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“There really is a paradigm that says ‘the Middle East is just reactive and defensive and everything you see there is just a reaction to the way the United States acts, or to colonialism, or Zionism or imperialism.’... Frankly, it’s not so interesting to look at the Middle East as a place that just reacts to the United States. You might as well just study the United States then.”

—THE WEEKLY STANDARD MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT LEE SMITH AT THE MIDDLE EAST AND UNITED STATES STRATEGY SERIES, HOSTED BY THE ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

“I get this one a lot: ‘Oh, my God, you’re a lot bigger than you look on TV.’ And I’m always like, ‘Well, yeah. I mean how big is your television, lady?’ ”

—BEN BAILEY, EMMY-WINNING HOST OF CASH CAB, TAPING A STAND-UP SPECIAL FOR COMEDY CENTRAL AT THE SKIRBALL CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

“My mom said, ‘You gotta try this Internet thing out. It’s like a giant library.’ [Then] I got there and the human element was so incredibly powerful and striking—literally the first time I logged on I was chatting with somebody in Alabama.”

—CLAY SHIRKY, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR AT THE INTERACTIVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM AND AUTHOR OF COGNITIVE SURPLUS, DISCUSSES WHAT SPARKED HIS INTEREST IN THE INTERNET DURING THE ARTHUR L. CARTER JOURNALISM INSTITUTE’S PRIMARY SOURCES SERIES

“In 1965, there were 160,000 people in jails and prisons in America. Today, there are 2.3 million. There are nearly 6 million under probation or parole.... [Mass incarceration] has created a culture of despair and hopelessness that actually feeds violence and criminality.”

—PROFESSOR BRYAN STEVENSON, DIRECTOR OF THE EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE, AT THE FORUM “DOES THE UNITED STATES INCARCERATE TOO MANY PEOPLE?” HOSTED BY THE SCHOOL OF LAW
THE IRREPRESSIBLE COURANT
MATHEMATICIAN RICHARD COURANT OVERCAME WAR AND ANTI-SEMITISM TO BUILD THE INSTITUTE THAT BEARS HIS NAME
/ BY AMY ROSENBERG

CRITICAL CARE
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/ BY ANDREA CRAWFORD

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

NYU Alumni Magazine’s Fall 2010 issue marks the 15th since we first began publishing seven years ago. When we launched, we viewed the magazine as a new opportunity to connect with our alumni, and to build a sense of identity that spanned borders and generations.

Now we have confirmation that we’ve been doing that. This past spring, nearly 1,000 of our readers participated in the magazine’s first large-scale survey, generated by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. For us, the results were illuminating: 73 percent of respondents reported that the alumni magazine strengthens their connection to the university. Two-thirds rated the quality as excellent or good, and 30 percent found it a source of continuing education (see more on p. 6).

Yet we know that there is always room for improvement. We hope that you will continue to send us your thoughts on what the magazine does well—and, more importantly, what we can do better—as well as what types of stories you want to read. (Please e-mail feedback to alumni.magazine@nyu.edu or mail it to NYU Alumni Magazine, 240 Greene Street, Second Floor, New York, NY 10003.)

In this issue, we present the story of Richard Courant, the brilliant mathematician who escaped Nazi Germany in 1934 to found the mathematical institute at NYU that now bears his name some 75 years later (“The Irrepressible Courant,” p. 34). We also examine a labor-intensive new pilot program for high-risk patients at Bellevue Hospital Center that may be one of the best bets for saving Medicaid dollars (“Critical Care,” p. 38). Finally, we look toward NYU’s 200th anniversary and a grand new framework to guide our future growth (“Looking to the Future,” p. 42). Known as NYU Plans 2031, it details how we aim to meet the growing demands on space for classes, research, lodging, recreation, rehearsals, and any of the many activities that make this institution a top-tier center of learning.

—JOHN SEXTON

CONTRIBUTORS

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STAR POWER

TOP-DRAW ALUMNI AND FRIENDS PUT ON THE GLITZ FOR NYU

ACTOR LIEV SCHREIBER NARRATED AN ORCHESTRAL REIMAGINING OF THE STORY OF ICARUS AT THE WORLD SCIENCE FESTIVAL.

SINGING SIBLINGS WYCLEFT AND MELKY JEAN PERFORMED AT A PHOTO EXHIBITION IN THE GALLATIN GALLERIES.

U.S. SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY TIMOTHY GEITHNER TALKED FINANCIAL REFORM AT STERN.

FIRST LADY OF FRANCE CARLA BRUNI-SARKOZY VISITED STEINHARDT TO ANNOUNCE A NEW PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN HER FOUNDATION AND SEVERAL NEW YORK ART SCHOOLS, INCLUDING NYU.
In place of our usual Letters to the Editor, we’d like to share some results from our first bona fide reader survey last spring. Nearly 1,000 people participated—thank you!—and we read every comment. Here are a few highlights, “warts and all”:

**MOST MEMORABLE ISSUE?**
Many said “The Green Issue” (Fall 2007) and “It’s Not Science Fiction Anymore” (Fall 2009). One reader with an elephant memory recalled “The Big Think” (Spring 2004).

**PLUS:**
- “The magazine always stands out, but the ‘Purple Haze’–like cover (Fall 2009) is the most memorable.”
- “I remember an issue about the fund-raising target and wondered if Bloomberg was giving money.”

**WHAT DO READERS LIKE?**
Class Notes…and the sense of connection and nostalgia the magazine inspires, with its “eye candy” design and “quality” writing on a “breadth of topics.”

**PLUS:**
- “[I like] the great sense of pride I feel when I show it off to my friends from other schools. Eat your heart out, Michigan, Northwestern, Columbia…”
- “[I like] very little. The total lack of objectivity and obvious fear regarding criticizing the university makes it little more than a beautiful rag. Shame on the editors.”
- “[I like that] I actually get a hard copy of the magazine, which I keep in my library. I have almost all of them since its first printing.”

**WHAT SHOULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY?**
Some readers advised us to move online (Note: We have! www.nyu.edu/alumni.magazine) and others—56 percent of respondents—begged us to keep printing hard copies. Many wanted more articles focused on their particular class, discipline, or school.

**PLUS:**
- “More coverage of NYU’s history.”

(Note: We heard you. See “Remember the Triangle,” p. 10, and “The Irrepressible Courant,” p. 34.)

• “[Publish] warts and all.”

Please send your comments and opinions to: Readers’ Letters, NYU Alumni Magazine, 240 Greene Street, Second Floor, New York, NY, 10003; or e-mail us at alumni.magazine@nyu.edu. Include your mailing address, phone number, school and year. Letters become the property of NYU and may be edited for length and clarity.

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**YOUR GUIDE TO THE SCHOOL CODES**

**THE FOLLOWING ARE ABBREVIATIONS FOR NYU SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, PAST AND PRESENT**

**ARTS** - University College of Arts and Science (“The Heights”); used for alumni through 1974

**CAS** - College of Arts and Science (“The College”); refers to the undergraduate school in arts and science, from 1994 on

**CIMS** - Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences

**DEN** - College of Dentistry

**ENG** - School of Engineering and Science (“The Heights”); no longer exists but is used to refer to its alumni through 1974

**GAL** - Gallatin School of Individualized Study, formerly Gallatin Division

**GSAS** - Graduate School of Arts and Science

**HON** - Honorary Degree

**IFA** - Institute of Fine Arts

**ISAW** - Institute for the Study of the Ancient World

**LAW** - School of Law

**LS** - Liberal Studies Program

**MED** - School of Medicine, formerly College of Medicine

**NUR** - College of Nursing

**SCPS** - School of Continuing and Professional Studies

**SSSW** - Silver School of Social Work

**STEINHARDT** - The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, formerly School of Education

**STERN** - Leonard N. Stern School of Business, formerly the Graduate School of Business Administration; Leonard N. Stern School of Business Undergraduate College, formerly School of Commerce; and College of Business and Public Administration

**TSOA** - Tisch School of the Arts, formerly School of the Arts

**WAG** - Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, formerly Graduate School of Public Administration

**WSC** - Washington Square College, now College of Arts and Science; refers to arts and science undergraduates who studied at Washington Square Campus through 1974

**WSUC** - Washington Square University College, now College of Arts and Science; refers to alumni of the undergraduate school in arts and science from 1974 to 1994
WHERE IT HAPPENS

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A visitor to Nadrian Seeman’s office in the department of chemistry could be forgiven for wondering whether this is the same Ned Seeman who pioneered the precise manipulation of matter at the tiniest scales. The room has few bare surfaces—including the ceiling, from which geometric models dangle. Stacks of books and papers are piled high, pieces of plastic toys block a window, postcards and printouts and rope knots cover the walls. The chalkboard, with equations and sketches of DNA, is a discovery zone of its own.

A disorderly office, however, is apparently an unreliable indicator of a disorderly mind. Amidst this chaos, Seeman, who has been on the faculty at NYU since 1988, works within a new realm of chemistry that he created, called nanotechnology, or the control of matter on the scale of billionths of a meter. It seems an impossibly delicate task, like building a ship in a microscopically small bottle. But a wave of researchers is exploring an ingenious shortcut—essentially a way to get trillions of tiny ships in a test tube to assemble themselves—by using the programmable matter of DNA.

Seeman recently built an entire assembly line using this technology, inspiring The Christian Science Monitor to call him the “Henry Ford” of nanotech. Earlier this year, he shared the biannual million-dollar Kavli Prize for nanotechnology—the field’s version of the Nobel. “For a long time, there were no other labs working on his ideas,” says William Shih, a chemist at Harvard University who also studies DNA nanotech. “Now it’s a rapidly expanding field.”

Though the ultimate utility of nanotech is unclear, scientists believe it could revolutionize computers. Imagine an iPod Nano that’s actually nano.

Though the ultimate utility of nanotech is still unclear, many scientists, including Seeman, believe it could revolutionize building materials, medicines, and even computers. Imagine an iPod Nano that’s actually nano. “Our goal is to further in a realistic fashion the kinds of things that people have been talking about with nanotechnology for many years, most of which has been bullshit,” says Seeman, who has longish hair, a bushy beard, and no objection to colorful language.

Seeman, who earned his PhD from the University of Pittsburgh in 1970, invented DNA nanotechnology 30 years ago when he was working as a crystallographer at the State University of New York at Albany. He loved the puzzle of trying to figure out the shapes of tiny molecules. Researchers in his lab would shoot X-rays at crystals and decipher what the component molecules looked like by how the structure scattered the radiation. But forming those crystals “is the dumbest experiment known to modern science,” Seeman says, because it’s difficult to control. You fill a container with many copies of the molecule you’re trying to crystallize, concentrate it, and hope they all line up in a repeating pattern. “If you get a glop of crap, you
have no idea what you did wrong,” he explains.

One day at the local pub, Seeman was thinking about DNA junctions—created when strands of different DNA double helixes are unzipped and stuck together to form branched intersections—when an image by M.C. Escher popped into his head. The illustration, titled “Depth,” depicts fish swimming in a regular pattern with other fish lined up above, below, in front, and behind. He realized that if he combined the right strands of nucleotides, their sticky ends would meet up and they would automatically conform to a repeating three-dimensional grid of six-arm junctions, just like Escher’s fish.

“When I had that epiphany in the bar, I had been doing a lot of things that to me were really neat, but it wasn’t me,” Seeman recalls. “Crystallography was fun, and I was good at it, but something clicked in me that said, ‘This is what I’ve got to spend the rest of my life doing.’” Controlling matter on a fine scale using DNA had the analytical components of crystallography, but he saw considerably more potential for creativity.

Since this epiphany, Seeman’s work has spawned several branches of research now being conducted in more than 50 labs around the world—many of them populated by former students of his. One branch is the construction of intricate self-assembling shapes. In 1991, he and a collaborator built a cube that consists of six loops of DNA. Later he and another collaborator built a truncated octahedron, or eight-sided figure. Other researchers have made a smiley face and a map of the Western Hemisphere, a thousand of which could fit across the diameter of a human hair. There’s no immediate use for any of these shapes, but they were proof of a concept—any design could become a reality.

Seeman also helped give birth to the fields of DNA computing and
DNA nanomachines. In the latter, manipulating the DNA strands allows scientists to control their movement like little machines. Years ago he built the first nanoscale inchworm walker. Others have made tweezers. “He invented a somewhat crazy field,” and for years was “a lone voice in the wilderness,” says Caltech researcher Paul Rothemund, who created the smiley faces and maps.

More and more people are listening to the “lone voice.” In May, Seeman’s team reported in the journal Nature that they’d built an entire assembly line out of DNA. A microscopic walker could pivot and move past three other machines, each holding a different cargo of nanoparticles. The scientists could direct whether each machine would reach over and deposit its cargo onto the “chassis” as it marched past. “A new chemistry, I believe, will come out of this in terms of control,” Seeman says. Creating molecules is currently a messy multistage process that involves adding and removing protective groups of atoms at various stages to avoid volatile interactions among unfinished molecules. But with something like Seeman’s assembly line, researchers will eventually be able to manufacture drugs and who knows what else more easily and cleanly. It’s Detroit in a test tube.

Despite these leaps forward, it was only last fall, after nearly three decades, that Seeman finally constructed the DNA version of Escher’s “Depth”—a project he thought he could accomplish in five years. The path was more difficult than he’d expected. “On the way, we took what we thought of as baby steps,” he says, noting they continued breaking down the process to see why it didn’t work. This led them to discover: “Some of them were, in fact, giant steps.”

It was just about quitting time on Saturday, March 25, 1911, when the first tongues of flame licked across the eighth floor of what is now NYU’s Brown Building, but was then home of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. The fire jumped to the ninth then to the 10th, and top, floor. Along the way, scores of finished blouses, freshly cut patterns, and ubiquitous scrap boxes, fueled by rows of well-oiled sewing machines, lit up like greased tinder. Next door, in today’s Silver Building, NYU professor Frank Sommer and his law class heard shrieking and sirens. They scrambled to the roof, where students George DeWitt, Charles Kramer, Frederick Newman, and Elias Kanter lifted dozens of workers to safety. Within half an hour, the fire had mostly burned itself out; the modern building was, ironically, considered fireproof. Yet some 146 people were dead—most of them mere girls and recent Jewish and Italian immigrants. Trapped in unbearable heat, many had leapt from the windows, to the point that the first reporter on the scene wrote that the gutters ran “red with blood.”

Only the year before, these same women, on strike with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, had demanded safer working conditions. Looking over the carnage, the reporter prophesied, “These dead bodies were the answer” to their unheeded call. Indeed, the tragedy shocked New York City and the nation into action, delivering many of the fire and building codes that protect us today, as well as routine drills, better inspections, and more humane labor laws. “A certain amount of air per worker, windows, clean bathrooms—all those things we take for granted were legislated as a result of the fire,” notes historian Richard Greenwald (GSAS ’95, ’98), dean of the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies at Drew University and author of The Triangle Fire, the Protocols of Peace, and Industrial Democracy in Progressive Era New York (Temple University Press). As the fire’s centennial approaches, many groups on and off campus are recalling this history with an array of activities—performance art, museum shows, courses, and no less than three TV documentaries—all culminating on the anniversary with the annual reading of the victims’ names at the Brown Building.

The modern building was considered fireproof. Yet some 146 people died—most of them mere girls.

In the days after the fire, spontaneous memorials sprung up around the city, as newspapers opined about who was at fault and union activists called for more stringent codes and enforcement. The groundswell of public concern led to a mammoth relief effort for survivors and families of victims, and a solemn funeral parade for the seven women who remained unidentified. Despite rain, it drew some 400,000 participants and observers. It also put pressure on the political elite to respond and triggered a period of reform that would extend through the New Deal in the 1930s. In fact, Frances Perkins, FDR’s labor secretary, witnessed the fire from the street, while future U.S. Senator Robert F. Wagner presided over state investigations in the aftermath. Both championed new regulations.

Reform is just one focus of a spring show at NYU’s Grey Art Gallery on how the tragedy has been commemorated over the past century. The exhibit is the labor of an ongoing interdisciplinary course for graduate students in the Archives and Public History and the Museum Studies programs, and will incorporate painting, sculpture, historical documents, and photos. Though students are still creating the exhibits, one highlight will be several sculptures by Evelyn Beatrice Longman, a protégée of American sculptor Daniel Chester French, who was quietly commissioned by the city’s elite to
carve a memorial for the unidentified remains. The city purposely installed Longman’s marble relief of a garment worker at the Evergreens Cemetery in Brooklyn, far from the grieving immigrant masses of downtown Manhattan.

As the event moved into the past, there was a span of decades when unions appeared to be almost the sole stewards of its memory. Now that’s shifting again, says Marci Reaven (GSAS ’09), director of the cultural conservation project Place Matters, who is co-teaching the NYU course with Lucy Oakley, education and program coordinator at Grey. “One could imagine that with industry moving out of the city and union membership down generally, no one would pay attention,” Reaven says. “But they are.”

This is because “there’s a sense of the pure wrongness of it,” says artist Ruth Sergel (TSOA ’08), who, since 2004, has organized a group of volunteers to haunt the neighborhoods where victims lived—primarily the East Village, Lower East Side, and Little Italy—and chalk their names, ages, and addresses onto the sidewalk before their former homes. Though the annual, if impermanent, memorial started with a low-key e-mail blast to family and friends, Sergel has drawn an increasing number of participants, and in 2008, sensing the coming centennial would need a central organizing body, she founded the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition. “You have the labor movement, Jewish-Americans, Italian-Americans, women, immigrants—they all feel passionately invested,” she says. Some see parallels with the plight of undocumented workers who toil today in meat factories and on farms and construction sites. For others, Triangle resonates with a more recent, though starkly different workplace trauma, 9/11.

Then there are those who feel a bit of déjà vu, as if American society had returned to the Gilded Age with the recent string of regulation-related catastrophes, from the financial crisis to the BP accident in the Gulf of Mexico. “The oil spill, it’s really Triangle all over again,” says Daphne Pinkerson, producer of HBO’s Triangle documentary, which will air next spring. While fire drills and sprinkler systems were known to significantly reduce injuries in 1911, for example, government was reluctant to trample on the liberties of the private sector. Then, like now, “The business of government was really to help business,” explains Michael Hirsch, a researcher and collaborator on the film. “But that changed after the fire.” Unlike the many other documentaries that have recounted the incident with authors and historians, the HBO film will look at it through the stories of the descendants of victims and survivors. To do this, Hirsch tracked down about 25 relatives, some of whom are featured in the documentary.

For Hirsch, the search for family members is part of a larger project to create an association of descendants so that they may have a voice in how the event is remembered going forward. There is a movement afoot, for example, to build a permanent memorial on or near the site of the fire, now noted simply by two retiring plaques on the building’s facade. The most lasting monument, however, may be all the lives saved since that fateful day. “American history is filled with these kinds of tragedies,” historian Greenwald muses. “In very few do you see something positive rising out of them.”

LEFT: SOME 400,000 PEOPLE GATHERED IN THE RAIN TO HONOR THE SEVEN UNIDENTIFIED VICTIMS OF THE FIRE. BELOW: A BOROUGH AWAY FROM THE OUTRAGED IMMIGRANTS OF DOWNTOWN NEW YORK, THE REMAINS WERE DISCREETLY LAID TO REST BENEATH THIS MEMORIAL BY EVELYN BEATRICE LONGMAN.
Facebook has been in the news a lot lately. In July, the social networking site hit 500 million users—that was the good press. The bad: A glitch in May inadvertently released many users’ private information, such as chat transcripts, to their friends. Last April, the site changed its privacy policy and suddenly users faced the dilemma of whether to share some personal information with everyone, or no one at all. Perhaps the scariest breach of trust was the discovery that data such as your name, age, and occupation was being shared with digital marketing companies, including Google’s DoubleClick and Yahoo’s Right Media. With each scandal came a media firestorm.

“Facebook, while iconic, is not alone,” warns Gabriella Coleman, assistant professor of media, culture, and communication at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. “There are banks and other institutions at play here.” And more than just personal mortification or consumer patterns are at stake. Last December, the all-powerful Google was hacked—reportedly by an entity in China—and companies and contractors that handle critical infrastructure, such as Internet service providers, electrical grids, and nuclear power plants, grew increasingly worried. The accumulating breaches led the Obama administration to announce, in the president’s Cyber Security Review last year: “Cyber threat is one of the most serious economic and national security challenges we face as a nation.”

While the gravity of these cyber challenges is clear, what to do about them remains contentious and uncertain. Private companies are taking their own measures, while the federal government struggles to assuage fears with several proposals—most notably a classified National Security Agency program called Perfect Citizen, which would monitor Web activity and detect cyber assaults on companies and government agencies. Meanwhile, universities are tackling these questions from other vantages. The hope is that some of the ideas now swirling around campuses, government halls, and boardrooms will illuminate how to regulate the Web in a manner that is both legal and effective, that preserves the openness and transparency that built such a powerful tool but still protects privacy.

To get any regulation right, one needs to understand how our conception of privacy is changing. The increased reliance on new technologies has “radically disrupted” the way information flows in society, notes Helen Nissenbaum, professor of media, culture, and communication at Steinhardt and author of *Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life* (Stanford University Press). Privacy remains an important value, but not in the form of secrecy, or controlling and withholding information. “People say that young people don’t care about privacy anymore,” she says. “That’s nonsense. Look at their loud objections to the changes in Facebook’s privacy settings.” What people do care about, she says, is that information is shared appropriately.

Nissenbaum predicts that people will eventually stop using Face-
The class of 1980 donned their caps and gowns while Jimmy Carter was in office, the Iran hostage crisis was showing no signs of a resolution, and Blondie’s “Call Me” was rocking the airwaves in the top spot on Billboard’s Hot 100. NYU was primarily a commuter school in those days, with the vast majority of students trekking to the Village from the outer boroughs and suburbs. This year, more undergrads hail from California than New Jersey, and 25 percent of students live in dorms—compared to less than 4 percent back then. Here’s how some other stats stack up to their 1980 counterparts:

**WOMEN OUTNUMBER MEN—MORE THAN EVER**

Then: 53% of students were women
Now: 59%

**RESIDENCE HALLS HAVE MORE THAN QUADRUPLED, from 5 to 21**

**MOST POPULAR UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR**

Then: Biology
Now: Film and Television

**A MOVIE DATE FOR TWO TO FILM FORUM**

Then: $8
Now: $24

**MOST POPULAR STUDENT GROUP**

Then and Now: Asian Cultural Union
(It’s nice to know some things don’t change.)

Sources: NYU Archives, Office of Institutional Research, Film Forum, Division of Student Affairs
When President Barack Obama delivered his first speech to Congress in 2009, he proclaimed that “every American will need to get more than a high school diploma,” affirming the consensus that a BA has become the new baseline of education. But as college degrees grow more common, a new study warns not to let someone’s résumé fool you—undergraduate students may not be learning fundamental skills, such as critical thinking and writing, the hallmarks of higher ed. “If ‘college for all’ is nothing more than just warehousing kids for four years, that’s pretty disturbing,” says Richard Arum, a professor at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development.

The “soft” level of student achievement is the focus of Arum’s new book, Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses (University of Chicago Press), co-written with University of Virginia assistant professor Josipa Roska, which examines the results of the Council for Aid to Education’s Collegiate Learning Assessment exam, or CLA. The test—which gauges critical thinking and writing skills—was administered to more than 2,300 students at 24 universities around the country, and the results are disconcerting: 45 percent of students exhibited no measurable improvement in these areas over their first two years of college.

The tidings grew more alarming when Arum and Roska cross-referenced the CLA results with data on participating students’ socioeconomic backgrounds and lifestyles. They found that half of those surveyed hadn’t taken a single course in which they were required to write more than 20 pages, while a third report not being assigned more than 40 pages of reading per week. While this may not instill confidence in those hiring students right out of college, there are those who glean hope from the conversation provoked by the news. “You need data to hold people accountable,” reasons Matthew Santirocco, dean of the College of Arts and Science. “That’s why Richard’s study is so important. Institutions need to embrace his results, so they can individually see where their weaknesses are and then start addressing them.”

One bright spot in the study revealed that students at institutions with strong liberal arts programs, undergraduate research opportunities, and a competitive peer environment learn at higher rates. This may be due, in part, to the fact that faculty in these programs spend less time on their own research and more time interacting with students. NYU’s own need to address this issue has resulted in programs such as the Morse Academic Plan, which offers foundational courses in science, culture, writing, and languages, in addition to an expansion of the university’s arts and science core, and access to freshman honors seminars. Key to the success of these initiatives is constant oversight. The faculty committee governing the Morse curriculum, for example, meets every few weeks to assess the courses. “[The results] show that our instincts and our rigor are validated, but it also shows that we’ve got to continue to push in that direction,” Santirocco says.

Even those schools that have already initiated reforms may be in for an awakening in 2016, when the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development will employ the CLA in the largest cross-national study of the higher-education system to date. Arum believes that the findings will galvanize everyone with a vested interest in learning to act. “Undergraduate education is clearly a worthwhile investment as a whole,” Arum says. “But that doesn’t mean we can’t do better to deliver a more meaningful, valuable product for students.”
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IN BRIEF

BIG WINNER, LITTLE WONDER
Last April, Paul Harding’s debut novel, Tinkers, published by Bellevue Literary Press, won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. The little-known but visionary imprint, founded in 2005 in affiliation with the NYU School of Medicine, has only two full-time staffers and publishes two fiction and six nonfiction titles yearly. Fittingly, the tiny publisher focuses on the intersection of art and science, with an emphasis on medicine. Switching between past and present, Tinkers explores the fraught relationship of a dying New Englander with his epileptic, traveling-salesman father. The Pulitzer citation lauded the slim volume as “a powerful celebration of life.”

—Sally Lauckner

A PLACE TO CALL HOME
Until recently, when you asked someone how to get to the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, you might get a number of different answers. With offices and classrooms cast throughout NYU’s Greenwich Village campus and beyond, the school and its students often struggled with the lack of “there” there. But that will all change by summer 2011 when SCPS moves into its own 12-story building at 7 East 12th Street.

With state-of-the-art classrooms, multi-use student lounges, and a sleek glass facade, the building will give both students and faculty their first opportunity to work side by side, something Dean Robert Lapiner believes will be “transformative” for the school. The 117,000 square feet of space in the current building will be totally redesigned by New York’s Mitchell/Giurgola Architects and will host most SCPS entities, including the Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management; continuing-education programs in Liberal Studies and Allied Arts; and the American Language Institute. Plus, the opening date conveniently coincides with another major milestone—SCPS’s 75th anniversary. Not a bad way to celebrate.

—Emily Nouko

A Fuller View of Iran

In the summer of 2009, all eyes were on Iran when a controversial presidential election tipped off widespread protest. The mass demonstrations and violent government crackdown played out in real time as protesters turned to new media, such as Twitter and text messages, to communicate with one another and the outside world. Though brief, the incident was a powerful reminder for the West to look beyond Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and see a dynamic and diverse nation in which many are desperate for democracy.

NYU’s newly launched Iranian Studies Initiative, sponsored by the Gallatin School of Individualized Study, couldn’t have come at a more relevant moment. The brainchild of Ali Mirsepassi, professor of Middle Eastern studies and sociology at Gallatin, the program kicked off this fall with a six-part lecture series stretching over the academic year and featuring prominent scholars, including exiled Iranian author Reza Baraheni. Intended as a resource for students, scholars, and public-policy makers, organizers hope it will eventually grow to a full-scale academic program, promoting coursework and research. NYU Alumni Magazine asked Mirsepassi, author of the recent Democracy in Modern Iran: Islam, Culture, and Political Change (NYU Press), about the country’s cultural and political complexities.

Why study Iran?
Iran is an important center of ancient civilization and Islamic history and culture. It bridges the cultures of the Arab-Islamic world with Asian, Indian, and Chinese cultures. Since the late 19th century, Iran has been at the center of modernization in the Middle East and recently it has been at the center of attention in politics and religion due to the rise of political Islam and the struggle for democracy. We believe that interest in Iran should expand beyond those of us who study it as part of our academic profession to all sorts of interdisciplinary fields and even those who are interested in global studies.

In your book, you suggest President Obama’s election indicates a possible shift in which the West will be more accepting of other cultures. Is this shift happening?
I think there has been a change of attitude that I hope will be followed by a change of policy. The politics of reconciliation doesn’t necessarily lead to immediate results; it requires one to be patient and to be hopeful and to wait for the right moment for change to occur. My hope is that President Obama will favor global ethical reconciliation over the real politics that necessitate military or physical intervention in solving our problems.

You also debunk the idea that Iranian culture is incompatible with democracy. Why is this idea wrong?
Iranians have struggled for democracy and rule of law since the second part of the 19th century, and as a result, in 1906, there was what we now call the Constitutional Revolution, which resulted in the formation of a parliamentary government. It is not culture but a mixture of domestic politics and international imperatives that made Iran victim to dictatorships. Whenever Iranians have had the chance, they have always wanted democracy. I finished the book in May 2009 and in it I predicted that very soon there will be a large, social movement for democracy in Iran. During that summer, millions of Iranians in Tehran came out and demonstrated in demand for democracy and their rights. So to ask “Is Iranian culture or Islam compatible with democracy?” is itself a problematic question.

—S.L.
I have the best memories of being a student here. I’ve been building my New York City library ever since. This is the place where all my adventures began.”

— Jacob, class of 2004, composer, playwright and musician

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A BIODIVERSITY CORNUCOPIA—FOR NOW
by Kyle Leighton / GSAS ’10

T’S A BIT OF SERENDIPITY THAT ECUADOR’S YASUNÍ NATIONAL PARK IS LOCATED BETWEEN THE NAPO AND CURARAY RIVERS, TRIBUTARIES OF THE MIGHTY AMAZON. THAT PARTICULAR SPOT GETS LOTS OF MOISTURE, WHICH HAS KEPT THE RAINFOREST THERE LUSH EVEN AS SURROUNDING REGIONS HAVE DRIED UP DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND HAVE BEEN IMPERILED BY CULTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT. SCIENTISTS SAY THAT, AS A RESULT OF THIS GOOD FORTUNE, YASUNÍ IS ARGUABLY THE MOST BIODIVERSE PLACE ON EARTH.

New evidence of this was recently published in the scientific journal *PLoS ONE*, where co-author and NYU primatologist Anthony Di Fiore revealed that the species in Yasuní eclipse an array of world biodiversity records. For example, the Tiputini Biodiversity Station, located on the northern rim of Yasuní, is home to 247 types of amphibians and reptiles, 550 bird species, and more than 100 types of bats. A single hectare of forest in Yasuní is estimated to contain 100,000 different types of insects, as well as a whopping 655 species of trees—more trees than are native to the continental United States and Canada combined.

But it may not last. Di Fiore notes that oil exploration within the park and creeping development on its outskirts now threaten this refuge. The Ecuadorian government has proposed halting the oil extraction, asking the international community to compensate them for 50 percent of the projected lost revenue, which would total nearly $3 billion over the next decade. So far there have been no takers, prompting President Rafael Correa to unveil an alternative plan to conduct more “environmentally safe” drilling.

This is still not encouraging to Di Fiore, who says that man’s influence will eventually be compounded by nature’s, as climate change increases and any effect on the park’s habitat could eliminate the opportunity to document unknown species of plants and animals. “Most models that look at climate change envision a drying up of the eastern Amazon,” he says. “And if you lose the west of the Amazon to human impact, then you’ve lost everything.”

Friendly Barriers
by Emily Nonko / CAS ’10

For a new college grad, “social capital” might be key to landing a job. It could also help one score free box seats to a Yankees game. But for marginalized groups, social capital—in other words, family and friends—can sometimes do more harm than good. In many cases, it’s actually “both helpful and hurtful,” explains Silver School of Social Work assistant professor Robert Hawkins, who studied how social capital has affected lower-income women in Boston and the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

Hawkins discovered that relationships with family and close friends were more likely to keep lower-income individuals in an economic rut. However, weaker and shorter-term relationships with teachers, service providers, or co-workers were more likely to be agents for positive change. The Boston study, titled “Fickle Families and the Kindness of Strangers,” published last spring in the *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, revealed that families typically offer immediate emotional support for lower-income single mothers but don’t lighten their financial burden. In Hawkins’ New Orleans study, “Bonding, Bridging, and Linking,” he was able to better understand how social limitations work within a community struck by disaster. Ultimately, the interviews Hawkins conducted provided catharsis for his subjects, and possibly even some positive social capital. “For all these individuals, it was a very empowering process,” he says. “Many just were thankful they were allowed to tell their story.”
hen it comes to learning, it’s a good idea to give yourself a break. That’s what graduate student Arielle Tambini and Lila Davachi, assistant professor in the department of psychology and the Center for Neural Science, discovered in a recent study. “We found that taking breaks after absorbing a lot of information strengthens your memory of that information,” Tambini explains. This might seem like common sense, but previous studies have only tested memory consolidation during sleep. Tambini and Davachi were interested in how memory works when you lie quietly with your eyes closed—but remain awake. Participants tested were shown pairs of images followed by a period of rest, when they could think about anything they chose. A scanner was used to gauge the activity in the hippocampus and cortical regions of the brain; it revealed that the mind works specifically to consolidate memory of those images in that time.

The findings were published in a January issue of the journal Neuron, and other NYU researchers are now testing how different kinds of activities—such as reading and math—may interfere with memory consolidation during rest. Until then, Tambini says, “We now know recess is never a harmful thing.” —E.N.

Karen Grépin stood on a street in Ghana last year, looking at a brand-new AIDS treatment facility. Its manicured lawns and fresh facade starkly contrasted with the structure across the street—a decrepit residence hall for one of the few Ghanaian medical schools that, she says, “looked like something you would never want to step inside.” It’s an increasingly familiar dichotomy visible throughout Africa, and the focus of a recent study by Grépin, assistant professor of global health policy at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

Grépin collected data across 28 sub-Saharan countries. Her research has revealed that focusing health-care funding so intensely on HIV/AIDS programs in Africa is producing unintended consequences. Millions of dollars pour in from governments and nonprofit organizations each year, but the majority of money is earmarked specifically for funding of HIV/AIDS awareness, diagnosis, and treatment. “The buildings are being built, but they have to be for that particular disease area,” Grépin notes. Further complicating the matter, African countries must also reallocate scarce resources—doctors, nurses, facilities—within their already struggling health-care systems to implement the new large-scale HIV/AIDS programs.

As a result, Grépin discovered that in areas with increased HIV/AIDS disbursements, basic health-care coverage—such as vaccinations for children and maternal health—is declining. While HIV/AIDS funding remains essential for saving lives, Grépin suggests that African countries would be better served by investments to support medical schools and train community health professionals to administer necessary vaccines. “Millions of children die every year from preventable things,” she says. “We have the drugs. Now we just have to think about how to get them into their arms.”
Last January, the world watched in disbelief as hundreds of thousands of Haitians were left dead or severely injured after a devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake ripped through the Caribbean island. For Patricia Poitevien, the horrifying images of felled buildings and smoky rubble were personal—her parents are Haitian and still live there. After Poitevien, a pediatrician at NYU’s Langone Medical Center, ensured that her family was safe, her next instinct was to organize a relief effort. “It was a no-brainer,” she says. “I felt that was the very least I could do for my home country.”

On January 22, just 10 days after the quake struck, Poitevien was part of an interdisciplinary team of seven NYU medical professionals—including orthopedic surgeons, an anesthesiologist, and a nurse with war experience—who arrived in Haiti to assist with urgent health needs. Among them was Fritz François (WSC ’93, MED ’97,’07), a Haitian-born physician and assistant professor in the department of medicine, who left Port-au-Prince for the United States when he was 10 and had never returned. While François could recognize major landmarks, he was shocked to discover his home country almost entirely transformed. The scene that greeted him as the plane touched down was worthy of a postapocalyptic novel; in the distance the ground was teeming with bright flames and dense smoke swallowed the air. Save for a smattering of generators, the island was without electricity.

For both Poitevien and François, the conditions were emotionally and physically draining. L’Hôpital Général, the country’s largest hospital, was severely damaged and the threat of another violent aftershock destroying the building led hospital personnel to set up tents for treating patients outdoors (only the operating room and the intensive-care unit remained inside). The adjacent nursing school had collapsed, trapping people under rubble, and François recalls the putrid scent of decaying bodies as he walked past the debris. Due to a scarcity of running water and a lack of medicine, children were dying from highly treatable conditions such as dehydration or an asthma attack. “That was particularly upsetting,” Poitevien says. At night the team returned to a campsite for relief workers organized and run by Partners in Health, a global nonprofit organization.

Hanging over the physical destruction were more daunting questions about Haiti’s future. How would an already-downtrodden nation rebuild not only homes and hospitals but the spirit of its people? One of François’ biggest regrets is that the NYU coalition didn’t have a mental-health professional on the trip. In the immedi-
ate aftermath, people who suffered shock but didn’t have any visible ailments were overlooked, he explains. Six months after the quake, Partners in Health reported that many Haitians suffered from psychological trauma, including hallucinations, insomnia, and severe anxiety. The organization estimates that it will spend only 1.8 percent of its total budget for Haiti on mental health and psychological support.

While the NYU coalition has no concrete plans to return to Haiti together, Poitevien intends to make a second, solo, relief trip to the island. Meanwhile, François is representing NYU on a U.S. Department of Health & Human Services-sponsored committee to rebuild the infrastructure of Haiti’s health-professions training. The country is a major exporter of health-care workers, so it’s also crucial to supply incentive for future medical workers to stay and practice in their country. “If we are going to sustain this effort, then we have to involve the next generation so they can take over,” François explains.

Despite their worries about the earthquake’s enduring legacy on the island, Poitevien and François were both inspired by how they saw the islanders responding to the disaster. “We have a difficult history and a difficult present,” Poitevien explains. “But Haitian people pick themselves up and keep going no matter what. Watching people go to the marketplace and put their wares on tables and picking up debris from their old homes was very touching for me. That’s what is so remarkable about the country.”
ince NYU announced in 2007 that it would create a brand-new sister campus in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), there has been no shortage of opinions from students, faculty, and alumni. Some believe it’s a transformative step toward building a truly global university, while others wonder how well NYU’s Village culture will jibe with the state’s Middle Eastern perspective. But one thing is indisputable: The school, in its debut year, has attracted some of the best students in the world.

The numbers say it all. NYU Abu Dhabi’s inaugural class includes 150 students from 39 countries. Though some 9,048 applicants sought admission, only 2.1 percent were accepted. Of this group, the average SAT critical reading score was 770 (ranking fifth among U.S. universities) and the average math score was 780 (ranking sixth). About one-third of students hail from the United States, with the UAE, China, Hungary, and Russia comprising the next most popular countries of origin. As one would expect of such an international crowd, 87 percent speak two languages and nearly half speak three or more. President John Sexton called the incoming freshmen “arguably the most selective and internationally diverse entering class in the world.”

The new class started courses this September at a temporary location in downtown Abu Dhabi, while a full campus on Saadiyat Island is scheduled to open in 2014. There they will receive a classic liberal arts and science education, much like their brethren in New York—albeit with student-faculty ratios of about eight to one.

Here’s a peek at four members of NYU Abu Dhabi’s Class of 2014:

**FLORENCIA MARIA SCHLAMP**
Recife, Brazil

**Goal:** To become a biologist and conduct research in the oceans and the rain forests

**Honors:** Recognized by city of Recife for raising awareness of environmental issues

**Hobbies:** Avid scuba diver and regional folk dancer

**Languages:** Spanish, English, and Portuguese

**Favorite music:** Argentinean salsa and cuarteto

**Favorite recent movie:** Avatar

**On starting college:** “I can see myself sharing traditions and exotic customs with friends from all over the world, and calculating how many Argentinean alfajores (cookies) and Brazilian brigadeiros (chocolate pastry) I should cook for them.”

**MADHAV VAIDYANATHAN**
Kodaikanal, India

**Goal:** To be an international business leader in biochemistry and technology

**Honors:** Ranked in top 1 percent in India’s National Mathematical Olympiad; awarded “Best Batsman” at St. John’s State Cricket Tournament

**Activities:** Helped the poor and blind through the Akanksha Foundation for four years

**Languages:** English, Hindi, Tamil, and Sanskrit

**Favorite music:** Trance, hip-hop, and electronic

**Favorite recent movie:** Frost/Nixon

**What you should know about him:** “I’m a very open person, very easy to approach. And I do whatever I can to earn people’s trust.”

**LAYLA AL NEYADI**
Abu Dhabi, UAE

**Goal:** To make art that will influence and educate people, such as Al Gore’s An Inconvenient Truth

**Honors:** Elected high school’s assistant deputy head prefect for environmental issues

**Activities:** Tutored students in biology and English

**Languages:** Arabic and English

**Favorite music:** Rock, such as Kings of Leon, Muse, Radiohead, and Oasis

**Favorite recent movie:** Avatar

**What you should know about her:** “I was raised by a British mother and an Emirati father. I experienced both the Western and Arab perspective, so I try to really understand other people without judging them.”

**MUSBAH DILSEBO ORMAGO**
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Goal:** A career in the Ethiopian diplomatic service

**Honors:** Ranked in top three on national exams; represented Addis Ababa at the African Union Youth Conference

**Volunteering:** Worked as translator and teacher for the NGO Voice for Street Children Ethiopia

**Languages:** Siltigna, Amharic, and English

**Heroes:** Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, and Ethiopian PM Meles Zenawi

**Favorite music:** James Blunt, Enrique Iglesias

**Favorite recent movie:** The Hangover

**Personal history:** “I am the only boy in my family to graduate from high school. They are very proud of me. I carry all the responsibility to change my family’s life.”
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STREET SMART PHONES
With an app for just about everything, the days of using cell phones simply to make calls are numbered—just ask Shawn Van Every (TSOA ’04), who teaches mobile development at Tisch’s Interactive Telecommunications Program. “They’re becoming part of us,” he says. “We’re carrying around sophisticated little computers that add sensory capabilities to our daily existence.” The technology is especially handy for New Yorkers overwhelmed by so much to see and do. An app like UpNext, with its interactive 3-D maps, can help users explore the city for nearby attractions, venue info, and reviews. “We’re in a walking culture and we can multitask because we’re not driving around in our own little bubbles,” says Van Every, who carries multiple devices with more than 200 apps—ranging from a public bathroom finder (SitOrSquat) to a social media game that rewards loyal customers with discounts for frequent patronage (Foursquare, co-created by Dennis Crowley, TSOA ’04). To navigate the labyrinth-like subway, he uses iTrans NYC for train schedules, service advisories, and directions between stations—and it even works underground. But Van Every’s favorite app is URBANSPoon, which he recommends for discovering new restaurants. Just choose the cuisine, price point, and neighborhood, then shake the phone to start the screen whirling like a slot machine and up pop the eateries that match your appetite.

APPS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT APPLE.COM/ITUNES

DANCE REVOLUTION
Each year the massive Hindi-language film industry known as Bollywood releases hundreds of musicals in which a simple kiss isn’t enough—when two people fall in love onscreen, entire crowds break into splashy, elaborate dance numbers. The films still don’t translate to a wide American audience, but thanks to the success of last year’s Oscar-winning Slumdog Millionaire, Bollywood dance is one of the hottest new workouts in the West. To find out what makes the style so infectious, we sent our work-study student—and NYU dance team member—Elisabeth Brown (CAS ’11) to DHOONYA DANCE in Chelsea. Since age 4, Brown has been classically trained in ballet, jazz, and hip-hop but says that she had no idea what to expect from her first lesson in Bollywood. The high-energy choreography is rooted in traditional Indian dance and incorporates forms such as kathak (storytelling), pop bhangra (Punjabi folk), and even yoga for a graceful yet upbeat style. The technique entails acting out the joy or love in a song with facial expressions and mudras (hand movements), so a simple motion can translate into blessing someone, as in the interpretive wedding scene Brown learned. “It was really cool to see that integration between the culture and the dance,” she says. Dhoonya Dance instructors are Bollywood experts—several even performed a routine on The Oprah Winfrey Show in 2009—but students can choose from a range of class levels. They also offer sessions for children, online classes by subscription, and discounts for NYU students. “It’s a really fun way to dabble in a new culture,” Brown says, “but it’s also a good form of exercise.”

DHOONYA DANCE, 347-644-0052; WWW.DHOONYADANCE.COM

FALL HARVEST
What better way to celebrate autumn than the annual free apple festival at the Queens County Farm Museum in Floral Park, New York? The city’s sole working historical farm offers hayrides, a three-acre corn maze, and pick-your-own-pumpkins throughout October—and it boasts the nation’s largest apple cobbler baked on site. However, for a harvest-season escape from the Big Apple, head two hours north to STONE RIDGE ORCHARD. Greg Albanis (WSC ’78, WAG ’80), senior director of university events, has been visiting his weekend retreat in the Catskills for 14 years, always stopping at the orchard’s gourmet farm market to pick up apples and fresh-pressed cider. Stone Ridge has been farming the fruit for more than two
The mountain climate provides ideal growing conditions for their more than 1,000 trees. The sustainable farm also includes organic tomatoes and sweet corn, plus cherries, peaches, raspberries, and other fruits. What really makes it worth the schlep, however, is the pick-your-own-apples deal, with more than 13 varieties to choose from. In addition to usual suspects such as McIntosh and Golden Delicious, Stone Ridge offers Honeycrisp and Macoun, a Northeast niche apple rarely found in grocery stores. “It’s a nice day out because the orchard’s punctuated with streams and a lake, so you can bring a box lunch and have a picnic,” Albanis suggests.

3012 ROUTE 213 IN STONE RIDGE, 845-687-2587; WWW.STONERIDGEORCHARD.US

EDITORS’ PICK: COCKTAIL CUPCAKES
The NYU Alumni Magazine office was buzzing about BUTCH BAKERY, with its oversize cupcakes in one-of-a-kind flavors such as Rum & Coke and Mojito. So when we discovered that founder David Arrick was also an alum, it was the icing on the cupcake. Arrick (TSOA ’89) was working at a law firm on Wall Street when the economy collapsed in 2008 and he was laid off. Living in the West Village, where cupcake shops abound, and frustrated with his unemployment, he noticed the long lines outside Magnolia Bakery. “They were always busy and I thought, How can I get on the cupcake wagon?” Arrick remembers. So he decided to offer an alternative to the typical dainty cupcakes in pink and pastel hues. His “mancakes” come in sophisticated flavors such as Kahlúa-soaked vanilla cake with Baileys Bavarian filling, chocolate beer cake with crushed pretzels, and the nonalcoholic maple cake sprinkled with bits of bacon. All come topped in edible camouflage, wood grain, or marble. Until Arrick finds a downtown storefront, the delectable creations are only available online, but they will soon ship nationally and he’s planning to expand baking operations to Los Angeles and Chicago. “I didn’t realize how cutthroat the cupcake market is,” he says, “but there’s room for all of us.”

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hances are you’ve heard of Tony Judt. Perhaps it was his en-
cyclopedic masterpiece Postwar: A
History of Europe Since 1945 (Pen-
guin) that first put him on your
map or his public sparring over the
Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Whatever
the introduction, he was one
of a handful of academics who has
earned an unusual degree of celebri-
ty. Remarkably, the intellectual
agility that made him famous re-
mained undiminished despite his
recent affliction with amyotrophic
lateral sclerosis, or ALS, a degener-
ative neuromuscular disorder also
known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.
Though paralyzed from the neck
down the last year-and-a-half of his
life, the University Professor who
spent more than two decades at
NYU, held forth on “What Is Liv-
ing and What Is Dead in Social
Democracy” at last fall’s Remarque
Lecture. He memorized the entire
two-hour address and delivered it
with characteristic flair, gasping
from a breathing tube he jauntily
referred to as “facial Tupperware.”

Even Judt could not have pre-
dicted the reaction, not just to the
physical feat of his performance but
to the central idea he put forth—
that government can still be a force
for collective good. Afterward,
young people in particular ap-
proached him curiously. “They
sense something deeply amiss in the
way we live but don’t quite know
how to describe it or what they
should be doing about it,” explained
Judt, founder of NYU’s Remarque
Institute, which promotes the study
of Europe, in an interview before
his death in August. The interest
was so great that his colleagues at
The New York Review of Books,
whose pages have hosted many of
his reviews and more recently a
string of mini-memoirs, decided to
reprint it as an essay. This led to a
whirlwind book, his 14th, titled Ill
Fares the Land (Penguin), which he
composed in his mind and then dic-
tated to an assistant.

The book’s title comes from
Oliver Goldsmith’s poem The De-
serted Village—“Ill fares the
land/To hast’ning ills a prey/
Where wealth accumulates/And
men decay”—and Judt viewed to-
day’s dogged pursuit and praise of
immense personal wealth as an
erosive force to all of the positive
public goods of the 20th century,
from public transportation to So-
cial Security. With an historian’s
eye, he detailed the advent and
subsequent disintegration of these
programs, and how we may still
salvage them. “The whole point is
not to give up in the face of disap-
Judt admitted, nonetheless he hoped the book would spark “at least a small conversation, out of which bigger ones might grow.”

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT FROM ILL FARES THE LAND:

Liberation is an act of will. We cannot hope to reconstruct our dilapidated public conversations—no less than our crumbling physical infrastructure—unless we become sufficiently angry at our present condition. No democratic state should be able to make illegal war on the basis of a deliberate lie and get away with it. The silence surrounding the contemptibly inadequate response of the Bush administration to Hurricane Katrina bespeaks a depressing cynicism towards the responsibilities and capacities of the state: we expect Washington to under-perform. […]

Meanwhile, the precipitous fall from grace of President Obama, in large measure thanks to his bumbling stewardship of health care reform, has further contributed to the disaffection of a new generation. It would be easy to retreat in skeptical disgust at the incompetence (and worse) of those currently charged with governing us. But if we leave the challenge of radical political renewal to the existing political class—to the Blairs and Browns and Sarkozys, the Clintons and Bushes and (I fear) the Obamas—we shall only be further disappointed.

Dissent and dissidence are overwhelmingly the work of the young. It is not by chance that the men and women who initiated the French Revolution, like the reformers and planners of the New Deal and postwar Europe, were distinctly younger than those who had gone before. Rather than resign themselves, young people are more likely to look at a problem and demand that it be solved.

But they are also more likely than their elders to be tempted by apoliticism: the idea that since politics is so degraded in our time, we should give up on it. There have indeed been occasions where “giving up on politics” was the right political choice. In the last decades of the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, “anti-politics,” the politics of “as if” and mobilizing “the power of the powerless” all had their place. That is because official politics in authoritarian regimes are a front for the legitimization of naked power: to bypass them is a radically disruptive political act in its own right. It forces the regime to confront its limits—or else expose its violent core.

However, we must not generalize from the special case of heroic dissenters in authoritarian regimes. Indeed, the example of “anti-politics” of the ’70s, together with the emphasis on human rights, has perhaps misled a generation of young activists into believing that, conventional avenues of change being hopelessly clogged, they should forsake political organization for single-issue, non-governmental groups unsullied by compromise. Consequently, the first thought that occurs to a young person seeking a way to “get involved” is to sign up with Amnesty International or Greenpeace, Human Rights Watch or Doctors Without Borders.

The moral impulse is unimpeachable. But republics and democracies exist only by virtue of engagement of their citizens in the management of public affairs. If active or concerned citizens forfeit politics, they thereby abandon their society to its most mediocre and venal public servants.
between the teen heartthrobs of Twilight and the soap opera sexpots on HBO’s True Blood, “vampire” has become a word that elicits groans and eye rolling instead of fear. But vampires were once sickening monsters, like Bram Stoker’s Dracula, before they became the latest pop-culture craze, and finally there’s a new bloodsucker bringing some horror—and dignity—back to the genre.

In the comic book series American Vampire (Vertigo), which has a special hardcover edition hitting bookstores this month, Skinner Sweet is a vampire who actually scares other vampires, a sociopathic outlaw terrorizing the Old West even before he gets his fangs. This killer antihero is brought to life by Scott Snyder, who teaches a fiction workshop on genre, literature, and comic books called “The Monster Under Your Story” at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study, and the master of horror himself, Stephen King, who is making his first foray into comic script writing. Snyder initially caught the author’s eye when his short story collection, Voodoo Heart (Dial Press), debuted in 2006 to critical acclaim, including from King, who said it “just blew me away.” So when Snyder asked him to write a blurb for the Vampire series, King went a step further and offered to pen Skinner’s origin story. The idea for a new breed of bloodsuckers actually struck Snyder during the previous vampire glut, in the early 2000s, with movies such as Underworld, Queen of the Damned, and the sequel to Blade. “I just got so sick of seeing the same kind of vampire over and over again with the leather trench coats and always going off to some glamorous club or Gothic party,” says Snyder, who became nostalgic for the creatures he grew up with in The Lost Boys, Near Dark, and King’s Salem’s Lot. Those characters were frightening for their familiarity rather than exoticism. So his vampires are American icons—starlets, cowboys, rock stars—whom the story follows through different decades, starting with 1920s-era Hollywood and moving into Las Vegas in the ’30s. The series imagines that vampires have been evolving over time as the bloodline creates new strains, each with their own abilities and weaknesses. In the story, the traditional stake-through-the-heart nocturnal species consists of European nobility who are “as interested in bucks as blood,” and who have been unrivaled for centuries. That is, until Skinner Sweet takes the next evolutionary step to become the first of his kind: an advanced American vampire powered by the sun who no one knows how to kill. With an unhinged jaw, rattlesnake fangs, and elongated claws, Snyder’s creation looks more like a rabid Nosferatu than the sparkly skinned pretty boys of Twilight.

The first five issues of the series feature back-to-back stories that alternate and intersect between King’s background on Skinner in 1880s Colorado and Snyder’s storyline about an aspiring silent-film star named Pearl Jones, who meets Skinner nearly half a century later. King was only supposed to contribute one issue but ended up writing more because, he says, the story “really lit up my imagination.” Vertigo accommodated his extensive writing with extra-large issues, and King has expressed interest in returning to contribute when the series reaches the 1950s and ’60s. “The bar was so high
with his stuff that it was intimidating,” says Snyder, who’s been a huge fan of King since childhood. “He could’ve easily phoned it in and it would’ve been really good anyway, but he really went to the mat for each issue.”

Snyder says the horror maestro easily adjusted to the new medium and the only occasional problem he had was a case of premature decapitation—tearing the heads off characters before they were supposed to die. But such dark inclinations bring real chills to the pages, as when a hidden opening in the wall reveals bloodied bodies hanging by hooks through their mouths, still begging for mercy. The book is drawn by the artist Rafael Albuquerque, whose previous work includes the comics Superman/Batman and Blue Beetle. To capture the dual eras of the Jazz Age and the Old West in the first cycle, Albuquerque used two styles in each issue: sharp inks and contrasting black and whites for the theatrical feel of Hollywood, and pencil with paint-like washes for the gritty, antiquated texture of a Sergio Leone Western. “I feel like I could write a terrible script and it would still be good on the page because of his art,” Snyder says.

In addition to the series, Snyder is working on a novel that’s due out next year. But for the lifelong comics fan, who attended conventions back when they were just a bunch of guys with foldout tables, he’s happily contracted to write American Vampire for another two years and is now exclusive to DC—home to both Batman and Superman. He says: “I’m constantly bugging them to see if I can come into the office because it really is geek heaven.”

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PRETEND ALL YOUR LIFE (PERMANENT PRESS)
JOSEPH MACKIN
GSAS ’91

Lives unravel in this dark drama set in post-9/11 Manhattan. Richard Gallin, a shallow, miserable plastic surgeon, struggles to cope with the loss of his only son in the attack on the Twin Towers. But it’s the surrounding characters that animate Joseph Mackin’s debut novel—from the facially scarred Nicaraguan soldier looking for a fresh start to the redheaded reporter out to avenge his HIV-stricken lover. The inevitability of death runs through the pages like a current, and over the course of six days the constellation of characters, with their secrets and tragedies, collide, letting blood and cash. Early on, Mackin aptly references Yeats: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.”

—Renée Alfuso

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GALLATIN: AMERICA’S SWISS FOUNDING FATHER (NYU PRESS)
NICHOLAS DUNGAN

Around Washington Square, most people know the name Gallatin as an NYU school. But history remembers Albert Gallatin as the longest-serving secretary of the U.S. Treasury, founder of the House Ways and Means Committee, and a fiscally conservative public servant who helped finance the Louisiana Purchase and negotiate the Treaty of Ghent. The Swiss native (1761-1849) also found time to assist in establishing New York University in 1831 and served as the inaugural president of its governing council as he aimed to make higher education more accessible for the masses. With this first full-scale Gallatin biography written in nearly half a century, author Nicholas Dungan traces Gallatin’s pedigree back to 1258 AD and maps, in straightforward detail, how a Genevan aristocrat became a Greenwich Village legend.

—Jason Hollander
THE IRREPRESSIBLE COURANT

GOOD WITH NUMBERS, IF NOT ALWAYS WITH PEOPLE, RICHARD COURANT OVERCAME WAR AND ANTI-SEMITISM TO BUILD A TOWERING MATH INSTITUTE

BY AMY ROSENBERG

In 1934 Richard Courant, a Jewish professor and one of the most influential mathematicians of the 20th century, fled Germany with his wife and four children. Having been placed by the Nazis on “extended leave”—essentially, dismissal from his post at the University of Göttingen—he feared what might come next. He carried with him a letter offering a two-year faculty appointment at New York University, which some prominent American friends had helped to arrange. Grateful for the ticket out of his Nazi-ruled homeland, Courant nevertheless despaired to leave behind the university that had formed his career. He nearly lost courage altogether when a new colleague met the family at New York harbor and brought them to his home—an ancient, dilapidated railroad apartment in upper Manhattan—where a couple of Courant’s children would temporarily stay. In her biography of the mathematician, Constance Reid sums up Courant’s reaction: “The flat itself was…frightful, dreadful. Five rooms, kitchen and bath lay all in a row. Only one room had a real window, and it looked out on the street…” Courant searched in vain for [a] study…Was this how a professor lived in New York?”

Anyone who knew Courant, however, also knew that he was an irrepressible optimist. Just a few weeks after his arrival, he met a friend from Germany who was familiar with the mathematician’s love of music (Courant had taught himself how to play the piano at the age of 14) and asked him whether he would be playing quartets again in his new home. Courant reportedly replied, “In this country not quartets. In this country, octets!” He had quickly absorbed the atmosphere of opportunity and gathered that it would be possible for him to accomplish much in this city.

He was right. Halfway through his two-year term, in 1935, Courant was asked to stay on at NYU and transform its nearly nonexistent math program—there was just one full-time faculty member at the time—into “a strong graduate department.” Eleven years later, having brought in research dollars by the bundle and assembled a world-class faculty, he became director of the university’s new Institute for Mathematics and Mechanics. Within a few decades U.S. News
& World Report would rate it the best graduate department in the country in the field of applied mathematics, and it would become renowned worldwide for outstanding research in partial differential equations, probability, geometry, and computer science.

Today, on the 75th anniversary of its founding, the institute boasts 17 members of the National Academy of Sciences—more than any other mathematics department in the United States. In the past five years, three of its faculty members have won the Abel Prize, the field's equivalent of the Nobel. Its reputation has grown over the decades, and it has changed along with the field of mathematics, but it has not forgotten its founder—a fact attested to by the name it received in 1964: the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences.

To many people, Courant probably seemed an unlikely candidate for transforming an insubstantial academic department into an internationally lauded center for study. He was a slight man, mumbly and contrarian, and he had what he himself called in a letter to a friend a “dangerous” propensity for making thoughtless utterances and an equally grievous tendency to “meddle” in others’ business. Some felt, too, that he was manipulative and so shrewd as to seem at times dishonest. “There were things about Courant which I found detestable….” admits James Stoker, who took over as director when Courant retired. “He was such a calculator.” But even Stoker balanced this criticism with praise for a man who was inarguably complex: “His merits were so great…. He was so helpful to people of all kinds…so willing to put himself out for people.”

Courant did have a reputation for extraordinary acts of generosity, often personally supporting penniless students or working tirelessly to find appointments for assistants and colleagues. He also had a talent for attracting support from people in positions of power. NYU professor Peter Lax, winner of the Abel in 2005 and a former director of the institute, knew Courant better than most. Lax even married the elder mathematician’s daughter after he had passed away. “He was not a conventionally dynamic person,” Lax notes. “But thoughtful people, influential people, and perceptive people realized that he was a person who could build things up. He was extremely smart, he was energetic, and he was a good judge of character.”

Just as important as these qualities, Courant had experience—he had already spearheaded the creation of the Mathematics Institute of the University of Göttingen, in central Germany. That university had attracted the world’s best mathematicians, from the early 19th century through to the reign of the Third Reich, but, until Courant came along, it had never had a center dedicated to advancing the field.

Courant arrived there in 1908, having excelled at his studies in gymnasium, the German equivalent of a college-prep high school, ready to work beside top-tier mathematicians. As a student at Göttingen, and later as a professor, he furthered fields related to applied mathematics, including numerical methods, calculus, and topology. In 1914, he was interrupted by a call for mandatory military service in World War I, and over the next four years he worked his way up to lieutenant in the 91st regiment, and survived a life-threatening injury. Even during the course of trench warfare near Reims, France, math was never far from his mind. One night in a foxhole, Courant realized that soldiers needed a method of communicating that could resist artillery fire. He landed upon a solution: earth telegra-
phy, or the production of electromagnetic signals using the ground as a conduit. After some collaboration, he and his colleagues in Göttingen developed a device he called a “magic box,” an apparatus that could transmit messages over two kilometers, which changed the nature of frontline battle.

As soon as the war ended in 1918, he went right back to work, publishing several influential papers, most of them to do with Dirichlet’s principle (which, in a nutshell, concerns the use of a simple equation to solve a more complex one), and he co-authored Methods of Mathematical Physics, which became a seminal textbook for mathematicians and physicists. (Much later, in 1941, he co-authored What Is Mathematics?, another book that became, and is still considered, a seminal text for non-mathematicians interested in the field.) But the greatest mark he left on Göttingen was the Mathematics Institute he created. Courant pushed for the construction of a new building to house the mathematics department and the money he obtained included funding for an administrative support staff that had never really existed before. There was also a big push to create an institute that would allow for greater interaction between math and other scientific fields. Thus, unlike the centuries-old department that preceded it, the institute was a fundable, authoritative, dynamic center that kept the math curriculum at Göttingen moving forward.

By the time Courant reached NYU, he had a sense of what was required to produce a top graduate program, and the political climate worked in his favor. The U.S. government was rapidly funding programs with a focus on applied mathematics and physics in order to further research that might aid the war effort. (The Manhattan Project was happening in a different part of the city around the same time.) Courant went after the research dollars and, Lax points out, he was savvy enough to realize that the government would continue these investments even after the war. Though he did not necessarily foresee the Cold War, he understood that the need to develop greater technology would continue to be a driving force for the new American superpower.

Another condition that helped Courant quickly advance the institute was the anti-Semitism from which he had expected to find escape when he left Europe. He was surprised, when he arrived, to discover that Jews faced discrimination in the United States, too. They were often excluded from the faculty of top-tier universities such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Courant began to recognize New York as “a great reservoir of talent” and his department inadvertently benefited from academia’s anti-Semitism, welcoming Jewish scholars who had been shunned elsewhere, many of whom went on to become leaders in the field. Moreover, he used what he called “the Jewish angle” to raise funds for the department, appealing to successful Jewish businessmen and émigrés in the hopes that they would be eager to help support their brethren.

By the time he retired in 1958, Courant had, like other individuals born at the end of the 19th century, found his life shaped largely by the two World Wars. From his distinguished military service in WWI to the horrors of WWII, which had permanently uprooted his life, Courant always kept grounded by focusing on his one great passion. He lived for 14 years beyond his retirement, and during that time his mathematical activities never ceased: He updated his books, translated some of his early German works into English, and continued to lend his insights to the running of the Courant Institute.

While he worked, he began to see changes in the field of mathematics that worried him. The government still funded technological research, but the financial squeeze of the 1970s slowed down the influx of money, and with the waning of the Sputnik-inspired space race, the public’s focus was shifting. Also, within mathematics itself there was a movement away from applied practices and toward pure mathematics, a more theoretical realm with which Courant had never been comfortable. He felt the link between math and its practical applications was of paramount importance for the field. Nevertheless, with characteristic optimism, he told an interviewer toward the end of his life: “I think as long as the attitude with which science is pursued is honest and not dominated by commercialism, one must have confidence that something valuable will result.”

FROM TOP: COURANT AT THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR IN 1953; CONFERING WITH STAFF MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE; ITS OFFICES WERE ORIGINALLY HOUSED AT 25 WAVERLY PLACE ON THE CORNER OF GREENE STREET. RIGHT: COURANT CAPITALIZED ON GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF APPLIED MATH AND PHYSICS RESEARCH DURING WWII TO HELP ESTABLISH THE INSTITUTE, AS EVIDENCED IN THIS 1943 LETTER FROM THE NYU ARCHIVES.
Testing assumptions is what scientists do, and John Billings seems to relish turning common knowledge on its head. When a visitor to his office in the Puck Building in New York suggests that electronic medical records—touted as a money-saving measure of the recently passed health-care reform package—will reduce costs, he corrects her. “They will—if the systems are linked,” clarifies Billings, associate professor of health policy and public service at NYU’s
The majority of Medicaid spending—some 80 percent—treats only 20 percent of patients. “This is one of the few cases,” John Billings says, “where we think improving preventative care for a patient will actually save money.”

will continue to fail at hand-off points: A primary-care doctor, for example, will not know that a patient has entered a hospital or seen a specialist, and hospital staff will discharge a patient back into the community and no one will know to follow-up.

When this visitor then proposes that preventative care is surely one remedy for our ailing, overspent system, Billings again clarifies: “Unfortunately, prevention doesn’t save much money.” Catching some cancers in their earliest stages may save on one patient’s treatment—and, most important, save a person’s life—but, Billings warns, “We’re going to spend a gazillion dollars finding that early cancer because we’ll be looking for it on so many people.”

Billings has identified one place, however, where better preventative care could save a boatload. The majority of Medicaid spending—some 80 percent—treats only 20 percent of patients, and Billings started investigating that high-cost minority a few years ago. Working first with data from the United Kingdom’s health-care system and then from Medicaid, Billings developed an algorithm that scans the details available in claims—such as age of patient, date of service, diagnosis, emergency room visits, specialty visits, pharmacy costs, days spent in hospital, and some diagnostic characteristics—in order to predict which patients are at risk of being hospitalized within the next year. And because a single hospital admission in the United States averages $8,000–$10,000 per visit, he showed that investment in the improved health and welfare of these few patients could create substantial savings. “This is one of the few cases,” Billings says, “where we think improving preventative care for a patient will actually save money.”

Government health departments on both sides of the Atlantic took notice. So did his colleague Maria Raven, an emergency physician at Bellevue Hospital Center and faculty member at the NYU School of Medicine, who had an idea about what kind of intervention might help these patients. The physician, who had begun collaborating with Billings during a fellowship in medicine and public-health research, decided to use his model to study Medicaid claims at Bellevue; this would both validate the findings and establish whether the algorithm worked on a smaller data set. It did, and Raven identified Bellevue patients who fit the bill, but she knew that there was a limit to what information could be gleaned from claims. To devise a program to keep these patients out of the hospital, Raven needed to know more about them first. As Billings explains it: “I can learn a lot of their diagnostic history. I know how old they are, what providers they’re using, but I know nothing about their life circumstances. Her bright idea was, ‘Let’s go talk to them.’”

What Raven learned surprised her. While her team’s interviews with 50 patients and their providers confirmed much of what the data set had shown—frequent occurrences of substance abuse, depression, mental illness, and chronic disease—they also revealed significant rates of homelessness and precarious housing. “We found that the patients were in general very socially isolated,” Raven says. “Most have never been married and didn’t have many family or friends.”

It was suddenly clear that treating this population’s health problems required stitching them back into society’s fabric. Raven designed a medical intervention based upon social support. Though the pilot program required an extensive upfront investment in time, communication, and public resources—particularly housing—it appeared to reap real dividends for the patients and, by extension, taxpayers. When
New York State, inspired by Billings’ research, created a $20 million Chronic Illness Demonstration Project to support high-cost Medicaid patients. Raven’s program was one of six that received funding. The three-year project, called Hospital to Home, operates at three New York City public hospitals: Bellevue in Manhattan, Woodhull Medical Center in Brooklyn, and Elmhurst Hospital Center in Queens.

Here’s how Hospital to Home works: The state department of health gives Raven a list of eligible patients, and case managers reach out to all of them, which is unusual since many social programs require sobriety. Raven explains: “We didn’t require our patients to be sober because that would be a barrier to care.” However, just finding those on the list can be difficult. So this summer, the program signed an agreement with the city’s Department of Homeless Services, which now cross-checks names from the state with shelter databases. Once located, only a few patients declined to join. At the beginning of the summer, the program had enrolled 230 patients, almost halfway to its goal.

Then begins what Raven calls an “intensive care-management system,” where a case manager is assigned to each patient. The manager’s job “is to make sure that everyone involved in the patient’s care is on the same page, and then to triage if issues come up.” The managers may attend doctor appointments and coordinate care across facilities. They escort patients to social-service appointments and ensure their Medicaid or other entitlement enrollments stay up-to-date. The program even provides patients with cell phones, so they can reach a manager at any time, if they are confused about a physician’s instructions, say, or have trouble getting a prescription filled. It also offers support groups to meet others. Each week, social workers, managers, and participating physicians do “management rounds,” meeting to discuss cases and monitor patient progress.

Meanwhile, Billings and Raven are looking again at Medicaid claims dates, this time to identify what health-care professionals call “super users” or “frequent fliers” of emergency departments. Reliance on emergency rooms is something often hyped as a high-cost abuse of the system, but Billings points out—again debunking common assumptions—that these visits are not expensive, since one typically costs about $200 or less. But “it’s the symptom that...
there’s something going wrong with this patient,” he says. The researchers hope to determine whether a certain pattern of use results in hospitalization, again identifying at-risk patients for targeted intervention. Billings says, “Everyone knows there are people who use the emergency room a lot, but what their characteristics are and what’s going on with them, people haven’t probed very deeply.”

It will be several years before Billings and Raven know whether Hospital to Home truly delivers. Regardless of the outcome, the majority of Americans will still face ballooning health-care bills. That won’t change—and medical costs in general will not be controlled—until the remuneration system changes, Billings says. “There are no incentives to be efficient now; the incentives are to use as much care as you can because everyone is paid on units of service,” he says. So any lessons gleaned from Raven’s intervention model aren’t going to work on a general population “until we have accountable care organizations,” Billings says, “where a group of providers come together and take full responsibility for all the costs of care.” Such groups would have incentives to provide quality care in the most efficient manner, both so patients choose them over another group and so they don’t price themselves out of the market.

Another potential avenue of reform would be to empower patients to make more health-care decisions themselves. Patients, it appears, tend to be more conservative than their doctors, says Billings, who, along with colleagues from Dartmouth College and Massachusetts General Hospital, co-created the Foundation for Informed Medical Decision-Making two decades ago. Their goal was to educate patients so that decisions about their care can be based more on their attitudes about benefits and risks, rather than on the physician’s. In the recently passed health-reform bill, Medicare authorized several studies to pay doctors to contract with someone to provide such decision-making aid to patients. “The bottom line is that a lot of medicine doesn’t have a real strong science base. So there’s a lot of discretion,” Billings says. “Some doctors do one thing, some doctors do another thing. Well, one thing often costs more than another thing. So when the incentives are to do as much as possible, it’s really hard to crack down on anybody.”

Saving money, of course, has not been the motivating factor for Billings in his three decades of research, teaching, and advocacy. “My work,” he says, “has focused historically on the needs of vulnerable populations”—research on the uninsured, low-income patients, and racial disparities in care. But this latest turn doesn’t seem such a departure when one considers that we’re all going to be a vulnerable population if health-care costs are not brought under control.

OPEN WIDE

Physician Donna Shelley believes that the way to improved health care is through our mouths. One way to create greater access to care, reach vulnerable populations, catch problems earlier, and make health care in general more efficient, she notes, can be found in the groundbreaking collaborations now under way between dental and nursing professionals. “It’s becoming increasingly evident that there are many oral health problems that are a window into systemic problems,” says Shelley, who is director of interdisciplinary research and practice at the NYU College of Dentistry and College of Nursing.

Many major diseases have oral manifestations: One of the earliest ways to diagnose HIV/AIDS was through an infection in the mouth, and diabetes, for example, is associated with severe periodontal disease. Dentists are, of course, trained to treat periodontal disease, “but if we can encourage them…to think about what that periodontal disease might mean in terms of the patient’s systemic health,” Shelley says, “we might get more people who don’t know they have diabetes diagnosed and in treatment.”

One goal at NYU, which transferred its nursing program from the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development to the new College of Nursing within the College of Dentistry in 2005, is to make dentists, through curriculum and postgraduate education, more comfortable making referrals to their medical colleagues. And studies are under way to test the feasibility of doing HIV screening and implementing tobacco-use treatment in dental offices, for example, as well as offering dental care alongside nursing in senior centers and home health care.

At the same time, the schools have put both nursing and dental personnel together in their 14 clinics, where nurses have caught previously undiagnosed severe hypertension and diabetes in patients. “You know, they’re anecdotes,” Shelley says, “but you add them up and they start to be an improved model for treating patients.”

—A.C.
here is a strange sense of pride, or at least resignation, that some at NYU take in toiling away inside their converted closet of an office, scarfing down a bagel while leaning against a brick wall, rehearsing a dance performance in a hallway, teaching in a basement backroom, or studying at the diner because they couldn’t find a seat in the student lounge. Downtown Manhattan is as cramped as ever, and what passes as common comfort at other schools would seem luxurious to most Greenwich Village dwellers. Everyone here—students, faculty, and staff—knows it when they sign up.

But imagine an NYU with expansive public lawns and gardens, modern classrooms where light shines in, landscaped pathways in place of fenced-off alleys, labs where students don’t stand touching shoulder-to-shoulder, and offices where faculty are able to fit books on shelves just like professors at other colleges do. Imagine an NYU that conducts research and scholarship not only at Washington Square but also on Manhattan’s East Side medical corridor, in Downtown Brooklyn, and even out on Governors Island.

Sure, it sounds like fantasy. But it may not be for long. The university, as a top-tier research institution, believes it can only move forward and maintain its place by offering some of the “necessities” that other schools enjoy. This thinking is the basis for the framework NYU has outlined in *A University as Great as Its City: NYU’s Strategy for Future Growth*. The roadmap, three years in the making and unveiled last spring, is a vision for expanding the university’s physical plant by 40 percent—some six million square feet—with a time horizon that stretches to NYU’s 200th anniversary in 2031. It envisions facilities from the East 20s and 30s health corridor to Downtown Brooklyn to Governors Island, creating remote academic centers that will benefit specific disciplines. Around the “core” in Washington Square, NYU will maximize use of its own property and will follow community devised principles for other areas of growth in
The goal is to help the academic centers across campus more easily conduct their work—not just make things roomier. NYU has spent billions hiring faculty and creating cutting-edge facilities over the past 20 years, but that doesn’t change the fact that everything is, in a word, constricted. Almost everyone, in every building, is starved for space. Currently, NYU has a mere 160 academic square feet available per student, compared to 326 at Columbia University, 673 at Harvard, and 866 at Yale. The 2031 plan would boost NYU to 240. As the plan says: “The university may look big and rich to its neighbors, but it is cramped and poor relative to its peer institutions.”

Indeed, NYU’s academic needs are ever expanding. Take, for example, the new Center for Genomics and Systems Biology, set to open on Waverly Place in January 2011. With 70,000 square feet of labs and classrooms, this expansion is essential to continuing NYU’s research, which aims to uncover the interactions between genes and the system that drives cell and organism functions. In the old days, scientists would analyze one gene in a test tube; now, studying one genome requires 30,000 test tubes. Robots the size of some New York City apartments will produce gene mutants alongside DNA sequencers and cameras that monitor the many experiments 24/7. All this activity—along with six research teams of 30-plus scientists and students—requires significant space. And just as genomics suddenly emerged as essential research in 2000 when the human genome was first sequenced, NYU needs to prepare for other breakthroughs in this new era of systems biology. “Every step we take opens another huge area of investigation,” says Gloria Coruzzi, chair of the department of biology, who notes that the National Institutes of Health recently expressed interest in using NYU’s new center as a design model for laboratories worldwide.

Just as you can’t conduct genomics research in a closet, you can’t properly rehearse for a huge, complicated musical in a tiny black box theater. Yet such has been the case at the Tisch School of the Arts, which has increased its student population from 500 to 2,000 since 1980 while remaining confined to the same 79,000 square feet at Broadway and Waverly Place. To solve that problem, Tisch aims to build a new Institute for the Performing Arts, which would include classrooms, soundproof studios, and a theater complete with fly space, wings, and an orchestra pit. As Dean Mary Schmidt Campbell notes, most NYU students “go through their entire college career without the experience of working in a truly professional...
theater. This would give them that chance. And it’s not just about educating performers—the facility would connect the university to the downtown theater scene and provide new opportunity to students specializing in the electrical, carpentry, lighting, and costume design fields.

Overall, an undertaking like this has plenty of precedent in higher education. Similar transformations have been conceived by leading research universities, including Columbia, Fordham University, and St. John’s University within New York, as well as East Coast schools such as University of Pennsylvania, Yale, Harvard, and George Washington University. Additionally, NYU, which was recently ranked in the top 20 on Sierra magazine’s list of the “greenest universities,” is approaching every turn of the 2031 plan with attention to urban sustainability—from aggressive use of below-ground space to promoting pedestrian uses while growing along transit routes.

“New York City’s future economic growth depends on the strength and intellectual firepower of its great universities,” says Kathryn Wylde, president and CEO of the Partnership for New York City, a nonprofit organization of the city’s business leaders. “NYU’s expansion will ensure that the institution remains at the forefront of higher education, attracting great world talent, conducting cutting-edge research, and leading in global innovation. All these features of a vibrant university will translate into long-term economic benefits for New York.”

**LOCAL AND NOT-SO-LOCAL GROWTH**

NYU’s approach to space is different than that of many peer institutions, as it does not “bank” real estate—when the university develops or purchases space, it almost always puts it to use immediately. It also does not aim to purchase entire neighborhoods or blocks of land, as Columbia and Harvard even in its core area, NYU facilities of sit beside non-NYU buildings. And it demonstrated an unusual willingness to space dispersed—consistent with the nece of campus walls and its “in and of the character.”

With these principles in mind, the plan is NYU to expand citywide and, simultaneously, in concentric rings. There is the “core” nd Washington Square and the “neighborhood,” broadly defined from Canal to streets and First to Eighth avenues. Fi-
controversial 1950s slum clearance and renewal projects of the urban planner Robert Moses, built in the then-fashionable international “towers in the park” style.

The roadmap proposes building a fourth residential tower to house faculty beside the three Silver Towers, with a university hotel inside and underground parking. It would be taller than its companions (36 stories rather than 30) but would be inspired by I.M. Pei’s original modernist design in texture and feeling, and fitted into the other towers’ “pinwheel” configuration. The plans see a large new playground where the Morton Williams grocery store stands today (a new supermarket would open nearby) and improvements to the now-fragmented landscape.

Another move would be to raze the Jerome S. Coles Sports and Recreation Center. In its place would rise a large structure made of interlocking rectangles—hence its nickname, the “Zipper Building.” It would house classrooms on the lower floors, students above, and a new athletic facility below ground. An active, retail-oriented ground floor, including a supermarket, would enliven Bleecker, Mercer, and Houston streets, while new landscaping and pedestrian passages would invite the public in, linking NYU with the neighborhood, stitching the superblocks back into the original street grid.

On the superblock just north of this sits Washington Square Village, two long apartment blocks. They would remain, but the site would be transformed into a publicly accessible space with the current buildings continuing to face one another on two sides, and two new, rounded yin-and-yang-like, crescent-shaped, pyramidal glass academic buildings on the remaining two sides, fronting Mercer and LaGuardia. This would create a series of garden-like settings along with places to sit, wander, and play. NYU has also agreed to find on one of the superblocks adequate space to fit a new public elementary school, which it will donate to the city.

On Governors Island, an historic military base in New York Harbor sold to New York State in 2003, NYU envisions a waterfront campus surrounding a deck-like town square on a restored pier. A campus here could host up to 1,500 students at full capacity working in a single discipline, perhaps urban sustainability. An NYU study found that some historic structures could be adapted for housing both students and faculty.

Across the harbor in Brooklyn, change is already under way. NYU is set to complete its merger with Polytechnic between 2011 and 2013, and Poly’s current home in the MetroTech Center area presents an opportunity to think about not only expanded space for engineering and science but other NYU programs over time.

Back in Manhattan, a mile uptown from Washington Square, the expansion plan calls for a refurbished “health corridor” in the East 20s and 30s. In all, that site could accommodate more than one million new square feet on several potential development sites, for medicine, dentistry, nursing, and the health sciences. Work is already under way for a new facility on 26th Street for both nursing and dental research, as the nursing programs move from Washington Square to this health corridor.

**MAKING THE CASE**

To succeed at something this grand, NYU realized it needs the support of its neighbors, elected officials, leaders in economic development and planning, and New Yorkers in general, and part of this effort lies in recount-

**UNIVERSITY VILLAGE**

The strategy for the southern block is to add a residential fourth tower, as well as an expansive new playground at the supermarket site, to enhance and extend the existing “towers in the park” concept. In addition, a mixed-use building on the existing Coles Center site allows a great opportunity for a rebuilt gym and added retail, academic, and residential space.

**SPACE PER STUDENT**

Academic square feet per student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College/University</th>
<th>Academic Square Feet</th>
<th>Core Courses</th>
<th>Extracurricular Activities</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Professors</th>
<th>Total Credits</th>
<th>Full-Time Faculty</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>240</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>866</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbia University</td>
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<td>765</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>University of California at Berkeley</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvard University</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton University</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>240</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Square Feet**

**Core Courses**

**Extracurricular Activities**

**Funding**

**Professors**

**Total Credits**

**Full-Time Faculty**
the region. Beds were needed, and fast, as leases elsewhere expired. Decisions about solving the housing shortage happened ad hoc, under budget pressures, and with scattered internal communication. “It was a searing moment,” recalls Lynne Brown, senior vice president for university relations and public affairs, “at the end of which, we stepped back with a lot of leaders in the room and said, ‘How can we stop this from happening again? How can we do better?’”

Preventing history from repeating itself and being more forthright about the university’s have a ways longer to go.”

**WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

To devise the framework, NYU made good on its promise to seek dialogue. After rigorous academic planning, internal inventories, and assessments to determine its space needs, teams of planning consultants met with the community. This happened five times over 2007-08, at open houses with renderings and models on display, where activists and neighbors could fill in comment cards, talk with university leaders and the architects, and paste sticky notes on the exhibit boards. NYU incorporated the feedback into the new iterations of the plan, Brown says.

More formally, a Community Task Force on NYU Development also contributed. This group of officials and activists was convened by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and met with NYU more than 50 times from 2007 to 2010. The meetings were constructive but often tense. “More than ever before, New York’s economic success depends on finding a way for universities and their surrounding neighborhoods to remain fully invested in the city’s future,” Stringer says. “The Task Force has created the foundation for productive dialogue going forward. That’s a remarkable and important achievement, and bodes well for New York’s future.”

When NYU formally released the plan last April, the *Architect’s Newspaper* praised the designs, though noted they were rather large in scale. The *WestView News* community news-paper editorialized: “The proposal seems to be a sound one … [and] to have considerable merit.” The Villager most liked the plan’s commitment to the public school and added, “The work that NYU has done these past few years to better engage the community is to be commended.” Interviews with some community activists suggested that their demands were met for quality architecture and publicly usable green space. But some members of the Stringer Task Force had unequivocally opposed any expansion in the superblocks, so the notion of a fourth tower, and the Zipper Building, was poorly received by them.

Moses’ superblocks—love them or loathe them—are lightning rods for controversy, as they have been for decades. However, Brown notes that giving serious consideration to expansion beyond the Village and surrounding neighborhoods to areas such as Brooklyn, Governors Island, and the East Side of Manhattan was due to the community’s push. And the idea of including plans for a new public elementary school flowed from ongoing conversation with the community. There may be other “remote” sites that work for NYU in the future, with the right combination of academic rationale, ability to grow incrementally in those sites, workable finances, and adequate municipal services and amenities. This September, for example, NYU began conversations with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey about the future plans for lower Manhattan and what opportunities might exist downtown.
Joe Chan (WSUC ’93, WAG ’98), president of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, is “thrilled” to have NYU merge with Polytechnic and then greater expand its presence in the area, enhancing what is already a bustling collegiate community around the MetroTech area. “Practically speaking, it makes a lot of sense to target Downtown Brooklyn as one of NYU’s nodes for growth,” says Chan, noting that the area is one of the largest centers of mass transit in all of New York City. “We’d like to see as much NYU investment as possible.”

**WHAT’S NEXT**
Planning may have been the easy part. Now comes the really tough stuff: securing the necessary government approvals for the superblock plans and ultimately the financing for such a big undertaking. NYU has already begun to assess the feasibility of a major fund-raising effort that will require the support of its 395,000-plus alumni, its trustees, friends, and the corporate and foundation communities. While NYU owns the property, its uses are heavily restricted by the terms of the old urban-renewal plans. The city’s historic-site regulators must rule on what, if anything, can be built beside I.M. Pei’s towers and the surrounding site, which were landmarked in 2008. And city planners must weigh in on what sorts of development can take place, at what scale, and for what purposes. The community boards and the borough president will also have a say. And the New York City Council must approve any final plan. It’s not unusual for a land-use review process of this extent to take two to three years.

It’s too early to say whether the design renderings in A University as Great as Its City will be built, if the square feet will be secured, if new structures will rise. What can be said so far is that those with differing opinions are talking to one another. “The university is definitely more responsive than they have been in the past,” says Community Board 2 Chair Jo Hamilton, who has requested a breakdown of the uses of all the square footage in the core, details on the new public school, and the exact timing of construction, among other things. “There are a lot of really good ideas, and a lot of questions and concerns. Will they get it right? We have to wait and see.”

Read A University as Great as Its City: NYU’s Strategy for Future Growth at www.nyu.edu/nyu2031/nyuinnyc. This fall, NYU will mount a storefront exhibit of its 2031 plan at 528 LaGuardia Place (between Bleecker and West Third streets), which is open to the public. All are invited to stop by and view the models and drawings.
Discover how their crisis, emotional pain, and hopelessness turn around. For more information, and an excerpt from Chapter 1, “Locked Up,” visit www.YolandaTom.com

JULES OLDER / GSAS ’69 / created an iPhone application called San Francisco Restaurants. The app is part of Sufro Media and was selected as a “Staff Favorite” by Apple.

STANLEY KRIEGEL / STERN ’29 / recently celebrated his 100th birthday in his Brooklyn home with numerous family members and friends.

RUTH SHAPIRO / STERN ’47, STEINHARDT ’73 / was recently interviewed on the online radio talk show howigotmyjob.com. This past summer she led an interactive workshop, Writing Letters That Land Interviews, for the NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

GEORGE S. KAUFMAN / STERN ’55 / was reappointed to his fourth term on the board of trustees of the Fashion Institute of Technology.

ROBERT LIMA / GSAS ’68 / authored Dark Prisms: Occultism in Hispanic Drama (University Press of Kentucky), which has been rereleased in paperback.

ELLIOTT BROWN / STEINHARDT ’61 / was recognized at the Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions 21st Annual Electroneuromyographic Symposium as one of the physical therapy pioneers in electroneuromyography.

STEVEN HOROWITZ / LAW ’66 / was selected for inclusion in Super Lawyers 2010. He practices in business, mergers and acquisitions, estate planning, and estate administration.

BARNEY POPKIN / WSC ’64 / helped provide training to 2,500 Afghan farmers to improve pest control, crop export potential through conformance to Good Agricultural Practices, Triple Tier Standards, and farm income.

STEVEN HOROWITZ / LAW ’66 / was selected for inclusion in Super Lawyers 2010. He practices in business, mergers and acquisitions, estate planning, and estate administration.

JAIME E. MARTINEZ-TOLENTINO / ARTS ’65, GSAS ’66 / studied at the University of Paris, the University of Madrid, Purdue, and UMass, earning PhDs in both French and Spanish. As a writer, he’s published 17 books, including scholarly works, collections of short stories, plays, and a forthcoming novel.

ROBERT LIMA / GSAS ’68 / authored Dark Prisms: Occultism in Hispanic Drama (University Press of Kentucky), which has been rereleased in paperback.

JIM LACEY / GSAS ’68 / who retired from Eastern Connecticut State University in 2003 after 45 years of teaching literature, has just published an entertaining page-turner, Double Trouble: A Ryan/Lehrer Mystery (CreateSpace).

TOM BARBAGALLO / ENG ’69 / co-authored Rescued: A True Story of Enduring Love (Wine Press). In this compelling true love story, a New York City couple struggles through conflict, a drug overdose, and elopement. Next, the bride is arrested after a move to Vermont.

WALTER A. CHAMEIDES, MD / WSC ’56 / received his eighth “Teacher of the Year Award” from the third-year residents-in-training at the Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center, where he is an attending psychiatrist in the clinic. He is also a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Southern California Medical School.
1970s

JERRY MARTY / WSC '70 / earned an MBA from the George Washington University in 2009 and was recently designated a “Top Doc” by Baltimore magazine in its November 2009 issue recognizing physician leaders in 76 specialties.

ANITA MOSKOWITZ / IFA '71, GSAS '78 / authored the book The Facade Reliefs of Orvieto Cathedral (Harvey Miller Publications).

CHRISTOPHER FITZ-PATRICK / WSC '73 / has joined the firm Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP as counsel.

RICHARD NOLAN / STEINHARDT '73 / married his partner of 55 years, Robert Pingpank, in June 2009 during their 50th class reunion at Trinity College in Hartford, CT. The service was the first of its kind in the Trinity College Chapel.

FRANK TOMASULO / TSOA '73 / was selected to be the first recipient of the University Film and Video Association’s Teaching Award. He received the honor for lifetime contributions to classroom teaching, curricular development, mentoring of colleagues and students, pedagogical publications, and organizational advancement related to teaching.

GARY LAWSON / LAW '74 / was honored as a recipient of the American Airlines Veterans Initiatives 2009 Community Citizenship Award.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN
NYU’s inaugural class was held in Clinton Hall on September 26, 1832. Located in what is now lower downtown, at Nassau and Beekman streets, the building also housed both The National Academy of Design and The Mercantile Library.

The latter proved to be the perfect neighbor, offering library privileges to the early scholars, but it was all short-lived; the university moved uptown to the more bucolic Washington Square in 1835.

(continued on page 51)
FOR RETIRED U.S. ARMY CAPTAIN JOHN POINDEXTER, MARCH 26, 1970, MARKED HIS TROOP’S MOST CRUCIAL DAY IN THE VIETNAM War. He was stationed in South Vietnam, accustomed to grueling living conditions, relentless heat and humidity, and the burden of constant vigilance. After receiving news that another unit of 100 American soldiers with dwindling ammunition was surrounded by Vietcong, Poindexter made the fateful decision to lead his troop, part of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, on a perilous rescue mission. Fighting through dense jungle, A Troop successfully drove back the enemy—though outnumbered three to one—and saved the majority of their fellow soldiers.

A few months later, Poindexter returned to the United States, to NYU, where he clipped through an MBA in a year, and began a part-time PhD program in 1971. “I took the uniform off and I never put it back on again,” he remembers. “I probably became a civilian again on the flight back from Vietnam.” It was not until 2003 that Poindexter would suddenly find himself confronted by a flood of memories from that momentous rescue—and a startling realization that would send him off on a new mission, this time for...
In 2003, a startling realization sent Poindexter off on a new mission, this time for recognition.

requested for his men back in 1970 had been rejected due to a bureaucratic error. The vast majority of A Troop had gone without recognition for more than three decades. “I was mortified,” Poindexter says. “I failed in my duty to men whom I owed so much.” Adding to his embarrassment was the fact that he had been heavily decorated for his tour, receiving two Purple Hearts, a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and a Soldier’s Medal, among other honors. Poindexter immediately resolved to procure military decorations for all the deserving men. As the sole owner of J.B. Poindexter & Co., a Texas-based manufacturing company and the largest producer of commercial trucks in the United States, Poindexter was able to foot the bill for all the research necessary for such a huge undertaking. He set about tracking down A Troop and compiling their accounts of the battle. Unfortunately, he discovered that a significant number of the men were either deceased or unable to clearly recollect their actions, while others lacked witnesses to substantiate their claims. “We recognized it would be impossible to honor everyone,” Poindexter says.

Ever determined, he instead decided to seek a prestigious Presidential Unit Citation that would recognize all of the men. The centerpiece of the application was a manuscript he had written three decades earlier, which contained a detailed description of the combat. (He’d originally submitted it to the military journal Armor, but it had been rejected due to length.) After updating it with photographs and recollections from some A Troop veterans, Poindexter self-published the book, titled The Anonymous Battle, in 2004. That same year, he submitted the required documentation for the citation, including the book. Poindexter estimates that he spent more than $100,000 in printing and travel expenses for A Troop.

After an agonizing four-year wait, the Secretary of the Army approved the troop’s citation in 2008. And, finally, Poindexter and 86 fellow soldiers were honored in an emotional ceremony at the White House Rose Garden last year. President Obama gave an “inspired speech,” Poindexter says, and several men told him it was the most important day of their lives. “I saw them all dressed up smartly and in formation,” he recalls. “I felt overwhelming pride.” He also felt that the day was bigger than the soldiers present. As he notes, “[These men were] representing an entire generation of Vietnam veterans who had not been honored for their service.”
IN 2007, THE CAMPAIGN OF MICAH KELLNER FOR THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE HADN’T EVEN STARTED AND YET HE WAS ALREADY holding a critical message meeting on a surprisingly convoluted issue. Was Kellner gay, straight, or bisexual? One friend in the field said, “You should just be straight.” That would be weird, Kellner replied, because he’d been with men in the past. Okay, you’ll be gay, another friend suggested. Also weird because Kellner was then living with a woman. Someone else advised him to state: “While I’ve had sex with men, I don’t identify as being gay,” Kellner recalls, adding, “Which is like saying ‘I’m openly in the closet.’” In the end, he decided to run a campaign as one of the very few bisexual candidates in the country. And he won.

Micah Kellner is now the first and only openly bisexual legislator in New York history, representing a swath of the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island. However, his biography is all the more exceptional when one considers his relative youth—he’s a mere 31—and how he came into politics, as an activist for disability rights and LGBT rights. At a young age, the Warren, New Jersey, native was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and underwent years of physical therapy and numerous surgeries. He now walks with a very slight hitch, but without prior knowledge an observer would never guess his illness. His personal life—his sexuality and disability—has become a major part of his profile in Albany. In three short years in office, he’s pushed legislation to make all New York City taxis handicapped accessible and supported the fight for gay marriage. But his focus is at least as broad as his district’s concerns, and the junior legislator has been praised by The New York Times for his work on transparency in government.

Kellner characterizes his foray into politics a decade ago as “a happy accident.” As a BFA candidate in film and television, he was working as boom operator and sound technician on student films, including one that was eventually expanded to become the indie feature Raising Victor Vargas. Uninspired by internships in the entertainment industry, Kellner looked for a job with an elected official. He interned in Senator Charles Schumer’s office and worked for NYC Controller Bill Thompson, among others. Almost overnight, the film student turned politico.

His innate political acumen impressed Brice Peyre, deputy chief of staff for U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, who represents Kellner’s district and is another former boss. “He’s an unusually good listener,” Peyre says. “He’s able to take the pulse of his district or a room of people. It allows him to figure out what’s really concerning them.”

While on Maloney’s staff as the community liaison, the Assembly seat on the Upper East Side opened up when Alexander “Pete” Grannis was appointed to Eliot Spitzer’s administration. “We have a tradition in this neighborhood of electing people at a younger age,” says Kellner, who was encouraged by Peyre and others to run. “It didn’t seem inconceivable to me.” With the backing of the local Democratic establishment and an endorsement from then-Senator Hillary Clinton, he won with nearly 65 percent of the vote.

As a legislator, he has shined a light on disability rights. “[Those with disabilities] are invisible to a lot of people,” Kellner notes. “Until a disability affects you or your family, you think of it as something ‘other.’” His bill to make all taxis wheelchair accessible is his top legislative priority, and he’s confident that he can make it law one day. “In this city and state, it’s hard enough to get around if you’re an able-bodied person,” he says.

Kellner has also staked out a position within the LGBT movement and pushed to legalize gay marriage in New York. “I was a member of the legislature for 14 days when I got to vote for marriage equality,” he remembers. Despite the bill’s failure in the New York State Senate, Kellner is steadfast that one day it will be a celebrated accomplishment. “Every civil-rights movement has had their setbacks, and when they’ve had those setbacks, they’ve come out stronger for it,” he says. “This is coming.”

If Kellner sounds like an activist, that’s because he still believes he is: “Running for office is an extension of being an activist. Now I have a title on a letterhead and can demand a place at the table.”
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THE WHOLE BODY

At the dawn of the 20th century, abstraction—namely Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism—dominated the art world. Following the horrors of World War I, that changed as Europe yearned again for classical beauty and reembraced the human form represented as a whole, intact body. This shift back to figuration is the focus of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum’s new exhibition, *Chaos and Classicism: Art in France, Italy, and Germany 1918-1936*, which runs until January and is curated by NYU art history professor KENNETH SILVER (WSC ’73). “The works of art are the greatest witnesses to their historical moments,” Silver explains. “It’s interesting to see the ways in which each country deals with this idea of a return to order after the experimentalism of prewar avant-garde art.”

Neoclassical figure paintings, such as *Woman in White* by Pablo Picasso, who was based in France after 1904, reflected the poetic dream of antiquity. The Italian pieces are much more politicized, as artists chose allegiance or defiance toward the Fascist regime; while Giorgio de Chirico played it both ways in *Gladiators (Triumph)* (I gladiatori [Le triomphe]), Hannah Höch painted a clear antifascist statement with *Roma*, a parody in which she attached Mussolini’s head to the collaged body of a bathing beauty. In Germany, anti-Expressionist artists searched for aesthetic clarity through the movement known as “Neue Sachlichkeit,” or new objectivity, including Otto Dix’s print series *The War (Der Krieg)*, which represents the chaos out of which Europe was emerging in 1918.

Tragically, however, as Hitler came to power the New Classicism was misconstrued as human perfectionism. The exhibition’s dramatic conclusion at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, with aggressive and militaristic Nazi pieces, foreshadows the impending violence of World War II. As Silver notes, “The very end of the show is when you recognize that all this obsession with reconstituted bodies and happy humanity actually has a very dark side.”

—Renée Alfuso
A Legacy That Makes a Difference

Natalie Osherow Kahn-Lipsett (CAS ’42, Steinhardt ’54) recognizes the debt she owes NYU for the scholarship she received as a young wartime refugee. She has set aside a major place for NYU in her estate plans, providing a generous legacy of scholarships for future generations of students.

Natalie’s family fled Europe just a few days prior to Hitler’s invasion of Poland in 1939. Shortly after settling in Brooklyn, Natalie was offered a scholarship at NYU’s Washington Square College. Taking advantage of the expertise she acquired in language and literature, Natalie began teaching Russian and German to the budding engineers and scientists at Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn, and she remained at Poly through her entire academic career. While teaching at Poly, Natalie earned her master’s degree in language education at the School of Education and qualified for a doctorate in comparative literature.

“I am delighted and proud to be a member of both the NYU and NYU-Poly families. These two institutions have always been remarkable and exciting places for teaching and learning, and their new relationship will add to their academic strength. I am happy to make it possible for future students to obtain the educational advantages that I received from NYU.”

– Natalie Osherow Kahn-Lipsett

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Card holders also receive discounts at the NYU Computer Store and have access to the Torch Club, where faculty, staff, and university affiliates can share a meal, enjoy drinks in the Tap Room, or hold a private event. And, of course, Alumni Card holders are privy to discounted tickets at Ticket Central and the Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, as well as visits to the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library and Jerome S. Coles & Palladium Sports and Recreation Centers.

New graduates receive a complimentary Alumni Card, valid for one year after graduation. The Alumni Card is also given to all alumni who make an annual gift to NYU, in grateful acknowledgement of their financial support.

To get your card and start taking advantage of these deals, visit www.alumni.nyu.edu/alumnicard.

evaluation with an action plan for getting the star or director of their choice.

BANTA WHITNER / SSSW '80 / wrote This Congruent Life: A Spiritual Ecology Practice (Outskirts Press).

DIANNE SCARANGELLA / STEINHARDT '81 / has earned a nationally recognized credential in the grants field. Conferred by the Grant Professionals Certification Institute, Inc., the credential recognizes tenure in the profession, education, achievement, and a commitment to both public and private philanthropy.

THOMAS SIPOS / TSOA '82 / authored Horror Film Aesthetics: Creating the Visual Language of Fear (McFarland).

SUSAN CROWN / GSAS '83 / was appointed vice chair on the USC Shoah Foundation Institute’s board of councillors.

VINCENT N. SCHIRALDI / SSSW '83 / was appointed commissioner of the department of probation by Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

MICHAEL LAMPERT / LAW '84 / was elected Fellow of the American College of Tax Counsel.

DAVID LEFKOWITZ / TSOA '84, '86 / moved to Northern Colorado and is co-publishing the Performing Arts Insider theater journal, editing Total Theater.com, writing a monthly art column in the Long Island Pulse, and teaching playwriting at the University of Northern Colorado. He also has a comedy/talk program, Dave’s Gone By, now on the Web at davesgoneby.org.

MARK MARCANTANO / STERN '84 / has been named executive vice president and chief operating officer of Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island.

MARGARET VAN HOUTEN / LAW '84 / has been recognized by Best Lawyers in America 2010 in tax law, employee benefits, and trust and estates. She was also named Best Lawyers’ Des Moines Trusts and Estates Lawyer of the Year.

SHARON ELIZABETH SARKISIAN / STERN '85 / released Étonné and Éclatée: Cari Chesterfield and the Pirate, Book II, a sequel to her first book: Tender Trysting: Cari Chesterfield and the Coat of Arms, Book I (both Xulon Press).

MICHAEL L. CROWL / LAW '86 / has been appointed managing director and general counsel-Americas for Barclays Capital in New York. He was previously managing director and global general counsel for Barclays Global Investors in San Francisco.

LOIS H. GOODMAN / LAW '86 / was named a U.S. magistrate judge for the District of New Jersey in March 2009.

ROSEMARY ANN ROTONDI / TSOA '86 / has been an archival film and photo researcher for documentary filmmakers, artists, and writers since 1986 (www.archivalfilmresearch.com).

JEFF HERTZBERG / MED '87 / released his second bread cookbook, Healthy Bread in Five Minutes a Day (Thomas Dunne Books).

MARY ANN LYNCH / TSOA '87 / is featured in Big Island Journey: An Illustrated Narrative of the Island of Hawai’i (Mutual Publishing).


COLLEEN DUFFY / LAW '89 / was unanimously confirmed by the NY State Senate as a justice of the NY State Supreme Court in the Ninth Judicial District of New York.

TERRI JO GINSBERG / GAL '89, TSOA '97 / published her third book, an encyclopedic volume titled Historical Dictionary of Middle Eastern Cinema (Scarecrow Press).

More than 5,000 dives later, Clark, known as “the Shark Lady,” is a world-renowned ichthyologist who was inducted into the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame earlier this year. Throughout her 60-year career studying deep-sea sharks and tropical fishes, she’s received numerous awards, including the Explorers Club Medal for her extraordinary lifetime contributions in exploration and scientific research. She’s discovered more than a dozen new species of fish, written three books and more than 170 articles, and taught for 32 years at the University of Maryland, College Park. Although officially retired since 1992, Clark hasn’t slowed down. She travels frequently for lectures, conferences, and expeditions—and nothing can keep her out of the water.

In fact, at 88, it’s easier for Clark to dive than it is to walk; the water’s buoyancy frees her of her hip problems and the cane she uses. This past summer, she went cage diving in South Africa with Great Whites, which she calls “white sharks”—as though they’re not the man-eating monsters from Jaws. “I don’t feel you even need cages if you know how to handle the sharks,” Clark says. (The closest she’s come to being bitten was when she hit her car brakes and the mounted tiger shark jaws in the passenger seat drew blood from her arm as she reached out to brace it.) She’s always been too intrigued by sharks to be scared of them, so rather than fleeing from 50-foot whale sharks, for example, she rode on their backs at three knots. “People have big dogs with giant teeth, but they’re not afraid because they understand them,” she explains. “But
people don’t understand sharks. They’re like any other animal; it’s just that some of them are so big they can be dangerous.”

In the late 1950s and early '60s, Clark performed groundbreaking lab experiments in which she conditioned lemon and nurse sharks to press a target to obtain food. Her beloved sharks proved that they’re not “dumb eating machines” or “mindless creatures that couldn’t think things out.” They were even able to discriminate between targets of different shapes and colors. No one had tested the intelligence of large sharks before, so the Office of Naval Research awarded Clark a series of grants, which helped to develop the one-room lab she started in a wooden shack on the west coast of Florida. What began with just a boat, a Jeep, and a fisherman at her disposal, grew over the years into a major research center now known as the Mote Marine Laboratory, where Clark still serves as founding director, trustee, and senior member of the senior management team.

This journey is chronicled in her 1969 book, The Lady and the Sharks (Peppertree Press), updated and rereleased this year with a foreword by famed oceanographer Sylvia Earle, who notes that Clark was one of only two female students at Scripps Institution of Oceanography “at a time when science was hardly considered an appropriate career choice for a woman.” Among Clark’s many aquatic adventures regaled in the book is the time she was nearly carried away by a giant crab—13 feet across—after he wrapped his legs around her at a depth of 140 feet. But she says that her most thrilling underwater encounter was when she dove to 12,000 feet in a submersible craft and spotted a deep-sea hooded octopus dancing outside the window. “Now it’s more practical to send down robot cameras,” she says. “But there’s just nothing like being eyeball-to-eyeball with the fish at these great depths.”

1990s

CONSEULO HERNÁNDEZ / GSAS ’90, ’91 / authored Voces y Perspectivas En La Poesía Latinoamericana Del Siglo XX (Visor Libros).

DIANA ESTIGARRIBIA’s / TSOA ’91 / play Help Wanted was a short-listed finalist for the BBC International Radio Playwriting Competition in 2009.

GERARDO SANTIAGO / DEN ’91 / and his practice, Children’s Dentistry of Naples, were awarded the Southwest Florida Parent and Child People’s Choice Award.

EILEEN MULLOY / STEINHARDT ’92 / was hired as senior vice president of sales and marketing for Hollywood.com.

MEREDITH FUCHS / LAW ’93 / received the American Library Association’s James Madison Award, which honors individuals or groups who have championed, protected, and promoted public access to government information and the public’s “right to know” on the national level.

KIRSTEN REED / GAL ’95 / authored The Ice Age (Picador), which was short-listed for the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize and the NSW Premier’s Literary Award, 2010.

LAW 98 / was promoted to counsel in the litigation group of Wolff & Samson PC.

Louise Lagasse / STEINHARDT ’96 / is teaching music in Montreal and traveled to Haiti during the summer months as a volunteer.

EVELYN FURSE / LAW ’96 / was honored with the Dorothy Merrill Brothers Award for the Advancement of Women in the Legal Profession.

CLARK WILLIAMS / SSSW ’97 / was selected as the 2010 Social Worker of the Year for Santa Clara County, California.


Shannon O’Boye / CAS ’98 / joined the commercial litigation group of Quarles & Brady, LLP in its Chicago office.

LOUIS R. PIZANTE / LAW ’98, SERN ’04 / successfully executed the sale of his company, Mavent, Inc. to Ellie Mae, a diversified mortgage technology and services company, in his role as chief executive officer.

ALICE BELISLE EATON / LAW ’99 / was named partner at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, LLP.
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alumni art

Style and Substance

Photographer ELIZABETH JORDAN (WSUC ’93) transforms candid shots of daily life in faraway places into art. Using digital techniques like solarization and painting over the negatives, she infuses color into what is sometimes difficult subject matter captured in developing countries—as in the photo Schoolgirl (right), which was taken in Ghana. “I want to keep it light and—without diminishing its importance—create something that won’t make you sad, but more inspired,” she says.

All sales from her gallery shows go to organizations such as Women for Women International, which hosted Jordan’s 2009 Rwanda exhibit to raise money for survivors of war. This past spring she teamed up with NYU Ghana for “Strength and Balance,” which was sponsored by the Gallatin School of Individualized Study and focused on the poise of Ghanaian women who often carry large loads on their heads. Sibling singers Melky and Wyclef Jean performed at the exhibit’s opening and later asked Jordan to visit their native Haiti following the earthquake last year, which she describes as a “war zone” and considers her most difficult project to date. With much of the country beneath rubble, Jordan focused her lens on colorful graffiti messages of hope and the ornately decorated tap-taps—or buses—which she says illuminated the dusty, bleak surroundings as they drove by. —Renée Alfuso

alumni connections

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In recent months, UDAR has taken its events and programs on the road—from Paris to Prague and Buenos Aires to Beijing. Graduates, parents, and friends abroad have all responded enthusiastically and this continued involvement is critical in helping UDAR to fortify the network of NYU alums around the world; together, our potential is limitless.

We are inspired by your engagement with your alma mater and we look forward to working with you, President Sexton, and the university in strengthening NYU’s global identity. If you have moved outside of the United States, please make sure to e-mail us at alumni.global@nyu.edu to update your contact information so you can stay current on NYU programs in your neck of the world.
As a microfinance research fellow in Cambodia back in 2007, DIANA MAO (WAG '08) was confronted by a destitute villager who begged her to take his daughter to the United States, in the hope that the child would have a better life. Mao, who had been told that sexual slavery was widespread through the Southeast Asian country, suddenly understood the insidious connection between poverty and human trafficking. “I realized how easy it was for sex traffickers to come into poor villages and get access to children,” Mao explains.

That experience spurred Mao to found Nomi Network, a nonprofit organization that fights human trafficking by providing manufacturing jobs for former Cambodian sex workers and at-risk women and girls.

Today Nomi (pronounced “know me”) sells a line of handcrafted bags and totes, emblazoned with the slogan Buy Her Bag, Not Her Body, which, Mao says, sends the message: “Young girls are not for sale.”

Made from recycled rice paper, the fair-trade handbags retail between $20 and $78 on nominetwork.org.

“We’re a hybrid social enterprise,” Mao says. “We’re educating consumers about buying products made under fair working conditions, and we’re economically empowering these women to avoid slavery.”

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WHY
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March 2-5

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March 15-26

European Coastal Civilizations
April 29-May 7

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April 25-May 4

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May 15-28

Changing Tides of History—Norwegian Fjords & Baltic Sea
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June 19-27

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