far away?

But she didn't ask. She took her sister's hand. "What will we do?" Nicole spoke up again.

Even her grandfather appeared to be waiting for her mother to speak.

"Well, we're stuck!" her mother said at last. She turned around and smiled at them.

Tara was not convinced by this performance. But Nicole said "Stuck!" in a satisfied tone.

"I'll have to walk to the next exit," her mother said. "Right? Dad, you'll stay with them?"

Her grandfather was frowning. "Why not all go?"

"Dad, they'll be exhausted. They'll only slow me down." She paused. "What else can I do?"

The sound of her mother not being sure was like a note struck off-key. Tara began to hum beneath her breath, a familiar song, the song her father sang to her when she could not sleep. A fox ran away into town and took a goose and a hen, *All for his little ones, eight, nine, ten.*

"It's safe to walk on this road? A woman alone is safe?"

"Totally safe." Her mother spoke firmly for the first time since they began watching the fuel gauge. She had set herself in motion again, reaching for her handbag. "I'll call Daniel and he'll come and get me. We can pick up a gallon of gas for the car. I'll leave you the keys, Dad, and there are snacks here in case the girls get hungry." She gave him baggies of carrot sticks and graham crackers, a roll of fruit gums. "Girls, be good for Grandpa. Do exactly as he says, no talking back."

Tara felt a slippery fear; her mother was leaving.

"How long will it take?" asked Nicole.

"An hour at least," Grandpa said to her mother. "Two miles up the road, in this heat, and then waiting for Daniel to come."

"It might be faster," her mother said, but then her voice trembled a little. "I'm sorry, Dad."

There were plenty of miles to go that night, before he reached the town-o. Tara felt the hour stretching

like the lines in the road, breaking apart into so many long minutes that she could not see the end of them.

They watched her go. Marian had told them they could get out of the hot car and sit in the shade. She had pointed to a line in the pavement, about a third of the way up the slope. "Not past there, you understand me," she told the girls. "Stay above that line unless Grandpa takes you and you're holding his hands."

Yes, yes. They were frightened, solemn.

"I'll be as quick as I can, Dad."

They stood clutching his hand as she walked. Twice she turned back and waved. She was wearing thin leather slippers from home, Francis noticed, and a plain cotton white kameez with churidar. Her shadow kept a crouching pace beside her. She grew smaller and smaller and disappeared over the crest of the hill.

The girls were quiet. "Come," said Francis. They had brought their books out of the car; Nicole held them against her chest. "Come. Who will read me a story?"

They sat on the slope. The book was open in Francis's lap and Nicole read in a loud, singsong voice. She put her legs out, but Tara leaned against Francis,

They had reached the highway when he noticed a light flashing red on the dashboard.

curled into something nearly as small as the way he thought of her still, or the way he sometimes liked to think of her mother.

Marian had only walked a short distance, five minutes or so, when a car pulled up gently in front of her. She hesitated, but the man had rolled down his window. He was in his forties, she guessed, a black man in a short-sleeve button-down shirt. "That your family back there?"

She nodded, reluctant to speak, then felt this was inadequate. "Yes, under the bridge."

"Thought so," he said. "You look like you belong to them. Where you all from?"

"We live here. My husband's at the university. But I'm from India."

"India!" He looked at her appraisingly. "How do you like it here?"

This was a question she'd encountered hundreds of times before, at faculty gatherings, dinner parties, lunches with other women. She belonged to a book club, an international group, an art-museum league, a

parents' advisory board. She had cooked large batches of samosas and dressed up in a sari and given talks about India in the girls' school. She was, by nature, a cheerful person, not given to flights of nostalgia, innately well-mannered. She was very happy here, she was accustomed to answering.

But the man looked at her, a stranger to whom she owed nothing. His elbow was out the window, his face broad with a strong chin and — was it her imagination? — kind eyes.

"I miss home," she told him.

He nodded slowly. The sun beat down on the pavement and the top of her head. When he smiled it was not with pity.

"My name is Willy. Let me give you a lift."

She did not think of what her father would say, or her husband. She got in the car, buckled her seat belt, and thanked him.

When Nicole had read both books, she ran to look at the pilings. Tara did not follow. She got up and watched the cars flicking past on the highway. Francis, whose hip had begun to ache, got up also.

"What's wrong, darling? Not feeling well?"

She stood before him, already as tall as his belt, and spoke with both formality and forgiveness; she knew he could not help her. "I want my father," she said.

He looked past her, to the highway. For a moment he imagined it was Marian speaking, or his sons — one at sea and one he didn't know where — or the daughter he had lost before she was a week old. Sometimes he looked at Nicole, who did not resemble her mother or father, and wondered if she might have his own lost daughter's eyes or nose or chin. He would not recognize any of her features.

"Grandpa?"

"What is it?"

"How far is two miles?"

He looked at her — this child of his daughter's, a child he could not have imagined the day Marian left home. He and Essie had waited with Marian in the airport lounge, her eyes large and terrified, and he could think of nothing to say to ease her fright. "You have some cash in your purse? Check and see. You have your coat?" Essie was holding their daughter's hand in two





of her own, and suddenly Marian had reached out to touch his arm.

"You'll write, Dad?"

He had meant to, of course, but he had never been good with his pen.

"We can get you a ticket to come home for Christmas," he told her. Essie frowned at him, but if Marian knew he was lying, she didn't let on. Her eyes filled with tears, and she held his hand. "You'll let us know if you need anything?"

"I will."

But she had managed on her own; she met Daniel and married and had these children. This was the first time, it occurred to Francis, that they had been left entirely in his care.

"I'm king of the world!" called Nicole, who was at the top of the slope.

Tara pointed to the place where her mother had disappeared. "Is that almost two miles?"

"Two miles, you want to know?" He spread his finger and thumb. "In the whole wide world, two miles is this much only. Nothing at all, see? Any minute, Mummy will come."

"How many miles away is Daddy?"

He spread his fingers a little farther. "A small bit more."

She stepped closer. "Where is Grandma? Where is Uncle Jude?"

Francis stretched his hands as far as they would go; he felt the pull in his chest and arms. For a moment he stood like that, and then he let his arms drop to his sides. Cars were passing; what would they think of an old fool with his arms out like a scarecrow's?

"A long way off," he said. "Many, many miles."

Tara nodded, yes. When was the next time he would see this child, he wondered. How old would she be? How would her face have changed?

"But we can go on the plane." She smiled, a funny little triangle of a smile. Then Nicole called her, and she spun away to join her sister.

Willy turned to Marian. "I have a boy myself."

"Oh, yes?"

"He lives with his mother. I see him weekends." He looked at her. "You're worried about those kids of yours, I know. But we're just about there." They were already slowing to turn off the highway and almost at once a gas station announced itself, the sign towering above the road on tall posts. What would her father think of this episode, Marian wondered. How would he remember his visit? It might be his last. The journey was difficult for him.

"Here we go," Willy said. "I got a can in the back. We'll have you back with your family in a jiffy."

Marian rolled down the window. The wind was warm and stirred the hair from her shoulders and suddenly she felt a new lightness. The crisis had passed. The girls were safe; already she was on her way back to them. Her father would be surprised to see her again so soon.

"What's your son's name?" she asked.


Nicole had devised a game. They raced across the top of the slope, from one piling to the other, crossing paths. Tara began to sing to herself again. *So the fox and his wife, without any strife, they cut up the goose with a fork and a knife.* She was beginning to feel hungry. Soon she would ask Grandpa for carrots.

Marian could see them up ahead. The girls were running, two shadowy forms joining together, amoe-

He looked at her — this child of his daughter's, **a child he could not have imagined** the day Marian left home.

bic, indiscernible, until they pulled apart again. Her father was sitting midway up the slope, and Marian was pained to see how tiny he seemed, washed up on this great bleached highway like a bone or pebble, a bit of driftwood. All her worry about what he must think of her drained away and left simply this: her father who needed her, who would soon be leaving.

"There," she said urgently to Willy, who was already gliding toward them.

Cars blasted past, each its own punch of sound. Trucks bore down on them and roared away with a loud and terrible din. When Francis closed his eyes, the noise seemed to become a wall of water, boiling and churning, hurtling forward with a force so great that even out of its path, he could be knocked off his feet. He called the children, but they were like children at the beach, intent on their play and unafraid in a way that made him call their names again. *Come closer. Closer.* The cars and trucks sped on, grim-faced and steely, a current too fast and powerful for him to see properly. Was Marian in one? Another? He could not pick out faces, could not do anything but hold to the sound of his grandchildren laughing, laughing as though nothing could ever harm them, while he closed his eyes against the blur of speed. It rushed past like the torrent of years that had carried away his children and left him waiting by the side of the road for one to circle back and find him. 

NEWS

Mortimer B. Zuckerman gives \$200M for brain-science institute

Mortimer B. Zuckerman, a real-estate developer who is the founder of Boston Properties, the publisher of New York City's *Daily News*, and the chairman and

editor in chief of *U.S. News & World Report*, has given Columbia one of the largest gifts in its history: \$200 million to endow and name the Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute.

The institute, which will be based at the Jerome L. Greene Science Center, a 450,000-square-foot building scheduled to open in 2016 on the new Manhattanville campus, has been years in the planning. It will bring together neuroscientists and researchers from a wide range of fields to study how brain mechanisms underlie high-level functions such as memory, self-awareness, language, and emotion. One of its goals is to achieve a greater understanding of neurological disorders in hopes of developing new therapies.

"Mort Zuckerman shares with Columbia University the belief that acquiring a greater understanding of the brain and the mind will unlock solutions to a vast array of human problems," wrote President Lee C. Bollinger in a statement announcing the gift on December 17. "Moreover,

he believes that to gain these profound insights about human behavior, we must assemble a team of great scholars and scientists . . . On behalf of the University, I want to express our gratitude to Mort Zuckerman for this historic gift and also acknowledge the profound responsibility we have to marshal these resources to expand our knowledge of the mind, brain, and human behavior."

Zuckerman, a Canadian-born businessman educated at McGill, Penn's Wharton business school, and Harvard Law, earned his fortune developing large, elegantly designed properties in cities across the US as the founder of Boston Properties. An outspoken political commentator, Zuckerman writes columns for the *Daily News* and *U.S. News & World Report* and appears regularly on *The McLaughlin Group*.

At a forum on neuroscience held to celebrate his gift in Low Library on December 17, Zuckerman described how visiting the laboratory of Eric Kandel, a Nobel-laureate neuroscientist at Columbia, inspired him.



EILEEN BARROSO

Mortimer B. Zuckerman

Aung San Suu Kyi to students: approach aid work with humility

Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of Burma's pro-democracy opposition party, who spent most of the past two decades under house arrest because of her political activism, came to Columbia to participate in its World Leaders Forum on September 22. Her appearance in Morningside Heights was part of Suu Kyi's first visit to the US since being freed in 2010.

President Lee C. Bollinger, upon introducing Suu Kyi to a packed audience in the Low Rotunda, presented her with a rose. The gesture was symbolic: the late Václav Havel, the Czech dissident writer who became president of his country and who was an artist in residence at Columbia in 2006, had often spoken of wishing to meet her, at which time he said he would give her a single stem. Said Bollinger to Suu Kyi: "Havel understood so well that you provided hope to oppressed people, not only in your own country, but around the globe."

Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize winner elected to Burma's parliament last year, then sat down for a conversation with NBC News correspondent Ann Curry. She reflected on her life growing up in Burma when it was a democracy newly independent from Britain; the 1962 military takeover that turned the country into one of the world's most isolated and impoverished; recent steps taken by the military to loosen its grip on the country; and the current need to rebuild Burma's schools, its financial and banking sector, its judiciary, and nearly all other civilian institutions. "Everything, of course, is in ruins," she said, "which gives us the chance to build everything up from scratch."

Following her talk, Suu Kyi spent half an hour answering students' questions.

Are there certain skills, one student asked, that are especially needed in Burma? "We need good lawyers," Suu Kyi said.

“Eric Kandel is the visionary who convinced me that we stand at the edge of a new era of understanding of the human mind,” said Zuckerman. “He explained that for the first time we have the technology to measure extensively the real effects of drugs and treatment on the brain that would dramatically increase our capacity to deal with that very complicated part of our anatomy . . . Who could not be motivated by the potential benefits to this field of scientific research?”

The plans for the effort that now bears Zuckerman’s name were first announced in 2006, when Columbia received another landmark gift — from the late Dawn Greene and the Jerome L. Greene Foundation — to create a building that would serve as its physical hub. The Jerome L. Greene Science Center, designed by renowned Italian architect Renzo Piano, is now under construction.

At the December 17 forum, which was attended by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and hundreds of faculty, stu-

dents, and reporters, the Zuckerman Institute’s founding codirectors — Kandel and fellow neuroscientists Richard Axel, who is also a Nobel laureate, and Thomas Jessell, a Kavli Prize winner — joined a panel discussion about the future of neuroscience at Columbia. The range of intellectual perspectives among the panelists demonstrated the institute’s multidisciplinary nature. The other participants were Geraldine Downey, a psychology professor who studies personality disorders; Kenneth Forde, a professor emeritus of clinical surgery and a University Trustee; Elizabeth Hillman, an associate professor of biomedical engineering and of radiology; and David H. Strauss, the deputy director for research at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and a vice chair of Columbia’s Department of Psychiatry.

“The universal challenge for the twenty-first century is to understand the mind and its disorders in biological terms,” said Kandel. “But in a larger sense we not only want to understand the nature of the human mind and its diseases, but to also ask a



EILEEN BARROSO

Mortimer B. Zuckerman, second from right, with institute codirectors Richard Axel, Thomas Jessell, and Eric Kandel.

range of questions that link brain science to other areas of knowledge . . . These are the sorts of things that I hope the Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute will try to accomplish in the twenty-first century, and this is what we owe to Mort’s prophetic vision.”

>> To see video of the December 17 event, visit news.columbia.edu/home/2999.

What parts of the Burmese economy need urgent attention? “Agriculture,” she said. “Food security is going to be a greater and greater concern.”

Could she offer advice to young aid workers? “If you really want to come to help Burma, you must do it with a sense of humility,” she said. “The Burmese are a proud people. The fact that they’re poor [and] uneducated does not mean that they like being treated as poor, uneducated people.”

Do Burmese emigrants to the US have a special responsibility to their native country? “You can help if you want to,” she said. But “even if you do not want to help Burma, as long as you are a good citizen of this country, I’m satisfied, because at least you will be a credit to our country . . . People have the right to choose their own lives.”

>> To see video, visit news.columbia.edu/suukyi.



EILEEN BARROSO

Aung San Suu Kyi appeared at the World Leaders Forum in September.

Nobel Prizes go to alumni Robert Lefkowitz and Alvin Roth

Among the nine intellectuals who traveled to Stockholm to receive Nobel Prizes on December 10 were two Columbians: Robert J. Lefkowitz '62CC, '66PS and Alvin E. Roth '71SEAS.

Lefkowitz, a professor at Duke University Medical Center, was awarded the prize in chemistry jointly with Stanford's Brian K. Kobilka for describing how tiny receptors in cell membranes can detect chemicals on the outside of a cell and then translate that information into useful instructions on the inside. The insight is now a cornerstone of drug research.

"Bob Lefkowitz changed our knowledge of one of the most important pathways of the human body," said Robert S. Kass, a Columbia pharmacology professor, shortly after the prize was announced in October.

Alvin E. Roth, a longtime Harvard professor who was recently recruited away to Stanford, shares the prize in economics with Lloyd S. Shapley, a retired UCLA professor. They were honored for developing new

ways to distribute goods or services in situations where no money is exchanged, such as in assigning children to popular public schools or in allocating donated organs to people who await transplants.

"The combination of Shapley's basic theory and Roth's empirical investigations, experiments, and practical design has generated a flourishing field of research and improved the performance of many markets," reads a statement from the Nobel Foundation. "This year's prize is awarded for an outstanding example of economic engineering."

Lefkowitz and Roth are each sharing a \$1.2 million prize with their co-winner.

Cells and sensibility

Robert Lefkowitz was a research fellow at the National Institutes of Health in the late 1960s when he took up a problem that had baffled scientists for decades: how the billions of individual cells in our bodies detect what is happening outside the confines of

their own cell membranes. Scientists had long suspected that these membranes must contain receptors; this had seemed apparent since the late nineteenth century, when scientists first observed that cells respond to the presence of hormones like adrenaline without allowing those hormones to permeate them. But scientists had failed to spot any such receptors.

"When I started doing my work, there was still some skepticism as to whether receptors really existed," says Lefkowitz, a Bronx native who graduated at the top of his class at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1966.

Lefkowitz hypothesized that the receptors were simply too small to have yet been seen and he searched for them using a novel experimental approach: he attached radioactive iodine to hormone molecules, which enabled him to monitor each molecule's path. If a molecule attached itself to a cell membrane, he would bring all his analytic firepower to bear on that spot.

Over the next few years, Lefkowitz and his research team achieved a series of breakthroughs that virtually defined the nascent field of receptor biology. They showed, for instance, that a typical cell receptor consists of an extremely long amino-acid chain wrapped up like a bundle of rope; that the receptor is embedded in a cell membrane like a plug, with one end protruding from the membrane and the other anchored to its inner surface; and that when the exposed end of the receptor is stimulated by a molecule, the shape of the entire receptor changes in a way that triggers a cascade of metabolic activity inside the cell.

Many of Lefkowitz's discoveries were made while he was working closely with his fellow Nobel recipient Brian K. Kobilka, who was a postdoctoral researcher in Lefkowitz's laboratory in the 1980s. Together, they identified genes that contain the DNA blueprints for several cell receptors, each being sensitive to a specific hormone, neurotransmitter, or growth factor.



Robert J. Lefkowitz '62CC, '66PS arrives at his Duke office on October 10 shortly after learning that he won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

AP PHOTO / TED RICHARDSON

This gave them clues about the structure and function of the receptors.

It was for their role in characterizing “G protein-coupled receptors,” the largest class of cell receptors in the human body, that Lefkowitz and Kobilka received the Nobel. Their research led to the discovery of more than a thousand receptors and ushered in a new era of drug development. Today, nearly half of all drugs target G protein-coupled receptors.

Lefkowitz, who serves on the College of Physicians and Surgeons board of visitors, reflected on his student days here while speaking at an alumni event in 2011. As a medical student, Lefkowitz said, he never considered a career in research: “To me, medicine was like a priesthood. I always thought it was the highest and noblest thing you could do in life.”

And although he would soon become “addicted to data” and convinced that advancing medical knowledge was his calling, Lefkowitz still feels that “being a physician is the greatest thing in the world,” he said. “When I write down my occupation, I still write down ‘physician.’”

Better matchmaking

For parents in most US cities, getting a child into a good public school requires careful strategizing. That’s because districts use a school-assignment system whose results can be manipulated. Here’s how it works: parents are asked to submit an ordered list of their preferences. Every school then accepts or rejects those students who listed the school as their first choice. Children who get rejected by their top-choice school are considered by their backup schools only after those schools have looked at all of the children who picked them as a first choice. The result is that parents with unrealistic expectations about a child’s chances of getting into a popular school may get the child bumped all the way down to one of their district’s least desirable schools, as even the ones

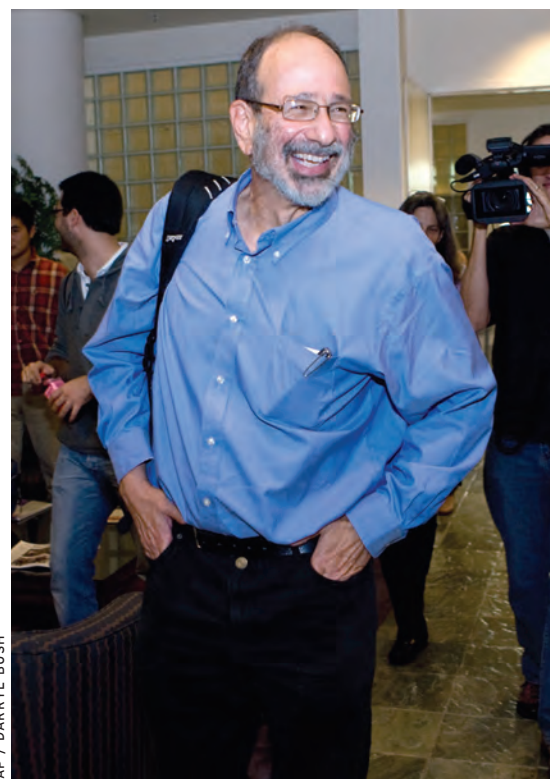
in between fill up. Meanwhile, an unexceptional student may secure a spot in a highly-rated school if the parent picks, say, the district’s third- or fourth-best school as a top choice.

Is there a better way?

Alvin E. Roth has devoted his career to solving such problems. An economist who studied operations research at Columbia’s engineering school, he is an expert in an area of macroeconomic research called matching theory, which addresses how central planners can distribute resources efficiently and fairly. His work builds upon mathematical principles developed in the 1950s and 1960s by Lloyd S. Shapley, with whom Roth shares the Nobel. Shapley’s research, while groundbreaking, was abstract and often whimsical: his most influential paper describes how a group of men and women can schedule dates among themselves in a way that speedily pairs each person with someone they can be assured is the most attractive person who will have them. Roth’s achievement has been to find more pressing real-world problems to which Shapley’s algorithms can be applied.

In the case of school selection, Roth has developed computer programs that help education officials make assignments in a way that balances family preferences with the academic requirements of individual schools, all while creating an incentive for parents to be truthful in their applications. In 2003, New York City implemented a version of Roth’s system, which has since increased the percentage of parents who say they are pleased with their child’s assignment. Boston, Chicago, and Denver have also adopted Roth’s system.

More recently, Roth developed software that physicians across the US are using to organize kidney-donor exchanges. The exchanges address a common problem: when a person needs a kidney transplant, a relative may come forward to donate one, only to find that he or she is an unsuitable donor. Doctors, in response, have begun



AP / DARRYL BUSH

Alvin E. Roth '71SEAS attends a press conference at Stanford announcing his Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences on October 15.

organizing large networks of people such that every participant who needs a kidney receives one from a compatible stranger. Roth’s software identifies which pairs of relatives should be in a given network so that people receive organs best suited to their bodies.

“He’s helping to transform modern medicine,” says surgeon Michael Rees, who runs the transplant center at the University of Toledo Medical Center.

According to Roth, using powerful mathematics to improve people’s lives is the essence of economics.

“Some say economics has all kinds of good tools and techniques, but it has an absence of interesting problems,” he told *Forbes* magazine in 2010. “I look around the world, and I see all kinds of interesting, important problems we ought to solve with the tools we have.”

Journalism dean Nicholas Lemann to step down

After leading the Graduate School of Journalism for a decade, a period in which the rise of digital journalism has prompted the school to undertake some of the most dramatic programmatic changes in its hundred-year history, Nicholas Lemann will step down as dean in June.



Nicholas Lemann discusses the future of journalism in a recent town hall-style meeting with students.

Lemann announced this past October that he will not serve another five-year term as dean. He will remain at the school as a professor.

“My best ideas have been implemented,” Lemann says. “It’s time for somebody else to take over.”

A political journalist who is a staff writer at the *New Yorker* and the author of five books, Lemann plans to take a year-long sabbatical before returning to the classroom in the fall of 2014.

“I want to go back to what I was doing before, which is to choose a big sociopolitical event in American history and tell the story of that event,” says Lemann, whose most recent book, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*, examined the culture of the Reconstruction-era South. “Right now, I’m interested in Wall Street and the global financial system.”

Columbia’s journalism school is a different institution today than it was when Lemann took over in 2003. Since then, the increasing popularity of news websites has led many journalism schools, Columbia’s included, to dramatically expand their instruction in video, audio, and multimedia tools. But unlike most

of its peers, Columbia’s J-school is now also focused on training people to develop new ways of researching and publishing news, such as by inventing computer programs to help reporters spot patterns in huge data sets, designing interactive charts and graphs to display statistics, and creating novel strategies to disseminate content through social media. In the past two years, the school has launched new degree and fellowship programs to teach the necessary skills.

“We’re producing toolmakers, not just tool users,” Lemann says.

During Lemann’s tenure, the journalism school has also deepened its ties with the rest of the University. In 2005, for instance, the school created a master of arts program that gives journalists in-depth knowledge of particular subjects that they aim to cover; students in this program work with journalism professors as well as with faculty in politics, business and economics, arts and culture, and science and health.

“One of my goals was to make the journalism school a more academic institution, one more analytically and intellectually oriented,” says Lemann. “And I think we’ve accomplished that.”

Columbia students rally for Sandy relief

They piled into rental vans and drove to Coney Island in Brooklyn. They borrowed cars from parents and went to the Rockaways in Queens, to Staten Island, to Long Beach, and to the New Jersey shore. They arrived with boxes of food, clothing, blankets, shoes, baby formula, medicine, toys, flashlights, batteries, toiletries, and cleaning supplies.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, students from across the University joined in relief efforts or organized their own.

Claire Kiefer, a student at the School of Nursing, led twenty of her classmates to Belle Harbor, Queens, where the group

spent several days shoveling sand away from houses and cars, cleaning out flooded basements and garages, and tearing up ruined floorboards.

“As nursing students, we strive to improve the lives of all people,” said Kiefer. On this occasion, “we tried to make a difference for people whose lives were affected close to home.”

Some students put their schooling to direct use.

Rob van Haaren and Garrett Fitzgerald, doctoral candidates in earth and environmental engineering, adapted a solar-panel system they had originally designed for

charging electric cars to instead generate electricity at a church in Rockaway Beach that was serving as a distribution point for donated goods. For several weeks, their 1,200-square-foot solar array was laid out in the church’s backyard, powering lights, refrigerators, computers, and cell phones.

“The panels were just sitting in New Jersey not being used,” van Haaren says. “So why not put them to work?”

Chloe Svolakos, a student at the School of Social Work, created a Facebook page showing where people could drop off food and clothing donations in and around New York City. “The idea was to act as

Nicholas Dirks named chancellor of UC Berkeley

Nicholas Dirks, the executive vice president and dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Columbia since 2004, has been named the next chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley.

This summer, he will leave Morningside Heights to take over the University of California system's most prestigious institution, located across the bay from San Francisco.

"I'm deeply honored, and humbled, by this opportunity," says Dirks. "At the same time, I'm going to miss Columbia enormously. I've loved this place."

At UC Berkeley, Dirks faces the formidable task of upholding that institution's standing as the top-ranked public university in the US while keeping it accessible to low- and middle-income California residents. State funding for the University of California system has dwindled in recent years, which has led to tuition hikes and a shift toward enrolling more out-of-state students. In response, students have staged large protests at several campuses, including UC Berkeley's.

"The necessity to relate well with students and other stakeholders at UC Berkeley is especially relevant given the campus'

storied history of political activism," wrote the editors of the *Daily Californian*, Cal's independent student newspaper, in a recent editorial. "Everything we know about Dirks so far suggests that he is up to the task."

Dirks, who is known at Columbia as a warm and approachable figure, was recruited here to chair the anthropology department in 1997. He rebuilt the department, complementing its traditional strength in archaeology with a new focus on social, cultural, and historical studies. An expert on South Asia and the effects of British colonialism, Dirks also made the department more international, hiring many professors from parts of the world that have "typically been the objects, rather than the subjects, of anthropological inquiry," as he once said.

As executive vice president of Arts and Sciences, a position in which Dirks has overseen the operation of six schools — Columbia College, the School of General Studies, the School of International and Public Affairs, the School of the Arts, the School of Continuing Education, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences — he implemented changes that have brought



Nicholas Dirks addresses UC Berkeley students in November.

more coordination to budgetary and hiring decisions.

"Nick was centrally important to sustaining and improving our academic excellence, building and expanding interdisciplinary programs, improving our capacity to be a diverse community, expanding our sources of revenue, and all the while being a friend of us all," wrote President Lee C. Bollinger in a statement on November 8. "While we will miss Nick deeply and are extremely grateful for all he has done for Columbia, we also take great pride in his appointment."

a liaison for people who were prepared to donate but uninformed about the logistics," Svolakos says. "I located donation sites near my friends' homes, and then encouraged them to post pictures of donation boxes to share with others who live in these areas." She has since founded a non-profit, Threads, that has helped to repair the homes of eight Coney Island families.

"I was proud to see that so many of our students were quick to respond and pulled together as a community to support one another and those in need," says Kevin G. Shollenberger, dean of student affairs for the College and Columbia Engineering.



Pictured, from left: Columbia science and engineering undergraduates sorting food donations in Staten Island, the men's Lions basketball team on a cleanup trip in Far Rockaway, and members of Alpha Epsilon Pi and Columbia/Barnard Hillel surveying storm damage on Rockaway Beach.

First "Giving Day" raises \$6.8 million

On October 24, thousands of Columbia alumni and friends went online to participate in the first twenty-four-hour, University-wide annual-fund drive.

Giving Day generated \$6.8 million in new donations — a sum five times as large as the University's previous record for annual-fund gifts in a twenty-four-hour period.

The event drew some 5,000 contributions from fifty states and thirty-nine countries. Forty percent of donors were giving to the University for the first time. The donations will support financial aid, research, and programs across the University.

The success of Giving Day, say University officials, is due in part to its spirit of friendly competition: alumni of sixteen schools jockeyed to win their school a portion of \$400,000 in matching funds that the Board of Trustees kicked in. Columbia

College raised the most money — nearly \$1.3 million — to which the trustees added another \$78,000; the School of Continuing Education achieved the highest alumni participation rate, earning \$40,000 in matching funds.

Throughout the day, the Giving Day website streamed original content, including live video of the preeminent Columbia brain scientist Eric Kandel answering questions sent to him via social media, a roundtable discussion with several deans, and real-time fundraising results.

The event's organizers say they found it gratifying that a large percentage of traffic to the site was referred through social media, such as Facebook posts or Twitter messages from Columbians.

"The success of Giving Day shows the remarkable impact our alumni can make



The Giving Day website features video of faculty, deans, trustees, and students discussing their work at Columbia.

when they come together to achieve a common goal," says CloEve Demmer, the director of annual fund programs.

>> Visit givingday.columbia.edu.



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Dr. Vagelos, Richard Witten '75CC, and Allie Feldberg at the Alumni Leaders Luncheon, October 13, 2012.

In brief

Big screen coming

Katharina Otto-Bernstein '86CC, '92SOA, a filmmaker best known for her award-winning documentaries *Beautopia* and *Absolute Wilson*, has committed \$5 million to create a film screening room in the Lenfest Center for the Arts, the new arts building scheduled to open on the Manhattanville campus in 2016.

The 150-seat Katharina Otto-Bernstein Screening Room will host screenings by prominent and emerging filmmakers, lectures and panel discussions, and artist talks — in addition to providing a place for students to view one another's work.

"It is with great joy that I find myself in the position to give back to the institution that has played an immeasurable role in my development as a filmmaker and as a person," says Otto-Bernstein.

New computations

Dylan Liu '13SEAS recently became the first Columbia Engineering student ever to win a prestigious Marshall Scholarship for graduate study in the UK.

Liu, a native of New Jersey who left high school after the eleventh grade to attend Columbia, plans to pursue a DPhil in theoretical physics at the University of Oxford. He hopes to contribute to the emerging field of quantum computing, which borrows ideas from quantum mechanics in an attempt to design extremely powerful computers.

Pursuing graduate work at Oxford "will quench my thirst for elegant physics," Liu says, "while also fulfilling my commitment to improving our world via applications to biology, neuroscience, economics, chemistry, climate science, and more."

Giving with flair

New Delhi-based entrepreneur Sharik Currimbhoy '02CC has made a donation to Columbia as notable for its dramatic timing as for its generosity: he announced his gift of \$12.12 million at 12:12 p.m. on December 12, 2012.

Currimbhoy, who studied economics at the College from 1998 to 2002 and is the founder of the real-estate and private-equity investment firm Element Capital, says the gift is intended to honor his great-great-grandfather, Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim. It is the largest gift ever to Columbia from an alumnus in India.

According to a University statement, Currimbhoy's gift will "support research and fellowships with a focus on India and emerging markets" at several schools across Columbia.

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—LISA CARNOY '89 CC
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NEWSMAKERS

Good Fortune

Two Columbians were included on *Fortune* magazine's 2012 "40 Under 40" list, which recognizes rising stars in the business world. **Binta Niambi Brown '95BC, '98LAW** was ranked 35th for her work as a partner with the law firm Kirkland & Ellis, as well as for



COURTESY OF KIRKLAND & ELLIS

Binta Niambi Brown '95BC, '98LAW

her reputation as one of the country's top black fundraisers. The youngest trustee of Barnard College, Brown also has served as an adviser to New York governors Eliot Spitzer and Andrew Cuomo, as well as to Hillary Clinton during her senatorial term. **Benjamin Jealous '94CC**, who in 2008 became the youngest president of the NAACP, was 37th on the list. A Rhodes Scholar and fifth-generation NAACP member, he has increased the organization's revenue by 10 percent annually and expanded programs in economic literacy, education, and health.

High-Tech Checks

Two Columbia Engineering professors were included on *Forbes* magazine's list of "30 Under 30" notable science and health professionals. **Christine Fleming**, an assistant professor of electrical engineering, has created optical-imaging catheters to get detailed images of the heart walls, which could help doctors to better diagnose disease. **Changxi Zheng**, an assistant professor of computer science, was recognized for his work devel-

oping machines that make realistic natural sounds, helping to create an impressive virtual representation of our physical world . . . **Clifford Stein**, the chair of the Department of Industrial Engineering and Operations Research, was honored with an Association for Computing Machinery Fellowship, which recognizes the highest achievements in computing research and development. Stein's research has recently focused on developing innovative ways to help computer processors save energy.

Leading the Way

Sheena Wright '90CC, '94LAW has taken over as president and CEO of United Way of New York City, becoming the first woman to lead the organization in its seventy-five-year history. Wright was most recently president and CEO of the Abyssinian Development Corporation, where she managed an extensive network of community and economic-development activities in Harlem.

Capturing Awards

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures named **Kathryn Bigelow '81SOA** best director for *Zero Dark Thirty*, her film about the killing of Osama bin Laden, which also won for best picture. Additionally, Bigelow recently won the best-director



Kathryn Bigelow '81SOA

award from the New York Film Critics Circle, becoming the first woman ever to win it twice. She was also honored by the group in 2009 for *The Hurt Locker*.

Big Macs

Three members of the Columbia community received \$500,000 MacArthur Fellowships, or "genius grants" for creativity, originality, and long-term potential in their fields. **Maria Chudnovsky**, a mathematician and professor of industrial engineering and operations research, will use the grant to continue her research on complex graph theory. Novelist **Dinaw Mengestu '05SOA**, who is the author of *The Beautiful Things*



Dinaw Mengestu '05SOA

That Heaven Bears and *How to Read the Air*, was recognized for his use of fiction to paint a powerful portrait of the African diaspora in America. Also a noted journalist, he has recently covered conflicts in Darfur, Uganda, and Congo. Geochemist **Terry Plank '93GSAS**, a professor in Columbia's Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, is best known for her research on tectonic plates and the thermal and chemical forces that result from their collisions.

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WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / SGT. MICHAEL CONNORS

EXPLORATIONS

Hope for new life in diabetic pancreas cells

Scientists thought they knew the cause of type 2 diabetes. First, the body becomes resistant to insulin, a hormone that transports blood sugar to cells that need the energy. Then, insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, like the one pictured at right, strain to meet the need and die prematurely.

A new study by Columbia medical researchers Domenico Accili and Chutima Talchai suggests that the disease progresses in a different way. In experiments on mice, the researchers have shown that worn-down pancreas cells do not typically die but instead regress to an earlier stage of their development, when they were undifferentiated “progenitor” cells not yet capable of functioning in an adult body.

This appears to solve a mystery that had emerged in recent years. “When you look at a diabetic pancreas, you find very few, if any, dead beta cells, which are the ones that make insulin,” says Accili, a professor of medicine, whose paper appeared in the September 14 issue of the journal *Cell*. “So the organ dysfunction is out of proportion with the number of dead cells. Nobody has had a plausible explanation for this.”

The discovery is exciting, Accili says, because it suggests the possibility that pancreas cells that have regressed might be coaxed back into maturity, thus regaining their ability to produce insulin.



DAVID MACK / SCIENCE SOURCE IMAGES

Currently, type 2 diabetes is treated with drugs that try to extend pancreas cells’ insulin-producing life for as long as possible.

“That’s like flogging a dying horse,” says Accili. “You can push these cells only so far.”

Although it is too soon to know if his efforts will succeed, Accili is now searching for drugs that might reverse the degeneration process.

“It’s a pretty new idea,” Alan Saltiel, a diabetes expert at the University of Michigan, told the *New York Times* recently, and it “offers a lot of hope.”

Cloudy, with a chance of flu

Predicting where and when an influenza epidemic will break out is notoriously difficult. This is because a flu bug’s spread is determined not only by its virulence, but also by weather conditions and social factors, such as how vigilantly people follow prevention tips.

Jeffrey Shaman, an assistant professor at Columbia’s Mailman School of Pub-

lic Health, and Alicia Karspeck, of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, have overcome these obstacles to create the first flu forecasting system capable of predicting the severity and timing of influenza outbreaks weeks in advance. They say this information could one day help public-health officials decide when to stockpile flu vaccines and drugs, and perhaps, in the case of truly harrowing forecasts, when to close schools and workplaces.

Their technology analyzes meteorological data relevant to influenza’s spread — cold, dry air is especially agreeable to flu viruses, for instance — together with information drawn from Google Flu Trends, a Web tool that provides near real-time estimates of flu incidences based on the

numbers of flu-related Internet searches in a region. To test their computer model, the scientists generated retrospective forecasts for the 2003–2008 flu seasons in New York City and found that the model could predict the peak timing of an outbreak nearly two months before it occurred. The results appear in the December 11 issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Shaman and Karspeck say their technology could be ready for implementation in a couple of years.

“The forecasts developed here indicate that we will soon reach an era when reliable forecasts of some infectious pathogens are as commonplace as weather predictions,” their study concludes.



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REVIEWS



The Sadar Bazaar wholesale market in Delhi, India, 2005.

Live, Work, Drink, Dream // By Basharat Peer

A Free Man: A True Story of Life and Death in Delhi

By Aman Sethi (W. W. Norton & Co., 240 pages, \$24.95)

If I were asked to name the single work of American literature that is most widely read and discussed in cities and towns, colleges and universities across India, my guess would be John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. The choice is natural — conversations in India about rural-urban migration and the struggles of village folk who turn into badly paid and barely protected industrial workers have often reminded me of Steinbeck's Joad family. And while the worker is a key figure in American literature, particularly over the last century, he is curiously absent from contemporary Indian fiction.

That gap is gradually being filled by a growing number of non-fiction writers. The first wave of "New India" books, published

in the last decade, sought to describe and explain the country of a billion people and capture the changes to that country brought on in part by India's rising economy. As Indian entrepreneurs oversold the story of the nation's imminent superpower status, correctives to that vision began to emerge as well: the Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist Katherine Boo '88BC published her extraordinary account of life in a Bombay slum, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, and the New York-based Indian writer Siddhartha Deb '06GSAS traveled across the country to report his account of India's gilded age of new money and new poverty in *The Beautiful and the Damned*.

Aman Sethi's *A Free Man* is an excellent addition to these books, which bring into sight the hidden worlds of India's have-nots. Owing to the high growth rate of the Indian economy over the past decade, the number of Indians working as laborers in construction has more than doubled, from 18 million in 2000 to around 44 million in 2010. Sethi '09JRN, a young reporter who grew up in New Delhi and worked there for a magazine, sets out to understand the life of just one of those 44 million.

Sethi met Mohammad Ashraf, a forty-year-old house painter, and his friends in a decrepit, crowded part of Delhi abutting the city's Muslim ghetto. Bara Tooti is a labor market populated by painters and plumbers, salesmen and repairmen, rickshaw pullers and cigarette sellers, *mazdoors* (laborers) and *mistrys* (masons), a place "on the streets of which daily wagers like Ashraf live, work, drink, and dream." It provides work and wages a man can survive on, but it is a hard, exacting place, where the pressures of life often send people into hospitals, drive them mad, or even kill them at an early age.

Ashraf and his friends live on the street. They have stitched pockets in the insides of their shirts and pouches into the waistbands of their trousers — on-person vaults where they keep their money, identity papers, and phone numbers of homes they left years ago. In the mornings, except when they are too hung-over, they squat with their tools in the Bara Tooti and wait for contractors to pick them up for a day's work: painting a wall, repairing a roof, or lugging bags of cement and piles of bricks up construction-site scaffolding.

Ashraf wasn't always homeless. In fact, his beginnings were promising: his mother was a maid in the house of a professor in the North Indian state of Bihar; the professor sent Ashraf to school and eventually to college, where he studied biology. But then the lonely professor's house became the focus of the land mafia — increasingly pervasive groups of political officials who acquire, develop, and sell land illegally. Thugs began to surround the professor's house. To ward them off, Ashraf fired at the mafia boss with the professor's handgun, but missed. The mafia left, but weeks later the professor was killed in a mysterious car accident, ending Ashraf's hopes of a better life. Fear pushed Ashraf out of Bihar, onto a long journey as an itinerant laborer: he worked as a farmhand in Punjab, a butcher in Bombay, a marble-tile polisher in Calcutta, and a tailor in Delhi before ending up on the streets of Bara Tooti.

Sethi spent more than five years meeting with Ashraf to tease out the texture and timeline of Ashraf's current life and the many lives he led before coming to Bara Tooti, which makes for a rich, detailed portrait. Sethi's diligence also reveals the market dwellers' inner selves, their loneliness, their compassion, their friend-

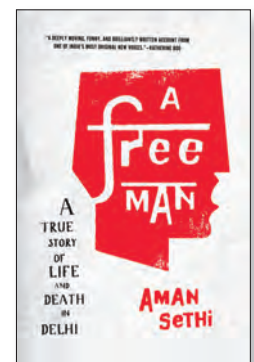
ships, and, in a recurring theme, their dreams of striking it rich. "Everyone at Bara Tooti has at least one good idea that they are convinced will make them unimaginably wealthy," Sethi writes.

The person in Bara Tooti who comes the closest to succeeding is Kalyani, an entrepreneurial woman who runs an illegal bar and falls into a lucrative second enterprise. Adjacent to Bara Tooti is a bazaar where grain merchants unload trucks of expensive basmati rice into warehouses. The laborers use iron hooks to load and unload the jute sacks from the trucks, spilling some grains of rice in the process. Kalyani moves in like a sparrow, sweeping up "the mixture of grain, mud, and grit into a gunny sack" and sifting it to get several kilos of "fragrant basmati rice." A few months into her venture, Kalyani collects between ten and fifteen kilos of rice every day. She strikes an arrangement with the warehouse owners and hires an army of workers to collect and clean the spilled rice.

Neither Ashraf nor his friends Rehaan and Laloo are that fortunate. After cycles of working and drinking, their loneliness and luck do them in. Rehaan, who fantasizes about making money by opening a goat or pig farm in his North Indian village, falls from a ladder on a construction site. "Dropped off a tall ladder, these bones shatter, these muscles tear, these tendons snap, and when they do, they leave behind a crumpled shell in the place of a boy as beautiful and agile as Rehaan," Sethi writes in one of the most moving passages of the book. Laloo, already plagued with a limp, goes mad and is seen running naked after cycle rickshaws, with fists full of rupees, shouting, "Two hundred rupees for the day. Today I want to see all of Delhi, everything."

And Ashraf himself, with Sethi's financial support, moves to Calcutta, looking for an old friend and the life he left behind. But there, too, he ends up on the street, and eventually in a hospital with tuberculosis. Sethi goes beyond the conventional duties of a reporter, helping Ashraf with money and sending his friends over to help, but the two men's phone calls to each other, which animate the book with great dialogue, eventually stop. Ashraf disappears from the hospital, leaving Sethi only to hope that someday Ashraf will call him at midnight, as was his way, and say, "Aman Bhai, I hope I didn't disturb you. You should come see me some time."

Basharat Peer '07JRN is the author of Curfewed Night, an award-winning account of the Kashmir conflict.



The Longest Season // By Chandler Rosenberger

Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948

By Madeleine Albright (Harper, 480 pages, \$29.99)

Madeleine Albright once famously asked General Colin Powell why he would not support sending US forces into the former Yugoslavia to halt Serbian atrocities. “What are you saving this superb military for, Colin,” Albright asked in exasperation, “if we can’t use it?”

Albright’s frustration was a response to the bloody ethnic violence that descended on the Balkans and also Rwanda in the early 1990s. As US ambassador to the United Nations and later as secretary of state, Albright ’68SIPA, ’76GSAS, ’95HON pushed hard for intervention against human-rights abusers, especially the Serbs. In 1999, she insisted that the Serbian military withdraw from Kosovo, even though the province was still internationally recognized as a part of a sovereign Serbia. When Serb leader Slobodan Milošević refused, Albright had NATO bombers ready to force his troops out.



At the time, Albright seemed to be responding to the chaos of the post-Cold War period. But her latest book reveals just how deep her commitment to resisting wicked regimes runs.

In *Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*, Albright may well have written the most poignant account we have in English of the tragic destruction of the so-called First Republic — the Czechoslovakia of interwar Europe — at the hands of Hitler and Stalin. Not much of this account is truly autobiographical: Albright was born only in the last years of the Republic’s existence and spent much of her childhood either in exile in London or with her diplomat father in postwar Yugoslavia. Like her contemporary, the future Czech president Václav Havel, Albright was too young to understand the larger forces undoing her country.

For contemporary reflections on the Republic’s fate, Albright turns to the letters, journals, and articles of her parents’ generation, especially those of her extraordinary father, Josef Korbel. This perspective allows Albright to infuse old political debates with the warmth of conversation at the family dinner table. Korbel and his contemporaries were not merely serving a historical state — they were building a home for their children. Albright portrays Korbel’s colleagues, especially Czechoslovak foreign minister and future president Eduard Beneš, in a detailed historical setting that feels as personal as a family photograph.

This intermingling of the familial and political gives *Prague Winter* unusual force as Albright discovers the true extent of her family’s suffering. Albright’s parents had raised her as a Roman Catholic; growing up she never knew that her parents had converted from Judaism or that dozens of her relatives had perished in Nazi camps. Albright did not even know that her own paternal grandfather had died at Terezín until the *Washington Post* explored her background in 1997.

Albright eventually discovered that while her parents were married in a civil ceremony and identified on their marriage certificate as *bez vyznání* (“without religion”), they converted to Catholicism while in exile in England. Why, Albright wonders, did her parents convert *then*? They no longer needed fear the Nazis. Why convert once safely abroad?

Albright’s answer is utterly convincing, and also troubling. Working for a government in exile, she writes, the Korbels wanted to “underline our family’s identity as Czechoslovak democrats.” In the Czech political culture of the time, Jews were often disparaged as serving an international financial conspiracy or nostalgic for the Habsburg Empire. The Korbels’ concerns were quickly confirmed when a Czech group that had organized to resist the Nazis reported to London that they would be happy if the Jews who had fled stayed away.

Even a country as proudly humanitarian as the First Republic was not untainted by the ethnic prejudices that we associate with other Central European countries. The accommodations made to minorities could not disguise the fact that the First Republic was ultimately the fulfillment of the national aspirations of two nations: the Czech and, to a lesser extent, the Slovak peoples. The Czechs had built themselves a home, but Czechoslovakia’s roof stretched over peoples who had not been asked whether they wanted to move in.

This led to a bitter irony. Even the anti-Semites in the Czech resistance saw that the true threat to their country came from another minority, the country’s three million Germans, themselves centuries-long inhabitants of the territory. Many *Sudetendeutsch* welcomed their brethren from Germany proper when they marched in to dismantle the First Republic in 1938. This treason convinced the Czech leadership that any sizable German minority was now intolerable; at the first opportunity, the reconstituted government in Prague expelled nearly all of its Germans, regardless of individual innocence or guilt. Thousands were killed on the spot; thousands more died in transit. Millions lost their own ancestral homes.

Albright recognizes that innocent Germans were harmed in these purges, though she makes clear that her sympathies are with the Czech government. “Small countries can survive hostile neighbors,” she writes, “but the odds lengthen when a significant national minority identifies with the enemy.” This sentiment may well be of a piece with the tough-mindedness that Albright showed in protecting Kosovo’s Albanians from the Serbian army some fifty years later. But as Albright herself acknowledges, Havel and other Czech anti-Communists came to see the expulsions of Germans as a step down the path to totalitarian rule. No one, it turned out, could out-demagogue the Communists on questions of collective

guilt: a party that could portray all the “bourgeoisie” as criminals could also portray every German as a national traitor. One can admire Albright’s excellent book and the moral urgency that she brought to US foreign policy. One can also recognize that the homeland she loves suffered when it did not live up to the ideals it was meant to embody.

Chandler Rosenberger is the chair of the International and Global Studies Program at Brandeis University. He wrote about the collapse of Czechoslovakia as a fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs.

Signs of the Times // By Joshua J. Friedman

New York Neon

By Thomas E. Rinaldi (W. W. Norton & Co., 192 pages, \$26.95)

How did neon go from a glowing symbol of the future to an emblem of urban decay?

At its pinnacle in the 1930s, eight miles of neon dazzled visitors to the 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago, while in New York the layout men, tin knockers, and tube benders of any given sign shop produced around sixty-five linear feet a day.

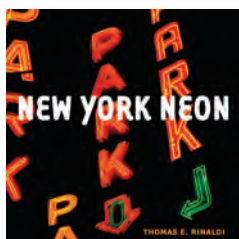
Civic reformers had long condemned all electrified signs as cheap salesmanship run amok. Madison Square was for a time host to both the stately Dewey Arch and, facing it, a giant illuminated Heinz sign crowned by a forty-five-foot pickle: “The dancing flash-lights of the ‘57 varieties,” wrote one critic, “are unimaginable except in nightmare.”

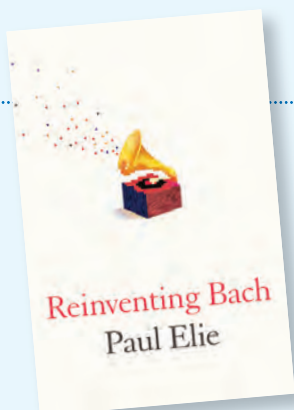
But the fall of neon’s reputation didn’t come until the post-World War II era, when families fled to bedroom suburbs, and neon came to be identified with gin joints and flophouses — the decadence of the city itself. “The joint looked like trouble,” intones Dick Powell in *Murder, My Sweet*, as the camera finds a bar’s flickering letters.

Today, urban life is back in fashion, and preservationists are discovering neon just as it disappears. In *New York Neon*, Thomas E. Rinaldi ’10GSAPP documents his favorite specimens, through photographs taken in the short window between dusk and the illumination of the street lamps. On many blocks, the old neon outshines its setting. As the architect Robert A. M. Stern ’60CC once joked about the blue neon letters atop the Pan Am building, “Couldn’t they just leave the sign up and take the building down?”



THOMAS E. RINALDI





Vogue Fugues and Mod Moogs

The book: *Reinventing Bach* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

The author: Paul Elie '91SOA

Columbia Magazine: Your book interleaves a biography of Johann Sebastian Bach with profiles of a handful of musicians closely associated with Bach's music and a history of sound recording. Could you have written a similar book about Beethoven or Mozart?

Paul Elie: The book is in part about my experiences, and my experiences were with Bach. Moreover, the literature of Bach, not some other composer, led me to the theme of invention. Bach repurposed his work more than other composers did. The crossover from sacred to secular is more common in his work. There is more transcription of his work for other instruments and other contexts. On top of that, I feel that using other composers in other contexts usually has a popularizing, missionary purpose that changes the identity of the music. Repurposed Bach seems to remain Bach in a way that "A Fifth of Beethoven," the 1970s disco number, does not remain Beethoven. That's an aesthetic judgment, but it's my judgment.

CM: At around the same time, many college students had LPs of *Switched-On Bach*, by Wendy Carlos '65GSAS, with music played on a Moog synthesizer.

PE: That was a radical repurposing of Bach, and yet no less a Bach interpreter than Glenn Gould called it "the record of the decade." Instead of shunning it as an inauthentic bit of musical carpetbagging or a gimmick, he said that this electronic Bach really *is* Bach.

CM: Inevitably most of us who are not practicing musicians know Bach through recordings, some of which are very great. But do we know Bach, or do we know Albert Schweitzer, Pablo Casals, Leopold

Stokowski, Glenn Gould, Yo-Yo Ma, and Lorraine Hunt Lieberson?

PE: The whole nature of musical influence has changed because of recordings. You're influenced by particular artists to whose live performances you would not have had access, but also by the aural perfection that is suggested by their recordings. A century ago, most Americans would know Bach from the odd German guy in their town who gave music lessons and played at the local athenaeum. Or maybe you heard Koussevitzky lead a performance of Bach in Boston in the 1930s. That one-time experience would become a musical memory; you had a sense of the music at full power from that one day. It was just in your head, and you couldn't play it a second time.

CM: You're a serious thinker about Catholicism; your first book is about a group of Catholic writers at mid-century. Were you attracted to Bach as a composer of religious music — though mostly Lutheran?

PE: Ever since I was a graduate student at Columbia, I have been interested in religious artists and people who managed to have it both ways — who are authentically religious and are true artists, too. That's the way I feel about Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy and Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day, and that's certainly true of Bach. It was out of that yearning for a combination of creativity and spirituality that I went to Bach. As aware as I was of Bach as a Lutheran and as a composer of sacred works, my visceral reaction to the music was primary. I heard it and thought, "Wow, this is it — this is what I like." I still haven't gotten over my sense of the rightness of the music and the way that it somehow makes its claim on each of us per-

sonally. Bach is one of the most renowned musicians of all time. You know that countless people have loved this music, and yet you feel, somehow, that it's yours.

CM: You describe intensely personal interpreters of Bach — Stokowski and Gould in particular — as well as the early performance movement, which sought an elusive, authentic Bach. Is Bach still being reinvented in 2012?

PE: Definitely. Just this fall in New York you had Angela Hewitt doing Bach piano music at Le Poisson Rouge, Cameron Carpenter doing very bold Bach organ performances at Lincoln Center, and Chris Thile, a virtuoso mandolin player who got a MacArthur grant, playing one of the Brandenburg concertos arranged for his bluegrass ensemble. Michael Century, a professor at RPI, has just created a Goldberg Variations app that enables you to play and analyze many different recorded versions simultaneously.

CM: When did you start listening to Bach?

PE: When I was a graduate student I listened to WKCR all the time — mainly the jazz programming. Around December 22 every year, they stop playing jazz and start playing Bach for a week straight. The BachFest was the best master class you could ever have. The people presenting the music were remarkably knowledgeable and articulate — about the music, the performance issues and styles, the various great performers. The BachFest is a gift to the city, and it changed my life. When you go into shops around New York and hear the BachFest on the radio, you have the sense that the music of Bach is the people's music. I feel it every year. — MBS

Kissing Teeth // By Daniel Asa Rose

Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria

By Noo Saro-Wiwa (Soft Skull Press, 272 pages, \$15.95)

Transwonderland is an amusement park constructed, after much public anticipation, in Noo Saro-Wiwa's native Nigeria. The park, a collection of gloriously westernized kitsch ("the closest thing Nigeria has to Disney World"), represents everything Saro-Wiwa '01JRN felt Nigeria lacked when she was growing up in England and forced to traipse home to troublesome old Africa every summer vacation. But in Saro-Wiwa's *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria*, the park turns out to be the least of it. When she travels back to her ancestral homeland as an adult, it's really transcendence she's tracking. Ready or not.

Part guided tour, part family history, the journey seems to represent an important moment for the thirty-six-year-old author, an ambitious reconciliation of her past and future. Even if the parts didn't flow together as well as they do, Saro-Wiwa's first book would be a fresh, invigorating look at a culture not often documented in Western books — and certainly not like this.

Nigeria, it turns out, is considered by other Africans to be the rowdy child of the continent, a naughty "nation of ruffians" with a penchant for disorder that is only sometimes amusing. According to Saro-Wiwa, Nigerians "like to shout at the tops of our voices, whether we're telling a joke, praying in church or rocking a baby to sleep." At the theater, it seems, the only people in the audience not chatting on cell phones at an "unapologetic volume" are those yelling out unsolicited suggestions to the actors onstage. The "jagga jagga" nature of Nigerian life (the slang term, meaning "messed up," is from a local hip-hop song a few years back) is attributable to "decades of political corruption" that have left the populace "deeply suspicious of authority." During its forty-seven years of independence, she writes, "Nigeria has lurched from one kleptocracy to the next," so that the photographs of national leaders on a museum wall resemble "a series of criminal mugshots, a line-up of chief suspects in the ruination of Nigeria."

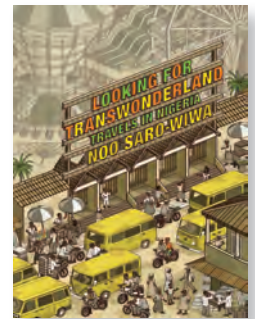
Whatever its origins, this boisterousness also speaks to a certain zest in the national character that the reader can't help but find, at times, endearing. Best intentions in every sphere of society may be doomed to fizzle before the avalanche of "misallocated funds, apathy and . . . fecklessness," but there's no gain-saying the fact that Nigeria was the world's biggest importer of champagne during the oil boom of the early '80s, and that "Nollywood" is the third-largest film industry in the world, churning out three "shoddy" and "interminable" movies per day. "It's a money-making business," says the author with a tone of exasperated fondness, "run largely by fast-buck entrepreneurs without a creative bone in their collective bodies."

No wonder she uses the phrase "kissing teeth" at least a dozen times (to the sorry exclusion of other sounds/gestures) — in one instance, three on a single page. It's a hard-to-describe sound (used in Jamaica as well as in parts of Africa) meant to express mild disapproval. The closest equivalent Westerners have is a tsk-tsk or tut-tut, but this is a hiss that can be deployed without losing one's cool or appearing starchy.

Noo Saro-Wiwa is the daughter of slain Nigerian writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, and her travels are in part a journey to better understand his legacy. Her father was an outspoken critic of the Nigerian government. He needled officials for failing to enforce environmental regulations against widespread abuse by foreign oil interests. His arrest and execution in 1995 caused an international uproar that resulted in Nigeria's being suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations for three and a half years. Nineteen years old at the time, Noo was forced to set aside her youthful rebelliousness and begin a long process of grasping that her father was more than just the embarrassing guy who had the bad taste to install a sea-green carpet in his home to match the stripes in the national flag. Reappraisal of her father and homeland took years, culminating in this book, which is deeply felt and also charmingly blithe.

Our guide is intrepid as she goes about balancing the dark and light of her birthplace. There seems no place she will not go and no conveyance she will not try. Weary of overcrowded buses, as well as the car driven by her father's former chauffeur, she discovers she loves hitching rides on "okadas," or motorcycles for hire. "Though fraught with danger and often ridden by reckless drunks in a hurry, okadas were exciting, liberating and cheap, and they appealed to a downwardly mobile side to my character I hadn't known existed. I would use this form of transport even if I were a billionaire."

She may be scarred by aspects of her past, but Saro-Wiwa makes sure we are well entertained as she squires us through dog shows ("The first dog, a boar bull called Razor, casually urinated during her inspection. Thoroughly amused, the crowd cheered") and Nollywood film sets, where she is offered a role ("Once upon a time, I might have laughed at the offer. Now, I swelled with hubris . . . imagining myself with a copper-coloured hair weave, preparing my Oscar acceptance speech"). Inevitably, she pays her respects to Transwonderland, a suitably "forlorn landscape of



motionless machinery . . . rusting amid the tall grass,” where she samples the neglected Ferris wheel. “Sitting alone on the empty ride made me feel self-conscious. Should I smile or look serious? I couldn’t decide. Smiling made me look a little foolish and deranged but keeping a straight face would make me look inappropriately solemn, if not *more* foolish and deranged.” A few stray onlookers look bored enough to kiss their teeth.

Saro-Wiwa is so committed to giving us a complete field dispatch, she even turns to the classified ads. Lucky thing, because her labors yield her the following, from a Sunday newspaper section where wannabe gigolos troll for sugar mamas. “Tony, 27, undergraduate, needs a caring, independent, neat and comfortable sugar mummy who needs sexual satisfaction.” “Victor from Port Harcourt needs a fat sugar mummy with big boobs. He promises to satisfy her needs.”

And here is where wheat is separated from chaff. Noo Saro-Wiwa, late of King’s College London and Columbia University, does not merely pore over these ads. Leaving no stone unturned in her quest for journalistic completeness, she phones the men that placed them.

“But can you satisfy me if you don’t find me attractive?” she sensibly asks one of her potential blind dates.

“‘Blood flows in my veins,’ he said impatiently. ‘I’m not a statue. You’re going to have *feeling* . . . I promise.’”

Feeling is what the reader gets, too, from this daring, alert, affectionate, spunky book. You won’t need to kiss your teeth . . . I promise.

Daniel Asa Rose is the author of Larry’s Kidney, named a best book of 2009 by Publishers Weekly.

Asylum Seeker // By Rebecca Shapiro

The Devil in Silver

By Victor LaValle (Spiegel & Grau, 432 pages, \$27)

Pepper isn’t crazy. Or at least no more than the rest of us. But he does have a temper, a lack of impulse control, and about five inches and a hundred pounds on your average guy. “He wasn’t Greek mythology-sized; wasn’t tossing boulders at passing ships . . .

He stood at six foot three and weighed two hundred seventy-one pounds, and if that doesn’t sound big to you, then you must be a professional wrestler.” In *The Devil in Silver*, the ominous, sharply observant new novel from writing professor Victor LaValle ’98SOA, those things and a hefty dose of bad luck are all it takes for indefinite confinement in the psychiatric wing of Queens’s New Hyde Hospital.

It’s painful to work through the first quarter of the book, as Pepper makes a series of slight wrong turns that lead him, at alarming speed, to a dead end. His journey starts with a chivalrous act gone awry — one punch to the face of the violent ex of a woman Pepper is trying to impress. The police are called, and Pepper punches one of them, too. But while he should just be arrested, the cops are feeling lazy at the end of their shift and invoke a little-known loophole to get him off their hands paperwork-free — they cry crazy and dump

him at New Hyde for a mandatory three-day observation period: “After an hour Pepper was, officially at least, a mental patient.”

Since Pepper isn’t actually mentally ill, the observation period should be a breeze. But before he can even make a phone call home, a modern-day Nurse Ratched appears with a dose of anti-psychotics so potent that they render him immobile. With these pills, it suddenly becomes clear that something tragic is happening at New Hyde. The nurses are buried in red tape; the one doctor is absent; and the patients, many of whom have been captive there for years, shuffle around in a medicated haze, unable even to walk the hallways without clutching a special railing. Pepper comes out of his stupor long enough to lash out a few times, only to see his dosage increased. Then, in a terrifying moment, he finally wakes up. The seventy-two-hour period has long passed; Pepper has been at New Hyde for more than four weeks and in his semiconsciousness, has signed away his right to leave.

Pepper is a sympathetic narrator, which makes his unfortunate situation all the more frustrating and LaValle’s social commentary all the more effective. As he falls deeper and deeper into life at New Hyde, it’s impossible not to wonder what would have happened if he had had family to advocate for him, or a lawyer to interpret the fine print, or a better education that might have helped him to navigate the system. Similarly, though most of his fellow patients are justifiably confined, they are not properly treated and are inca-



pable of self-advocacy, which keeps them there longer, further draining the hospital's already insufficient resources.

LaValle is also the author of a short-story collection and two previous novels, and while the four books differ in scope and circumstance, he writes compassionately in all of them about the underclass, the kind of people that society tends to forget. His protagonists are plagued by schizophrenia, obesity, addiction, and passivity, yet all are big-hearted and warmly drawn.

As Pepper becomes further entrenched in life at New Hyde, other such faces begin to emerge around him. He learns to lean on Dorrie, a self-appointed den mother, and grows accustomed to Coffee, his paranoid Ugandan roommate, who is usually found commandeering the pay phones. Pepper may have more mental faculty than the others, but he is just as lonely and disenfranchised, and the makeshift community that he builds is one bright spot in an otherwise bleak world.

But while these developments feel genuine, another major turn in the plot feels forced and causes the novel to lose focus. It soon becomes clear to Pepper that there is evil dwelling in New Hyde — the titular devil, a demonic creature confined to one wing of the hospital who pays residents midnight visits. Everyone at New Hyde seems more focused on exorcising the demon than on their own recovery or release, and soon Pepper, too, becomes obsessed with the creature, seeking answers where none are to be found. And as he does, his sanity finally begins to waver.

The monster, a physical manifestation of the fear prevalent on every page, is unnecessary and distracts from the book's real darkness. How can this system continue day after day, Pepper finally begs the elusive doctor, with no checks, no consequences, no questioning? How has it gone unnoticed that the system isn't helping anyone? "The system," the doctor replies, "is working *exactly* right for those it was *intended* for."

Consider the Octahedron // By Evelyn Lamb

Measurement

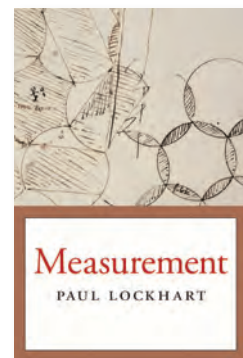
By Paul Lockhart (Harvard University Press, 416 pages, \$29.95)

Draw a triangle. Go ahead: I'll wait. Now draw three more lines, each connecting one corner to the center of the opposite side. If your drawing is precise enough, you will find that the three new lines appear to cross at a single point in the interior of the triangle. But do they really? If so, why? And how could you prove that you didn't just draw a lucky triangle? These questions are the subject of the first exploration in Paul Lockhart's *Measurement*, a book about the joy — and difficulty — of mathematical discovery.

Measurement is not just for those who think of themselves as mathematically inclined. Lockhart '90GSAS, a mathematics teacher at Saint Ann's School, in Brooklyn, starts with basic facts about geometry and invites even mathematical novices to join his journey through rigorous mathematical arguments. Many popular books and articles aim to tie mathematics to everyday life: calculus is used to study income inequality, game theory explains international politics, and limits are used to figure out compound interest. Lockhart takes a different approach. To him, mathematics is an alternate world, a theoretical realm filled with impossibly perfect forms. Shapes inhabit a sort of Platonic domain: the circles he cares about are ideals, all the infinitely small points exactly the same distance from the center. But in the real world, even a "circle etched in gold by a

laser to within a billionth of an inch" falls short of that ideal. It's made of atoms that aren't infinitely small. The atoms all have size and weight, and if that weren't enough, they won't stop jiggling around.

The first part of *Measurement*, "Size and Shape," is about the geometry most people studied in high school. Lockhart reintroduces readers to polygons, circles, and three-dimensional forms, and helps them learn how to ask and answer questions about these abstract objects. He cleverly derives the volume formula for a special kind of pyramid, for example, and then uses previously discussed ideas about deforming shapes to show how to generalize the formula to all pyramids. He leaves readers with a similar question about an octahedron, another three-dimensional form, allowing them to apply the same logic to a new problem. In part two, "Time and Space," Lockhart sneaks into calculus, slowly revealing its power to the reader. Along the way, he shows how multiplication signs, exponents, and other sometimes off-putting mathematical symbols make reasoning easier. In both sections of the



book, simple line drawings provide real help in following Lockhart's reasoning.

At one point, Lockhart steps back to reflect upon the ways the human perspective has shaped mathematics. Take the tangent property of ellipses. An ellipse is a circle that has been stretched in one direction (horizontally, vertically, or somewhere in between). There are two special points in the interior of the ellipse called the foci. If the ellipse were a pool table and you put a pocket at one focus, a ball hit from the other focus in any direction would ricochet off the wall into the pocket — an effect of the tangent property of ellipses. (To understand why, you'll have to read the book.) But the property breaks down at very small and very large scales. For example, if the pool table were only a few hundred atoms wide, "an atom-sized ball would simply fly through the gaps in the wall or get involved in some complicated electromagnetic interaction with it." But a galaxy-sized pool table wouldn't work, either, "due to gravitational and relativistic effects."

"To be like a geometric thing," Lockhart observes, "a real thing has to be the right size; namely, it has to be about *our* size . . . Why? Because we're the ones who made up the mathematics!"

He goes on to postulate that our formulation of geometry would be radically different if we were the size of atoms or galaxies.

Lockhart emphasizes over and over that math is about exploration, not rote computation. He does not expect the reader to sit back and watch him have all the fun. He explains mathematical arguments thoroughly and precisely and then leaves questions in bold for the reader to tackle herself. To get the most out of the book — to learn and practice mathematical reasoning — a pencil and paper are required, especially for those who are new to creative thinking in math. Even those who are well-versed in the topics he presents will enjoy turning off their prior knowledge and trying to solve problems using only the theory in the book.

"Mathematics is a meeting place for language, pattern, curiosity, and joy," writes Lockhart toward the end of *Measurement*. "And it has given me a lifetime of free entertainment." A reader who wants to learn more about the pleasure of doing mathematics will find much to explore here.

Evelyn Lamb is a mathematician and freelance writer in Chicago. She has written for Scientific American and the Notices of the American Mathematical Society.

Loyal to a Fault // By Kerry Fried

Treacherous Beauty: Peggy Shippen, the Woman Behind Benedict Arnold's Plot to Betray America
By Mark Jacob and Stephen H. Case (Lyons Press, 288 pages, \$24.95)

"Human beings are too important to be treated as mere symptoms of the past," Lytton Strachey asserted in his trailblazing 1918 book *Eminent Victorians*. Peggy Shippen, whose great misfortune it was to marry Benedict Arnold in 1779, has no trouble standing apart from her era in the clear-eyed, ultimately admiring biography *Treacherous Beauty*, written by Mark Jacob and Stephen H. Case '64CC, '68LAW.

In this cautionary tale of audacity and expedience, Arnold remains a man bereft of principle or ideals, passionate only about money. But his wife is a more complex soul. Hardly an innocent victim, this clever Philadelphia society beauty was very much embroiled in the plot to "deal a death blow to the American Revolution."

Resourceful and fearless, at twenty this pragmatist would put on a risky, risqué mad act to persuade General Washington that she was no party to her husband's treason. Meanwhile, the many-minded John André, a co-conspirator whose charming, enigmatic sketch of the seventeen-year-old Shippen still tantalizes, is a gift to

biographers, not least for his dignity as he faced execution.

André's sentencing and hanging is one of *Treacherous Beauty's* set pieces. Its most memorable ones, of course, feature its heroine. A self-reinventor extraordinaire, Shippen moved from frivolity to what some might term "sexpionage" to devastating familial devotion. The authors end their account with the feminist acknowledgment that even had she and her husband succeeded in their anti-American aim, Mrs. Arnold would most likely still have been hidden from history. That is no longer her fate.

Kerry Fried has written for the New York Times Book Review and the Washington Post.



CLASSIFIEDS

Books

FINDING MY WAY: AN AMERICAN MAVERICK IN CHINA BY DAVID RADDOK '74GSAS: "Dave Raddock's 'love-hate' relationship with China and the Chinese speaks to the experiences of laymen and experts alike. Raddock takes us on a journey with fascinating side roads and insightful commentary. It's also very funny." Mel Gurtov, coauthor of *The Pentagon Papers*. Find it at Amazon.com, B&N.com.

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NANTUCKET, MA: Homes by the sea or in town, for sale or rent, for families of all shapes. Pat Carr Calabrese: patcc@compassroserealestate.com; 917-655-4642.

PARK CITY, UT: www.parkcityluxuryrealestate.com, www.deervalleyhomesforsale.com.

SEATTLE, WA: Homes — www.RealFX.com, www.AnthonyGilbert.com.

ST. CROIX, USVI: Near Buccaneer Hotel. Family home on newly paved road. Cathedral ceilings, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths. Separate apartment with bedroom, bath, cooking. Full attic for storage. One-acre fenced yard. Automatic generator, split A/C, new water pump with UV filter. \$279,000. Contact Thomas Lerner: 631-286-5770; Joel Ureta: 340-643-4665; stxpm.com.

TENNESSEE: Own in Tennessee. Music City — www.nashvillehomesforsale.org. Mortgage — www.nashvillemortgageadvisor.com.

Vacation Rentals

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK, ME: 8-bedroom, 7.5-bath waterfront estate in Northeast Harbor with pier and deep water moorings. Monthly, May through October. 650-450-8413; neh2012@hmail.com.

DEERFIELD BEACH, FL: Lakefront 2-bedroom, 2-bath villa, fenced backyard, near I-95, beach. Weekly/monthly. Contact: ABINNY@aol.com; 914-722-2757.

LONDON: Covent Garden. Spacious 1-bedroom. Private patio. Owner. 415-933-9903.

MANHATTAN, NY: Furnished luxurious vacation and business rental apartments: info@nyctemphouses.com; 644-465-5902; www.nyctemphouses.com.

MASSAPEQUA, NY: Waterfront home available for rent September through May. 516-799-1022.

MOUNT DESERT, ME: Near Acadia National Park. Vacation luxuriously, landmark light-house, oceanfront home. Weekly starting Saturday (July–October), \$2,500–\$3,300, 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, impeccable accommodations. Happily sleeps 10. Spectacular views of working Bass Harbor. No ownership/maintenance expense. Details, Photos HomeAway, "Centennial Homestead & Family Lighthouse" 376334. 207-479-4030.

PARIS: Fifth floor, quiet, alcove studio sleeps three, balcony. View Eiffel Tower. www.parisgrenelle.com; 207-752-0285.

PARIS, MARAIS: Luxury rental in center of Paris. Close proximity Picasso Museum, Centre Pompidou, and other historical sites, as well as gourmet shops of rue de Bretagne. See owner's website at www.parischapon.com.

PARIS, SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS: Lovely studio apartment on rue Jacob. 212-463-8760; www.lefanion.com/paris.

ROME: Spacious, stylish, renovated apartment. Living room, 2 generous double bedrooms, 2 baths, kitchen/ breakfast room. Central location near St. John Lateran. \$850 weekly. 212-867-0489; www.casacleme.com; Lm603@columbia.edu.

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

Video Production

VIDEO ORAL HISTORY: Former TV news reporter (WABC/PBS/CNBC) and duPont–Columbia Award winner produces oral histories for personal and institutional purposes. NYC-based. Learn more: www.firstpersonvideo.tv or 646-772-7917.



OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY PETE SOUZA

Second Acts

On November 14, in his first press conference since his reelection victory over Mitt Romney, President Barack Obama '83CC addressed a topic not mentioned in any of the three presidential debates, the last of which took place on the day Hurricane Sandy was born in the Caribbean.

"As you know," he told reporters in the East Room, "we can't attribute any particular weather event to climate change. What we do know is that the temperature around the globe is increasing faster than was predicted even ten years ago. We do know that the Arctic ice cap is melting faster than what was predicted even five years ago. We do know that there have been an extraordinarily large number of severe weather events here in North America, but also around the globe. And I am a firm believer that climate change is real, that it is impacted by human behavior and carbon emissions, and as a consequence, I think we have an obligation to future generations to do something about it."

Obama went on to say that he didn't know what either Democrats or Republicans were prepared to do, since this was "not just

a partisan issue. I also think there are regional differences." He suggested that action on climate change had to be linked to job creation and growth in order to win popular support.

The next day, Obama traveled north for the second time to visit areas stricken by Sandy, including Cedar Grove Avenue in Staten Island (above). He promised federal support, thanked local leaders and first responders, spoke with residents, called on insurance companies to fulfill their obligations, announced that Housing and Urban Development secretary Shaun Donovan would be the White House point person on rebuilding efforts, and vowed to work with Congress to do "everything we can do" to get the resources needed.

"During difficult times like this," he said, "we're reminded that we're bound together and we have to look out for each other. And a lot of the things that seem important, the petty differences, melt away, and we focus on what binds us together and that we as Americans are going to stand with each other in their hour of need."

Afterward, Obama returned to Washington, where, that evening, he attended a private screening of *Lincoln*.



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