Got poets? SAS has an English department full of them, and their creativity adds up to more than words on a page.
Leadership Lessons

BY DEAN SAMUEL H. PRESTON

In the heady days when NASA was pushing toward the first lunar landing, a TV crew traveled to the Johnson Space Center to interview workers about their jobs. Many talked to the space agency’s can-do engineers and managers, but one reporter stopped to ask a janitor what he did at NASA. “My job is to help put a man on the moon,” he declared with evident pride and satisfaction.

From this floor cleaner’s perspective, leadership is not simply the prerogative of administrators. An organization that relies solely on top-down leadership is not using its most important resource, which is the creativity and energy of its people. In the janitor’s view, and in mine, leadership is earned and exemplified, and comes from every part of an organization, even from the “bottom.” Leaders take charge of the domain in which they work and within it, accept personal responsibility for achieving the mission of the whole enterprise.

Leadership is a subject that has lately come to the fore of our students’ attention. Many undergraduates who come to SAS have been leaders in their home communities and see themselves as future leaders. They are looking for mentors and for ideas about how best to develop as leaders.

In 1999, the School of Arts and Sciences was the recipient of a $10 million gift from Penn trustee Robert A. Fox, C’52, which funds the Fox Leadership Program for undergraduates. In the fall, he donated an additional $2 million to the program. Bob (center in photo above) is himself a leader in his entrepreneurial industry and on campus. He exhibits the balance of qualities a leadership program should strive to elevate: he’s persuasive yet a good listener, concisely analytical but creative, forceful but empathetic, extremely gregarious with a good sense of humor yet on point at all moments.

In addition to a full complement of courses, symposia, and guest speakers, the Fox Leadership Program creates an arena for students to take charge of the organization and advance its goals. Starting from the top with forceful director John Dilulio, the Frederick Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion and Civil Society, down to the rank and file of undergraduates who benefit from its offerings, the Fox program exemplifies an organization that has leaders all the way through it.

If the interactions I’ve had with groups of these impressive students are any indication, the Fox Leadership Program has been a striking success. It is one of the important ways in which the School of Arts and Sciences is helping to produce the leaders of tomorrow.
Ben Again

In his new book, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life*, author Walter Isaacson calls Penn’s founder “the most accomplished American of his age.” On September 9, Isaacson, president and CEO of the Aspen Institute and one-time journalist and editor, came to Zellerbach Theatre to discuss the “spunky, self-taught” inventor, entrepreneur, and founding father. As much a man of pragmatism as of principle, Isaacson noted, Franklin was the only contributor present at all three key founding moments of American independence: the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War, and the convention that produced the U.S. Constitution. Isaacson’s presentation was followed by an intellectual exchange between the biographer and Bruce Kuklick, the Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor of American History.

Joseph Cornell’s Worlds of Wonder

One of America’s leading collectors of contemporary art, Robert Lehrman, C’72, founded the Voyager Foundation to educate the public about modern and contemporary art. Chairman of the board for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden at the Smithsonian, Lehrman has shared his expertise—and his collections—with Penn undergraduates as a guest in the course *Contemporary Art and the Art of Curating* (see Fall 2003, p.23). Last spring, he came to campus to lecture on the fantastical art of Joseph Cornell, whose gently surrealistic collages and boxes take pride of place in Lehrman’s comprehensive collection. On February 25, 2004, Lehrman returns to campus and will discuss and demonstrate the first project of the Voyager Foundation: a DVD-ROM that offers “hands-on” access to Cornell’s playful art. With this technology, the artworks can be presented with multiple 3-D views, animation, and video, including interviews with scholars and those who knew the artist. The disk is part of a richly illustrated book, *Joseph Cornell: Shadowplay… Eterniday*, which has 231 splendid photos and essays by Lehrman and other art experts. In the book’s preface, Lehrman writes that living with Cornell’s artworks “has afforded me the opportunity to absorb and respond to their presence in ways not accessible to the scholar, critic, or other interested viewer.” His February 25 presentation will take place at 5:30 p.m. at the Institute of Contemporary Art (http://www.icaphila.org/Jon Penn’s campus. Lehrman’s lecture will be a display of Cornell’s beautiful art, but it will also showcase a new and powerful educational tool. For more information, call the ICA at 215.898.3911.
Fox Leadership Students Think Big

Students in the Fox Leadership Program are putting their leadership skills to work in an impoverished community in Paraguay. In May, the planned Think Big Initiative will bring 25 students to the town of Tobati, a provincial area east of the capital, Asuncion. Tobati has about 21,000 people, three-quarters of whom are under the age of 19. Over a third of the population lives on less than a dollar a day.

Think Big will undertake a range of projects designed to improve the health and education of the region’s people. Senior Benjamin Cruse, student director of the Fox Leadership Program, speculates that because of the disproportionately youthful population, “slight improvements in these areas could catalyze a vast set of changes.”

The students are looking to raise $48,000 to fund the project, which will include building wells and public restrooms, collecting and distributing children’s shoes to reduce diseases from foot parasites, and constructing a new hospital wing. The group also plans to collect and distribute children’s books to facilitate learning English, a requirement for admission to Paraguayan universities.

Cruse says he is optimistic that the initiative will “make a difference,” noting that the Fox program volunteers are “experienced in community service and understand the value of giving back to our global community.” For more information or to support the Tobati initiative, contact Benjamin Cruse at 215.746.2832 or bcruse@sas.upenn.edu.

Political Scientist in Iraq

In the fall, Brendan O’Leary traveled to Iraq, where he was invited to join a body of international experts advising the Kurdish regional government on the constitutional reconstruction of Iraq. O’Leary, the Lauder Professor of Political Science and director of the Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict, was an advisor on the Irish peace process and has worked for the UN and the European Union on constitutional matters. He came to Penn in 2002 after 19 years at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

In Kurdistan, he reports that American soldiers go about unarmed and maintain cordial relations with the locals, who treated him as an American on his trip. “I had a Southern military officer say to me, ‘You look like an American, you talk like a Brit, and you’ve got an Irish name, huh?’ — which I suppose was spot-on.”

The main issue in the give and take over a new constitution, he says, will be the Kurdish insistence on a binational federation. “They will be seeking not only extensive autonomy but power sharing in the federal government in a way that guarantees there will be no repetition of past述职 from commitments on the part of the Baghdad government. And,” he adds, “one of the questions for the Kurds will be, Should there even be a Baghdad government?”

Logic and Info

The connections among logic, mathematics, and technology are having profound effects in the modern world. Theoretical work in math and philosophical logic laid the foundation for the revolution in computer and information technology. A new SAS major (and minor) in logic, information, and computation will draw from courses in philosophy, math, linguistics, and computer and information science. The new academic program will provide a strong background for students to pursue the computational aspects of the natural and social sciences as well as careers in information technology.

Celebrating Women’s Studies

On October 30, Harvard economist Claudia Goldin kicked off a year-long celebration of 30 years of women and gender studies at Penn. Goldin, who taught economics in SAS from 1985 to 1990, gave the keynote address, Mommies and Daddies on the Fast Track: Success of Parents in Demanding Professions. The talk traced out what she called the “long and winding road” of choices made by college educated women since the turn of the 20th century. What is clear, Goldin remarked, is that “each generation built on the successes and frustrations of the previous ones.”

Notes

Demi Kurz, co-director of women’s studies, “Gender is a basic organizing principle of every society, so it’s absolutely relevant to everything.”

The schedule of 30th anniversary events can be found at the women’s studies website: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/wstudies/index.html.
Condensed Matter

Tom Lubensky, the Mary Amanda Wood Professor of Physics and chair of the physics and astronomy department, received the 2004 Oliver E. Buckley Condensed Matter Prize from the American Physical Society. The prestigious award was given for "seminal contributions to the theory of condensed matter systems," a field of physics that studies materials having applications to modern electronics, superconductors, nanotechnology, and other innovations. A large part of Lubensky's research focuses on soft condensed matter physics, which looks at substances that are soft to the touch, such as membranes and liquid crystals. "Living matter is the quintessential soft material," Lubensky observes, "and much of what we know about the physical properties of living matter comes from condensed soft matter physics."

Useful and Ornamental

Can human nature benefit from cultivation? Erasmus and other Renaissance humanists thought so—they often used gardening comparisons in their writings on education. Rebecca Bushnell, professor of English and dean of the College, wondered what these analogies might have meant to readers of the time. What would they have understood by "the culture of nature, human or otherwise?" To find out, she turned to gardening manuals of the 16th and 17th centuries. Her discoveries animate Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens, published recently by Cornell University Press.

"I was surprised," she says, "at the presence of serious literary themes in these supposedly utilitarian how-to books. What is truly English? What is the proper balance between beauty and profit? What is beauty in nature? Why, I asked, were these ordinary gardeners so concerned with these matters?"

Part of the concern was pragmatic, she found. In an era of increasing social mobility, of enclosure of common lands by private estates, the yeoman or husbandman might advance his station by turning gardener to a gentleman avid for "curious" plants, or by becoming himself a plantsman to supply the trade in fashionable specimens.

Former SAS Dean Honored

The department of history and sociology of science (HSS) hosted a symposium on November 1 in honor of Rosemary Stevens, the Stanley I. Sheerr Endowed Term Professor Emerita in the Social Sciences. A native of England, Stevens developed a strong and abiding interest in American medicine and its history and in organizational and social comparisons between healthcare in Britain and the U.S. She came to Penn in 1979 and served as SAS dean from 1991 to 1996.

"Rosemary Stevens is one of this country’s leading experts on the history of medical policy and medical institutions," said HSS chair Ruth Schwartz Cowan, the Janice and Julian Bers Professor of the History and Sociology of Science. Stevens is the author of six books, including In Sickness and in Wealth: American Hospitals in the Twentieth Century.
La Différence

Just 7 percent of French adults are overweight, as compared with 22 percent of Americans, and proportionally far fewer people die of heart disease in France. For more than a decade, American dieters and scientists have wondered—not without a little envy—how the French get away with eating rich sauces, buttery croissants, and creamy cheeses and still remain thinner and healthier. At first, investigators thought the wine, or maybe the olive oil, explained the “French paradox.” But psychology professor Paul Rozin says there’s really no paradox at all, unless you assume that fat is the major cause of obesity and cardiovascular disease. Current research is showing fat to be less of a risk factor than previously believed. “While the French eat more fat than Americans, they probably eat slightly fewer calories,” he says, “which when compounded over years, can amount to substantial differences in weight [gain].”

Together with two College students (Kimberly Kabnick, C’01, L’04, and Erin Pete, C’01) and some Parisian researchers, Rozin, the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Professor for Faculty Excellence, compared the eating habits of diners in both countries.

For the study, investigators went with digital scales into restaurants and fast-food outlets on both continents and weighed each item served. “We saw what every tourist knows,” Rozin points out, “but we measured it. Not only are the portions [25 percent] smaller in France, people spend more time eating.” The portion appraisers also compared serving sizes in cookbooks and single-serve foods in supermarkets, and again found Americans eating more. People tend to eat all of what’s put in front of them, Rozin explains. “Much discussion of the ‘obesity epidemic’ in the U.S. has focused on personal willpower, but our study shows that the environment also plays an important role.”

Celestial Fossils Found

When we think of our solar system, we normally picture the Sun ringed round by nine planets and assorted moons, comets, and asteroids. It wasn’t until 1992 that astronomers started to discover “planetesimals,” giant ice-crust ed rocks adrift just beyond Neptune in a region known as the Kuiper Belt. Last January a team of scientists, led by physics and astronomy associate professor Gary Bernstein, spotted three of them, using NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope. The city-size chunks (with the pedestrian names 2003 BF91, 2003 BG91, and 2003 BH91) are the smallest ever found in the frozen fringe of debris, three to nine billion miles from the Sun. Astronomers believe the planets were built up from collisions among planetesimals more than 4 billion years ago. By studying the leftover fragments in the Kuiper Belt, researchers hope to gain a better understanding of the solar system’s early history just as paleontologists study fossils to learn about prehistoric life on Earth.

Bernstein and his colleagues, who include physics and astronomy postdoc David Trilling, had expected the Hubble’s orbiting optics to detect at least 60 small fossils over 15 days of observation. Nearly 1,000 bigger ones had already been charted by earthbound telescopes less acute than Hubble. “Discovering many fewer Kuiper Belt objects than was predicted makes it difficult to understand how so many comets appear near Earth, since many comets were thought to originate in the Kuiper Belt,” Bernstein remarks. “This is a sign that perhaps the smaller planetesimals have been shattered into dust by colliding with each other over the past few billion years.”
Bernstein insists the main goal is to get students’ fingers dancing, “to constantly have them writing and thinking about writing.”
One of the chief wranglers of this herd of cats, Perelman organized poetry groups, talk series, and readings.

name, it jump-started the careers of dozens of poets and critics, including Bernstein’s.

The renowned poet and critic joined the English faculty in 2003. Even before classes started in September, Bernstein had grand designs, the first of which was PENNsound (www.writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/), a project to digitize poetry readings and distribute them on the Web. Still in its embryonic stage, the website will be a repository for the voices of poets—the celebrated and the not-so-famous—reading their works. “I think that poetry is an acoustic medium,” he says, “and the performance and recording of it is as fundamental as the printed version.”

Sound recordings of poetry are a basic part of Bernstein’s undergraduate courses, or, as he calls them, “reading workshops.” In a mahogany-meets-Intel classroom in the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (CPCW), poems are often displayed on a plasma-screen TV while Bernstein cues up the audio files. “The reading performance becomes a very integral part of the students’ experience of poetry,” he elaborates. “You can’t underestimate how important audio recording is. The amount of information that’s conveyed in an audio tape is much greater than possible with the alphabet.” In his experimental writing seminar, Bernstein emphasizes collaboration. Throughout class, his students pass around a wireless keyboard and punch in lines to an evolving poem. These quiffs of words are often witty and interesting, but the poet-instructor insists the main goal is to get students’ fingers dancing, “to constantly have them writing and thinking about writing.” That objective prevails throughout the rest of 3808 Walnut, the newly formed Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing, which houses both the creative writing and critical writing programs. Situated in the backyard of Writers House, the restored building is populated by advisors who counsel undergrads on genres from short stories to term papers. Greg Djanikian, C’71, head of the university’s ballooning creative writing program, plays the role of main mentor.

Djanikian returned to Penn in 1983 as an established poet with a flair for lyrical, narrative verse. He has published four books of poetry, dealing with everything from his Armenian heritage to the relationships of husbands, wives, and lovers. “His poems tell stories,” says former Writers House director Kerry Sherin, C’87. “They are true to the emotion.”

In the 1960s, Djanikian recalls, “there was no place to hang your hat, no place to go talk about writing” at Penn. The establishment of Writers House and CPCW solved that problem, but now, Djanikian says, the writing buzz has bled into the curriculum. Over 100 English majors concentrate in creative writing, and the number of creative courses has climbed to an all-time high of 18, including four on poetry-writing. With demand outpacing supply, Djanikian and Filreis have proposed changes to the English major that incorporate a new creative writing “emphasis” as well as a minor for non-majors.

The biggest obstacle to writing poetry during the academic year, notes Djanikian, is finding the time. A semiannual pilgrimage to Yaddo, an artists’ colony in Saratoga Springs, NY, is his solution. Every book of his poetry, except for the first, was the product of these trips. In 2003, he participated in a sort of tribute run by Filreis and attended by Penn alums. For three days at Frost Valley in the Catskills last spring, Djanikian’s poetry was read, discussed, and celebrated. He even test-drove some new material.

English professor Herman Beavers, the honoree of this spring’s Frost Valley seminar, echoes the need for a community
of writers. He says the group at Cave Canem “affirmed an experience that I’d had and made me realize that I wasn’t crazy.” Cave Canem describes itself as a “safe haven for black poets—whether schooled in M.F.A. programs or poetry slams.” Beavers was newly tenured and trying to balance an academic career with his creative passions in 1996 when he attended its inaugural retreat. Desperate to test out some new fiction-infused poetry, he found a fraternity of poets who connected with his stories—tales about the death of his father, economic hardship in Cleveland, and the love of jazz.

One of Beavers’ proudest achievements at Penn is the Brave Testimony series at Writers House. Started during National Poetry Month in 2001, Beavers invited five African-American poets, including several Cave Canem standouts, to read from their work. The long-awaited sequel will take place this spring.

While some poets find reading aloud to be, in Bernstein’s words, “a fundamental function of poetry,” others are not nearly as enamored of the public exercise. Susan Stewart, Gr’78, the Donald T. Regan Professor of English, falls into that group. After a Ph.D. in folklore, Stewart developed as a poet-critic teaching at Temple University. She returned to Penn in 1997 with a MacArthur “genius” fellowship. Her verse is infused with allusions to classical and Biblical figures, and the subject matter runs the gamut of human experience—memory, the senses, loneliness. In her teaching, she aims to convey to graduates and undergraduates the “long history of poetry.”

While the soft-spoken poet frequents Writers House events—and often invites fellow poets to appear—she rarely picks up the mike herself. “I don’t like to read very much—not more than two readings a year.”

One such occasion took place last October, when Stewart, Perelman, and Bernstein organized a conference called Poetry and Empire: Post-Invasion Poetics. On a shoestring budget, they enticed 35 poets to come to Writers House and the Institute of Contemporary Art for a weekend of discussions and readings on the situation in Iraq and the political effects of poetry. “We’re living in a culture where public information isn’t reliable,” Stewart observes, “and abuses of language surround us”—misuses that can beget and justify war.

“Our job is to enable people’s literary dreams,” offers Jennifer Snead, C’94, the current director of Writers House. In her first year on the job, the former English major is helping groups of student writers start up two new literary magazines, and she’s pulled together marathon novel-reading sessions. “I’m reliving my undergraduate days the way I wanted them to be,” she says.

For Ezra Pound, the relation between poetry and politics was a vexed one. The troubled poet is perhaps more famous for his treasonous rants against the Allies during World War II than the verses he first imagined in his early years at Penn. Just before his death in 1972, the first creative writing classes emerged on campus. Now, 100 years after Pound’s Quad-room readings with fellow poets, a garden of creative writers is thriving here.

Ted Mann, C’00, is a former English major.

These days it’s English professor Al Filreis carrying the torch—preaching the gospel of contemporary writing.
David Grazian on Conning the Blues
In the blues clubs of Chicago, amateur jam sessions usually draw part-time musicians and open-mike moths, not sociologists working on Ph.D. dissertations. So when David Grazian, a local grad student in the late ’90s, showed up with saxophone in hand at one of B.L.U.E.S. Etcetera’s mid-week events, the staff was mildly amused. They recognized him as one of their regular barflies and even waived the participant fee.

To the audience that night, Grazian’s performance must have had a magical storybook progression: stage fright at first, then a series of off-key riffs ending with an in-tune solo, enthusiastic applause, and praise from the onstage host. But this was no American Idol fantasy.

Grazian was conducting ethnographic research for what would later become his first book, *Blue Chicago*. Today, he is an assistant professor of sociology in SAS. By dusting off his sax, the social science researcher was hoping to earn the trust of musicians, who until the jam session, had treated him like a groupie tourist. The ruse worked. “They began to see me as this budding musician,” he says. “Not a great one, but they felt that they had something to teach me.”

The breakthrough was just one of the many ways Grazian penetrated the nighttime world of Chicago blues clubs. Over the course of a year, he spent countless nights in seedy and trendy establishments, interviewing club managers, bartenders, patrons, out-of-towners, and eventually, the professional musicians. The goal was to understand how people define the authentic blues experience. Grazian admits it began as a personal quest when his own idealized image of the clubs was shattered.

As a graduate student, he regularly went to blues hangouts as “a respite from the drab world of university libraries.” One weekend night, while he relaxed in B.L.U.E.S., an announcer asked how many in the audience were from out of town. Everyone in the room cheered. “This was totally shocking to me,” he recalls. “I’d spent this whole time thinking that I’d been in a place with a lot of regulars—local Chicagoans. It was strange to realize that in these clubs I was completely surrounded by tourists.”

In this new light, Grazian began to notice more unusual things. The audiences were often middle-aged, white, and affluent. The performers were always working-class blacks. Merchandise, like lingerie bearing the slogan “Don’t stop now; I’ve got the blues!” started to seem more like souvenir trinkets.

Slowly, all of the issues the budding sociologist was studying at the University of Chicago began to come to life in the clubs. “The questions that I was interested in pursuing—like the nature of race relations in the post-Civil Rights era, the commodification of global culture, the nature of urban nightlife—were emerging,” he says. “And blues clubs became the perfect laboratory for studying these sorts of contemporary sociological processes.”

In *Blue Chicago*, Grazian argues that many of the seemingly authentic aspects of modern blues clubs are really just carefully crafted artifice. “Blues musicians will tell you that club owners often dictate what kinds of music the bands will perform, what kinds of clothes the bands will wear on stage, what the racial makeup of the group will be.”

One of the most perverse byproducts of this manufactured authenticity is “the set list from hell.” This was the term that one musician used to describe the repetitive list of blues favorites like *Sweet Home Chicago*, *The Thrill Is Gone*, and *Mustang Sally*. “For a lot of musicians, the central problem is that for blues music to remain commercially viable, it has to become ‘museumized,’” Grazian observes. “These musical styles have become embalmed in time.
As one musician told me, ‘If you keep the blues in a straightjacket, it can’t evolve and it eventually dies.”

Race is another albatross the clubs wear. “The lucrative downtown clubs will as a rule not hire white musicians,” explains Grazian. “The owners and audience feel that only African-American musicians properly represent the authentic blues experience.” This stereotype relegates white musicians to dilapidated establishments and unpopular mid-week slots.

Because the practice is so pervasive, Grazian contends that it perpetuates a kind of mass-marketed prejudice that belittles black and white musicians alike.

Blue Chicago is subtitled “The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs,” and its author questions whether an unbiased authenticity is even possible. In what he calls the “sliding scale of authenticity,” blues aficionados constantly reevaluate what they consider to signify authenticity and shift their club allegiances in the process—say, from a touristy House of Blues to an upscale B.L.U.E.S. to a faux-ramshackle Checkerboard Lounge. “This search for authenticity leads one nowhere because we rely on very superficial determinants of what authenticity is in the first place.”

In a forthcoming article in the academic journal Qualitative Sociology, Grazian explodes the idea of authenticity even further, explaining that the blues clubs share many of the formal properties of a confidence game. Just as successful cons rely on elaborate staging, so too are the music performances based on a strategy of deception deployed by a number of actors. The club owners act as “operators,” funding the show, dictating the interior designs, and hiring the talent. With the help of PR reps and media boosters, the “ropers,” the prospective blues fan, or “mark,” is drawn into the “big store.” There, the musician takes on the all-important role of “insider,” the person who gives a credible performance and convinces the mark of the authenticity of what is really a well packaged tourist experience.

The live-music racket is so successful for the same reasons that con games work: The audience desperately wants to believe the ruse—they want to be entertained. “The alternative would be disappointment and slight embarrassment with the whole affair,” Grazian writes.

The only time Grazian admits of a personal sense of embarrassment was during his performance on amateur night. When he left the stage, after squeaking and honking a foggy mess of notes, a local bandleader stopped him. “You’ve got some chops, ” the musician told him. “You’ve obviously been playing for a while, and you’ve got some jazz influences that I heard in there. Am I right?”

And so from that point on, I knew that sometimes the difference between jazz and blues truly lies in the eye—or perhaps in this case the ear—of the beholder.

Blues vs. Jazz

David Grazian’s 60-Second Lecture, delivered September 17, 2003

There’s a sociological truism that music genres are never naturally defined, but always socially constructed and dependent upon their cultural context. In my own research on Chicago blues clubs, I first discovered the true difference between blues and jazz when I was invited to the stage of a blues bar at 2:30 in the morning to play a blues solo in F major. As it had been years since I had actually played an instrument, I froze because I couldn’t remember the notes of that key, which go like this: (plays sax well).

Now very often when my students don’t know the answer to a question, they’ll wildly toss out a bunch of guesses, praying that one of them will miraculously be correct. And so, because I didn’t remember the notes, that’s what I did. And it sounded like this: (plays sax badly). Ironically, after my solo, the bandleader told me—without sarcasm or guile— “Dave, you play really good, man! You’ve obviously been playing for a while, and you’ve got some jazz influences that I heard in there. Am I right?”

And so from that point on, I knew that sometimes the difference between jazz and blues truly lies in the eye—or perhaps in this case the ear—of the beholder.

Ted Mann, C’00, works for the University of Pennsylvania Press.
Dr. Julius Jacobson, G’48, is the father of vascular microsurgery. But that’s just for starters. Like Ben Franklin, he has only to see a challenge to address it, and the 83-year-old physician doesn’t let age stand in the way.

In 1947, when he first became involved with microsurgery, the dissecting microscope was the instrument of choice. Used for surgery on the eye and other small areas, it allowed surgeons to operate on tiny structures. For work on blood vessels, though, the surgeon and an assistant both had to view the surgery in progress. Jacobson needed a two-person surgical microscope. So he built it himself.

Once his prototype “diploscope” was ready, he approached American corporations. “The inevitable question, Can we sell 10,000? came up,” he remembers, “and nothing happened.” Germany’s Carl Zeiss was interested, so the inventor made the trip to post-war Germany, where he worked with Zeiss optical engineers to create a surgical tool of such significance that the original now resides at the Smithsonian. With the diploscope, effective treatments for “blue babies,” dismembered limbs, and other maladies were suddenly available, and the field of vascular microsurgery took off. “Many more than 10,000 have been sold,” he notes pointedly.

Original thinking, Jacobson says, is the most important thing in the world. For him, it’s a way of life. Right now, for example, he’s seeking the venture capital for a new high-tech idea he calls “24/7 medicine.”

“All my life, I’ve gotten calls in the middle of the night about patients. There’s a monitor by every bed at the ICU, but the content isn’t written down or saved. My idea is to provide 24/7 medicine by allowing doctors to access saved content from the monitor, observe the patient, and conduct a videoconference with the doctor on call—all from a distance.” Other projects in the wings include a failsafe walker for the elderly and an internal thermometer for overheated athletes.

To spur others to innovate, he’s endowed the Jacobson Innovation Award of the American College of Surgeons. The award honors living surgeons who develop new tools or techniques that advance any field of surgery. Winners have included surgeons who made breakthroughs in laparoscopic surgery and kidney transplantation.

Through his patients, many of whom owe life and limb to his surgical expertise, Jacobson has received a behind-the-scenes entrée to the worlds of art and music. As with technology, interest led to enthusiasm—and enthusiasm to action.

One patient offered Jacobson a painting he admired as a reward for a successful operation and started the surgeon down the road to serious art collecting. Today, in his New York City apartment, Jacobson points out works by Degas, Bruegel, Bonnard, Redon, and others.

Another patient with connections to the classical-music community, ran into Jacobson at a concert. Listening to the surgeon’s well informed opinions about the program, the patient joked that Jacobson should write a book. It took about a year for him to create The Classical Music Experience, a CD-book combo narrated by Kevin Kline. He’s now at work on volume two.

Julius Jacobson no longer performs surgery and has retired from his position as chief of cardiac surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital. As for the rest of his projects—he’s only just begun.

Lisa Jo Rudy is a freelance writer and consultant based in Elkins Park, PA.
The Work of Hope

Matt Grove (left) and Fr. Jeff Putthoff
“CHAINSAW!!!
Brrrrrip!!!” Ed Grove wrote, Tom-Wolfe style, in an e-mail to his son. “Are you nuts? For graduation? Sheese! What will be your next project?”

The parents of Matt Grove, CGS’03, had good reason to worry when their son asked them to bring along a chainsaw when they came down from Utica, NY, to see him graduate last May. Grove had been arrested not long before in a protest of the war in Iraq. At the end of senior year in high school, he deferred admission to Penn after arranging with the bishop of Zimbabwe to work for a year in an African hospital that was 30 miles from the nearest paved road.

He changed IVs, dispensed meds, bandaged wounds, pulled teeth, and removed stitches and casts. He used a manual put out by the World Health Organization to figure out the settings for the x-ray machine. “He did everything but major surgery,” according to his mom, Carole, who remembers vividly the worry of sending off her 18 year-old boy to a country 8,000 miles from home and under siege by a fierce plague of AIDS. “The chainsaw incident is minor—really minor!—in comparison. I gave up any attempt at judgment or control or anything else since Zimbabwe.”

On the morning after graduation, Ed and Carole drove across the Ben Franklin Bridge to a fixed-up row house in a rundown, boarded-up North Camden neighborhood where Grove had a job. He and his dad took the chainsaw from the trunk and—Brrrrrip!!—cut two stumps from the dirt in front of a three-story, brick home to make way for a flowerbed. Then they pulled out a masonry drill, bored holes in the brickwork near the front door, and bolted to the wall a honey-colored wooden plaque onto which Grove’s fiancée had burned the word Hopeworks. (Grove and Annie Wadsworth, C’03, were married in September. They met in the office of President Rodin, CW’66, during a nine-day sit-in by the activist group Students Against Sweatshops.)

Hopeworks (http://www.hopeworks.org/) is a faith-based, technology-training project aimed at “empowering” at-risk youth in Camden. It encourages young people to stay in school and out of trouble by providing computer-skills training and work experience in small-scale business ventures. The smell of baking bread often fills the computer-crammed house. The warm aroma helps feed the hunger of young trainees for a stable and caring home, and the bread satisfies another more gnawing need.

“To live in Camden is very difficult,” observes Fr. Jeff Putthoff, Hopeworks’ director and a Jesuit priest who resides in nearby Holy Name parish. “There are just lots of situations that people live in that are full of pain. A lot of it is just poverty. It’s a lack of resources—a lack of medical care and education. It’s a lack of parents who have jobs or housing that’s sure, instead of temporary.”

A loose t-shirt and baggy pants hang shapelessly over Grove’s stringy frame. Camden drug dealers often mistake him for a suburban junkie wandering the neighborhood in search of a fix.

“At ages 13 or 14,” he explains, “[Camden] young people’s lives start to unravel, and they drop out of school. . . We use technology to engage the youth and get them excited—helping them to see that there’s a future they can take hold of.” As they progress through the

“I’M NOT GOING TO BE THE SAVIOR OF ALL THESE PEOPLE. HOPEWORNOISN’T GOING TO BE THE SAVIOR.”
Hopeworks program, successful trainees start to lose the hard edge of the street and become more confident of their ability to learn, which helps them discover more options. One high school dropout went on to college to study computers and ended up majoring in music.

Grove learned about Hopeworks as an intern working next door at the North Camden Land Trust, part of the requirement for his urban studies major. Hopeworks had developed an online Web design curriculum that was good enough to earn course credits for trainees at a local community college. Fr. Putthoff had been looking around for new areas of technology that Hopeworks could grow into and thought Geographic Information Systems (GIS) held promise for skill building and business opportunities that might yield more jobs. GIS is software for visualizing information, particularly data related to location.

“The only problem,” Fr. Putthoff mused to a companion during one of many brown-bag lunches they had come to share with Grove, “is who could lead such a project?”

Turning to Grove, who was a junior and had some experience with GIS at Penn’s Cartographic Modeling Lab, the priest asked, “Do you think it’s a good idea? Do you know anyone who’s graduated that could start this out?”

Grove responded, “My only question is, How am I going to tell my parents that I’m dropping out of college to do this?”

Grove turned out not to be another Camden casualty; he simply put off graduation for a year. He transferred to the College of General Studies and became a part-time student, stretching senior year over two years in order to work full time at Hopeworks.

Starting from scratch, he wrote training lessons one day at a time. Eventually, he augmented Hopeworks’ budding GIS curriculum by tapping into the University of Montana’s online classes—at discounted tuition rates. Jack Dangermond, president of ESRI, a leading producer of GIS programs, became so enamored of Hopeworks’ mission and Grove’s moxie that he donated the company’s expensive software. Last summer, ESRI brought Grove and his trainees to its international conference in San Diego to give a presentation on the 33,000-parcel GIS map of Camden—the city’s first and only digital map—that they had pulled together from old tax documents.

“We trained the youth and created it in about five months,” Grove says. “At first, people didn’t think we were the real deal. . . . We made [the Camden GIS map] to establish our legitimacy, in the hope that it would get people interested in taking advantage of our services.”

Hopeworks now fields nearly a half-dozen word-of-mouth referrals a week, from small nonprofits to big city governments. Some projects require months of work, while youths go into neighborhoods with hand-held computers to collect information. Smaller jobs need only downloading and crunching of existing data. Clients include the Camden Housing Authority, Camden County Improvement Authority, New Jersey Tree Foundation, Rutgers University, and other community groups looking for affordable GIS services. “If anyone wants to do any kind of parcel-level analysis in Camden,” Grove brags, “they have to come to Hopeworks.”

Around Thanksgiving, Grove left Camden and returned to Utica to take over the family business, the Bagel Grove, where he had worked growing up. “Hopeworks has engaged a lot of his idealism,” Fr. Putthoff says, “and it might have roughed up some of that idealism too.” In the bagel shop, Grove and his wife plan to incorporate some social-awareness events and perhaps experiment

“THERE ARE JUST LOTS OF SITUATIONS THAT PEOPLE LIVE IN THAT ARE FULL OF PAIN. A LOT OF IT IS JUST POVERTY.”
Camden’s numbers* are daunting. It is New Jersey’s poorest municipality with more than a third of the population and almost half of the children living below the poverty line. The crime rate is nearly double that of the surrounding nine-county area. About two-thirds of the students in the public high schools drop out. Three of the last five mayors are in prison on corruption charges, and the city government is now run by the state. Camden is also a “resource” used by surrounding communities for sewage treatment, state and county prisons, garbage incineration, and re-apportioned low-income housing. Suburbanites drive through the shells of decaying neighborhoods for entertainment on the city’s newly developed waterfront—a facelift for a patient suffering cardiac arrest. Fr. Putthoff visited a nearby suburb in the fall and was startled to see the trees there aflame in autumn colors. “There’s just not a lot of green [in Camden],” he sighs, “and that’s a real poverty too.”

*statistics supplied by Hopeworks
Joe Rosenthal, who snapped the picture of the Iwo Jima flag raising, confided to Alyssa Cwanger, C’04, not long ago that he had almost missed the shot because his equipment wasn’t ready. Cwanger, a fine arts major and pre-med student, dreams of taking iconic photos like his and vows never to be unprepared. When she was five, she had a blue-and-red Fisher Price camera and took pictures of Barbie dolls and stuffed animals. These days she always takes her Nikon D100 whenever she goes to class or to work in a med-school cancer lab or to a photography assignment for the *Boston Herald*, the *Baltimore Sun*, or the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Cwanger is a prize-winning photojournalist. She is so soft spoken, so demure, that you have to wonder how she got a fireman to take her up on a cherry picker to shoot a fire. The *Sun* called her for images of the fallen World Trade towers when none of its picture journalists could get onto the site. The *Herald* sent her to stalk celebrities with the paparazzi, and Ben Affleck’s dad invited her into his home. “I’m persistent,” she says. “If I feel like I want to do something, there’s always a way.”

The results are often striking, occasionally quirky, and sometimes profoundly sad. “This is a splendid body of work,” notes Julie Schneider, her advisor and undergraduate chair of the fine arts program. “She has the ability to capture the critical moment.”

Last year, Cwanger was chosen as a photojournalism intern for Gift of Life International and accompanied a team of pediatric heart surgeons and nurses to Romania. She documented not just the life-saving skills of American medical volunteers, but the tear of a quiet-weeping baby, a mother’s head bent over clenched hands, the smile of a dad at the child lifted in his arms. With a click of a shutter, Cwanger plucked the critical moments of joy and grief, love and pain, and all the happy and unhappy endings from the high-tech bustle of modern medicine.

—PETER NICHOLS

SENIOR MAKES ART OUT OF JOURNALISM
To attorney Andrew Jay Schwartzman, C’68, L’71, even whale calls are broadcast-worthy. The fact that the sonorous groans can be emitted over the radio waves of Kodiak Island, Alaska—where the chamber of commerce nets whale songs with microphones below the ocean—means that Andy is doing his job.

The Ralph Nader of the airwaves, Schwartzman is now in his third decade of creating static for giant media conglomerates like Viacom and AOL Time Warner. Most recently, he pulled off a stunning upset by successfully fighting to stay new FCC rules loosening restrictions on media ownership. The ruling was a major setback for FCC chairman Michael Powell.

Schwartzman, the tenacious president and CEO of Media Access Project (MAP), a telecommunications law firm in Washington, D.C., harps continually on the need for on-air diversity and local ownership. Democracy, he insists, works only when everyone’s voice gets heard. Mostly, he works with small, defiant groups like civil rights organizations, churches, school districts, and environmental activists. “Many of those I’m up against see the First Amendment as just another device to protect their revenue stream,” he charges. “My clients are living, breathing people, not artificial people like these companies.”

Schwartzman defended the 1992 Cable Act, which requires cable companies to carry local TV stations. He’s paved the way for low-power radio stations—those tiny blips under 5,000 watts on the dial between the big stations—to operate legally. And, as co-counsel in a Supreme Court case that toppled the Communications

“BIG IS BAD IN THE MEDIA BECAUSE YOU LOSE TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE.”
Decency Act, he helped to establish free-speech rights on the Internet. “I love the media! I just want to make it better,” exclaims Schwartzman, whose shocking white hair is partially concealed by the headphones he wears to channel-cruise radio and TV.

A precocious consumer of journalism and avid follower of legendary New York Times columnist James Reston, young Andy was reading the Times by the age of six. So fascinated was the boy by the media’s impact on public decisions that he would line up three TV sets and scrutinize the spins each station placed on the same news stories.

The one-time sociology major grew up in a politically active household in New York’s Westchester county. His physician father, Joel, C’31, GM’46, and journalist mother were active in local Democratic politics. (Brother Paul, C’71, is a Hollywood film agent.) In law school he spent a semester in the nation’s capital working for a public-policy law firm, evaluating standards for misleading advertising. Later he joined the communication office of the United Church of Christ, where he promoted minority employment and ownership in broadcasting. He started working for MAP in 1978 and has never left.

A small public-interest law firm, Media Access Project grew out of a movement that began with litigation against a Mississippi TV station for failing to serve the black community. Most of the firm’s caseload involves television, the rest radio and Internet. Its three attorneys and various interns operate on a starvation budget of $650,000 a year, a sum less than the annual salary of many corporate lawyers.

“He’s been doing this thing on a nickel and a dime for years because he’s doing what he believes in,” says Shaun Sheehan, Washington lobbyist for the Chicago-based Tribune Company and frequent Schwartzman opponent. “You have to admire that.”

Pete Tridish, technical director for the Prometheus Radio Project, Schwartzman’s client in the FCC case, is awed by his encyclopedic knowledge of the regulatory agency. “His political sense of the FCC is like that of a naturalist who’s been watching a weird bird for years and understands its ins and outs,” says Tridish, who is amused by his lawyer’s quirky habit of nesting himself in “thousands and thousands of papers everywhere.”

Many of Schwartzman’s opponents call his arguments repetitive and without merit. He counters that the FCC is a highly politicized bird, dominated by well-funded interests with powerful lobbies. Lifetime wins have been few, but Schwartzman has stuck with his plan and his arguments. On September 3 of last year, that tenacity paid off.

Working on behalf of Philadelphia-based Prometheus, a nonprofit activist organization that fights for democratic ownership and regulation of media, Schwartzman surprised everyone—including himself. He defeated legal teams from the FCC and three major broadcast networks by convincing the court to freeze the new FCC ownership rules on the day before they were set to take effect.

Arguing before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, Schwartzman claimed that the new rules, which enable media companies to seize greater market share than under the current rules, impede diversity in ownership and operation of broadcast stations. “Big is bad in the media because you lose touch with the people,” he contends.

The hearing on the future of the rules is scheduled for early February. Schwartzman, who spends his spare time reading newspapers and magazines and working computer keys to surf the Internet, will again insist that having many media owners will yield a diversity of perspectives. Unmoved by opponents’ arguments that corporate ownership means polished newscasts with highly trained on-air personalities, he will also drive home the importance of local ownership of media outlets, which, he maintains, preserves ties to communities. “We think that localization and having the opportunity to present different points of view is more important than slickness.”

Although many of Schwartzman’s clients engage in public protests and civil disobedience, he stays within more conventional bounds, believing that the order and justice of the legal system will prevail. By using the law to protect the rights of the little guy, he strives “to improve how we function as a democratic society.”

“What keeps me in it is the sense that I’ve made a difference in people’s lives. Many of these things—free speech on the Internet, women and minority involvement in media management, ownership and newsgathering—are abstract. But,” he stresses, “they are no less real,” no less real than songs of whales over the airwaves of Kodiak Island—or the First Amendment principles that Schwartzman champions.

Joan Capuzzi Giresi, C’86, V’98, is a journalist and veterinarian in the Philadelphia area.
Shirin Ebadi was surprised to learn she had beaten out the Pope for this year’s Nobel Peace Prize. She is the first Iranian Muslim woman to win the honor. The state-run media refused to acknowledge the accolade for several hours after the world had already begun to laud the decision by the Norwegian Nobel Committee. Most Iranians had been apprised of the news by the international media, and many openly embraced the choice. The government finally acknowledged her accomplishment with a passing statement. That non-reaction did not go ignored by the Iranian public. When she arrived in Tehran as a Nobel laureate, Ebadi’s compatriots greeted her at the airport with flowers.

Ebadi has dedicated her career to defending the rights of the voiceless and underprivileged in Iran. Since the Revolution of 1979, which supplanted the secular Pahlavi government with Islamic rule, she has striven to protect political dissidents and defend the rights of women and children. Forced out of her position as one of the country’s first female judges, Ebadi resumed work as a human rights lawyer. She has been arrested for her activism, but even the fear of imprisonment and death has not stopped her from continuing the struggle against political oppression.

Working within the strictures of the Islamic legal system, Ebadi has argued that Islam can accommodate and co-exist with modern interpretations of human rights. This conviction has empowered her to effect change in Iran’s rigid political climate, forcing, for instance, a reassessment of child custody and divorce laws. In addition, she has supported Iran’s burgeoning democratic movement by representing students who were attacked in their dormitory several years ago by the police. She has also taken on high profile cases such as the murders of political dissidents Dariush Foruhar.

In an interview with the Sunday Times of London, Ebadi is quoted as saying, “All I want is legal equality between men and women. What I represent is a small part of a deep-rooted reform movement in Iran that cannot be stopped. In every society there comes a time when people want to be free. That time has come in Iran.”

Ebadi’s recognition comes at a sensitive moment in the evolution of Iranian society and indeed of the Islamic Middle East. As the United States confronts the unpleasant reality of occupying Iraq, conservative Iranian politicians watch with a mixture of trepidation and defiance. Though firmly ensconced in the government, they are increasingly challenged by reformers seeking to instill democratic values and practices in Iranian politics. Ebadi’s Nobel Prize is a tacit nod of approval for the reform movement as well as a message to the United States to re-think its “Axis of Evil” doctrine and to give grassroots democracy a chance in Iran.

Shirin Ebadi stands out as an exceptional woman whose success and recognition serve to inspire other Muslim women and human rights activists. To those who dare to defy oppression and to challenge the status quo in their societies, her message is one of hope.

Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet is an assistant professor of history who specializes in the history of the modern Middle East, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran. She grew up in Iran and calls herself “culturally Muslim.”
Through a Glass Historically

BY PROFESSOR BRUCE KUKLICK

From the time of the Spanish-American War, this country has flaunted the essence of evil in its enemies. When the battleship Maine was destroyed in Havana Harbor, William McKinley literally got down on his knees and prayed for divine guidance in striking out against the evil that was Spain. Americans demonized Germany in both world wars and the North Koreans and Vietnamese in subsequent wars. Today, with the exception of Nazi Germany, it is generally thought that the evil attributed to our enemies never really existed. There were differences of opinion—there were good guys and bad guys—but there wasn’t the kind of incarnate malice that was used to justify entry into these wars.

The second example is the standard argument people make that civil liberties take a hit during wartime. In World War I, A. Mitchell Palmer, a renegade attorney general, deported and jailed all sorts of foreigners and immigrants during the first Red Scare. In World War II, there was the incarceration of the Japanese in the detention camps. The Korean War is well known for the rise of McCarthyism, and the Vietnam War is associated with expansion of the powers of the FBI and the CIA.

What really happens in wartime, I think, is not just a curb in civil liberties but exaggerated responses to them. Although you had the Red Scare during World War I, you also had the impetus for women’s suffrage that led to the Fourteenth Amendment. Besides relocation camps, World War II also brought an expansion of work opportunities for African Americans and women. The Korean War helped integrate the armed services, and there was an efflorescence of social movements during the Vietnam War—a general loosening of American culture, the Civil Rights Movement, the movement for gay rights, and the women’s revolution.

The last thing is what I call the relatively untouched nature of the U.S. during wartime. Teddy Roosevelt called the Spanish-American War a “splendid little war” because it gave us a chance to flex our muscles—at very little cost. World War II was an enormous conflict, and there were 375,000 American deaths. The Soviet Union had a comparable population and lost 20 million. We used the Russians like mercenaries in that war, supplying them with enormous quantities of tanks, clothing, and armaments. When we do get into war, we rely on our enormous technological superiority. And when Americans begin to take casualties, as happened in Korea and Vietnam, the Truman and Johnson administrations were driven from office.

I watch CNN a lot, as I’m sure many of you do. The way the media intrudes on the private miseries of American families who have lost kids in Iraq seems obscene to me, especially in comparison to what the Iraqi people are suffering. What it suggests is that Americans have very little sense of how ghastly war is. This, it seems to me, makes us more willing to engage in war.

Bruce Kulkick, C’63, Gr’68, is the Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor of American History. This article is adapted from a talk he delivered in the fall at the home of Pam, CW’73, and Tony Schneider in Bryn Mawr, PA.
Help the Asch Center help refugees
Conflict among ethnic groups has displaced 40 million people around the world. In response to this crisis, the Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict (http://www.psych.upenn.edu/sacsec/index.htm) conducts psychosocial research and training to address the plight of displaced populations.

The center has conducted self-care, job training, education, conflict-resolution, and trauma counseling programs in Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone. It offers workshops for relief workers on the psychological needs of refugees and holds monthly meetings for the many people and organizations in the Philadelphia area who work on refugee issues.

A recent grant of $625,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will help the center expand these initiatives, but only if the School can raise $500,000 in matching gifts from alumni and friends. The grant and matching contributions will endow the position of director of refugee initiatives, as well as support the center’s research and training programs for refugees and those who work with them. Anyone interested in making a matching contribution should contact the School’s external affairs office at 215.898.5262.

Gift annuities pay off for alumna and her husband
Two of the newest members of the Society of Arts and Sciences made their contribution to the School through a planned gift. Sonia Shahinian Schacterle, CW’50, G’51, and her husband George recently established a series of charitable gift annuities to support graduate fellowships. They made their gift, which honors the memory of Sonia’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. Garabed Sital Shahinian, after receiving an annual appeal letter for the SAS Graduate Fellowship Fund. They had recently established a scholarship through a gift annuity at Temple University, where George had been both a student and professor, and they wanted to do something similar for Sonia’s alma mater. Sonia holds a master’s degree in English, and they were delighted to be able to assist future graduate students while memorializing her parents. The fellowship support was the couple’s first major gift to the School. When asked what prompted them to make such a generous gift, they responded, “Because someone asked!”

Gift planning: Focus on gift annuities
A planned gift can bring financial benefits to both SAS and you by generating lifelong income, diversifying low-yielding assets, reducing capital gains costs, creating income tax deductions, or reducing estate taxes. There are several ways to give, but many donors create charitable gift annuities, the simplest life income gift arrangement.

A gift annuity is a contribution that contractually obligates Penn to pay you, or those you name, a fixed income for life. The minimum contribution is $10,000 in cash or securities, and the person receiving the income must be at least 55 years of age. Single and two-life income rates are based on age as shown in the chart below. A portion of the gift qualifies for an income tax deduction as determined by IRS formulas.

To illustrate, if an alumnus aged 75 donates $25,000 in stocks (cost basis $10,000) toward a gift annuity, his income is $1,775 a year, of which $466 is tax-free, $699 is capital gain, and $610 is ordinary income. He has an income tax deduction of $10,565 this year and saves $951 in capital gains tax. Upon his death, the School will use the proceeds of his gift for the Graduate Fellowship Fund.

Many options exist. Penn’s gift planning staff can advise you on the full range of opportunities, financial implications, potential tax savings, and the impact your gift will make on the School. To learn more, call Janine Ehsani at 800.223.8236 or 215.898.1098 or ehsani@ben.dev.upenn.edu.

SAS PARTNERSHIPS

Children in Sierra Leone refugee camp
School meets challenge for Korean studies

With support from alumni, parents, and friends, SAS has completed a $5 million challenge to strengthen its Korean studies program. The challenge was extended in 1997 by the Korea Foundation, which pledged $2.5 million with the requirement that the School raise an additional $2.5 million. Major commitments from University Trustee James Joo-Jin Kim, W'59, G'61, Gr'63, and two anonymous donors helped meet the foundation’s challenge. Mr. Kim, the first person to significantly invest in Penn’s commitment to Korean studies, said, “I was delighted that I could help an institution of Penn’s stature promote greater knowledge and understanding of this important part of the world.”

Political science professor Chong-Sik Lee, considered the founder of Korean studies in the United States, began Penn’s program in 1963. These gifts have built on his work by establishing two Korea Foundation Professorships as well as a Center for Korean Studies, which is directed by Korea Foundation Assistant Professor of History Milan Hejtmanek, an expert on Korea’s Chosôn dynasty. Now that the challenge has been completed, the School has authorized the search for the second Korea Foundation Professor. These gifts have also been used to expand Korean studies courses, launch a minor, increase library acquisitions, establish a lecture series, and bring visiting scholars and notable speakers to campus.

President Judith Rodin announced the completion of the challenge at an alumni reception in Seoul in October. The event was part of her final international trip as Penn president. Joining her at the event was Dr. Lee, who is now a professor emeritus.

Writing programs reorganized for accessibility, creativity

The School has launched a new center to bring together, for the first time, Penn’s many writing programs. The Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (http://writing.upenn.edu/), directed by Kelly Family Professor Al Filreis, aligns the critical writing program, creative writing program, and Kelly Writers House, making it easier for students to find the writing resources they seek and allowing more imaginative collaboration among the three areas.

Under this new plan, the nationally recognized critical writing program offers writing seminars across many disciplines, while the creative writing program provides rigorous apprenticeships with eminent writers, and the Kelly Writers House hosts hundreds of writer-led symposia, readings, spoken-word performances, literacy projects, and workshops each year. Linking these three areas has created a lively writing neighborhood on campus where students can easily find writing courses, workshops, manuscript exchange groups, writing advisors, apprenticeships, activities, and mentors.

Alumni and friends can make gifts to endow the center and its directorship, provide research and travel funds for student writers, develop courses such as documentary/non-fiction writing, bring visiting writers to campus, and hire writing teachers, tutors, and advisors.

For more information, contact Patti Scullin at 215.898.5262 or pschind@sas.upenn.edu.

CPCW director Al Filreis (left) welcomes guests to the center’s new home at 3808 Walnut Street.
MEMBERSHIP recognizes individuals who have enhanced the excellence of the School of Arts and Sciences by giving $100,000 or more over the last five years. The members embody the spirit of the School with their dedication to achieving and maintaining distinction in the liberal arts. They demonstrate a unique awareness of the importance of balancing tradition and innovation in higher education and champion both in equal measure.

Their vision informs our pursuit of excellence, and their generous support moves us forward.

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