Breaking New Ground
innovative architecture, innovative education

Columbia COLLEGE CHICAGO
Our academic mission drives us to educate the whole person, to nurture and equip students who will be ready to take creative control of their own careers and become leaders in the disciplines they master, inventing and redefining the culture of our time.

Please check your mailbox for information on ways you can help support our mission to be the best student-centered arts and media college in the world.
Anna Deavere Smith
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2009
Respected actor, playwright, educator, and MacArthur “genius award” winner, Smith addresses the importance of diversity in creative expression.

Richard Florida
THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2009
The author of The Rise of the Creative Class, Florida is known internationally for developing the controversial concept of the “creative class” and its importance in urban regeneration.

All lectures are at 7:30 p.m. at Film Row Cinema, 1104 South Wabash Avenue, 8th floor. Tickets are available at no charge on a first-come, first-served basis through the Columbia Ticket Center at 312.369.6600 or colum.edu/tickets, two months before each lecture.

President’s Club members enjoy early ticket availability and invitations to VIP receptions following each event. To learn more about the President’s Club, call Kim Clement at 312.369.7084.

For Full Information: colum.edu/conversations

Kim Clement at 312.369.7084. About the President’s Club, call 312.369.6600 or colum.edu/advancement.早票及特定活动的邀请权。欲了解更多关于总统俱乐部的信息，请联系Kim Clement，电话312.369.7084。
Columbia College Chicago is preparing to break ground on the first new-construction building in its 118-year history (see cover story, page 14), and we’re wondering:

“How will the new Media Production Center affect the student experience at Columbia?”

Demo sat down with Columbia’s president, Dr. Warrick L. Carter, and asked him. Here’s what he had to say:

“It’s a building that is going to serve our students in unbelievable ways. As excited as I am about the building itself, and about it being our very first building built from scratch, I’m more excited about what it does for our programs. Although we started out thinking only about building a film production studio, we realized we needed to think bigger, that there are other media programs that should use this facility as well. So it will be a media production center,.charmers and faculty from many departments—film, and video, interactive arts and media, television, audio arts and acoustics, journalism, and others—have been involved in the process.

“This reflects a collaborative structure that is a continuation of the academic structure we’ve put in place throughout the college. When I first arrived, we had few connections between departments. Each department was really a silo. So we worked to create the school structure, with a School of Media Arts, a School of Fine and Performing Arts, and a School of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This structure is changing the way we educate students. It drives toward multidisciplinary discussions of curriculum, it drives toward innovative use of equipment—like our remote media truck and motion-capture studio—and it drives toward students moving across departments to get multiple skills. When a student leaves here, people in the creative industries don’t care what that student’s major was, they want to know what that individual can do.

“Another thing that is exciting for the students is that in the same space together, they are going to see things and hear things and work to develop relationships outside their own department. If you look at what our students are doing now, even without this facility, it’s already happening. Throughout this institution there is more collaboration, and departments are seeing more ways in which they can take advantage of this amazing synergy. For example, when you take journalism and you put audio arts and acoustics and radio in the same building, they begin to realize opportunities they hadn’t thought about before. And you get something like the broadcast radio journalism program, which I feel came out of that realization. The bottom line, when you look at a field like that—print journalism plus radio plus television—those are all skills that student’s major was, they want to know what that individual can do.

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“The Media Production Center will create that convergence; it will bring all of the faculty and students together. I think we are going to see product being developed by students, because of the advantages of this new facility, that we couldn’t even imagine in our current configuration. The students are going to be seeing each other’s work, working in this space, and they are going to say, ‘Wait a second, I think we can…’ And we’re going to see some wonderful stuff.”

Do you have a question for Columbia’s president? Let us know, and we’ll try to ask him for you. Email demo@colum.edu.

Main Soundstage $1,000,000
Corporate Logo Campaign $1,000,000 (10 @ $100,000)
Main Reception $750,000
Soundstages 2 $500,000
Production Design Studio $500,000
Motion-Capture Studio $750,000
Lasky Arch $500,000
Preparatory Stage $250,000
Directing Stage $250,000
Outdoor Courtyard $250,000
Student Lounge Area I $350,000
Production Office $50,000
General Classrooms (9) $110,000
"Lab" Classrooms (2) $100,000
Cinematography Storage $50,000
Prep Storage $50,000
Wardrobe $50,000
Building Office $50,000
Green Room $50,000
Dressing Rooms (2) $25,000
Makeup Room $25,000
Student Lounge Area II $50,000
Roof Terrace* TBD
For more information on how you can support this groundbreaking endeavor, please call the Office of Institutional Advancement at 312.369.7084.
Board Extends Carter’s Contract Through 2012

Columbia’s board of trustees has unanimously approved the extension of President Warrick L. Carter’s contract through August 2012. Carter, 66, has been president of the college since the summer of 2000. Carter’s four-year contract was unanimously renewed in 2003, with a further extension until 2010.

“As Columbia looks toward and beyond attaining the goals Carter set for the college in its strategic plan, ‘Columbia 2010,’ the board of trustees deemed continuity of primary importance to guide us into our next phase of growth,” said Allen M. Tumer, chairman of the college’s board of trustees. During his tenure, Carter has overseen the academic restructuring of the college, introducing the current structure involving a School of Media Arts, a School of Fine and Performing Arts, and a School of Liberal Arts in its mission, adhere to a firm belief in the importance of access and opportunity in higher education and the importance of a diversity of voices in the American cultural product.

We are at a crossroads in our evolution as an institution of higher learning,” said Carter. “How will we define our course in the years to come? Regardless, we will encounter both risks and rewards as the surface and the substance of the college changes and evolves. We are prepared for both.”

Carter’s guiding principles, reflected in the college’s mission, adhere to a firm belief in the importance of access and opportunity in higher education and the importance of a diversity of voices in the American cultural product.

Columbia College President Warrick L. Carter

College Considers Creating Honors Program

In response to feedback from students who have expressed interest in a more challenging curriculum, the administration at Columbia is exploring the creation of an honors program. As reported in the September 22 Columbia Chronicle, Steve Kapeike, provost and senior vice president, announced the plans at a recent faculty forum, while noting the college has considered creating an honors program for many years. Now, however, seems like a good time to institute it, he said. “We’re hearing urgency from the students. They want greater challenges and recognition for those challenges.”

Columbia is currently researching and exploring how best to initiate the program. Kapeike said the college would not exclude anyone from taking an honors course if that student were sufficiently prepared. “We’re not looking at an honors college or people being admitted into the honors program directly out of high school,” he said. Students who enrolled and successfully completed the courses with a certain GPA would graduate with honors.

When asked by the Chronicle whether they would take honors courses if they were available, students responded positively. “I would like more challenging courses,” said freshman film and video major Vigo Poustaival. “The college math class I’m in right now isn’t challenging me like an honors class would.”

“I’m crossing my fingers for that day to come,” said senior performing arts management major Callie Hamill. “I think students should get that option.”

The MoCP acquired the photos over the summer and is bound by the terms of the donation to show a portion of the collection every 10 years. The gift is part of the Andy Warhol Foundation’s Photographic Legacy Program, which has donated works by Warhol to 183 colleges and universities. Columbia joins the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of Illinois, the Krannert Art Museum at the University of Illinois, and the College of DuPage in receiving donations. Although no public exhibition of the photographs has yet been scheduled, the collection is available for study and research purposes.

Fundraising Tops $52.7 Million, Alumni Donations Up

Charitable contributions to Columbia more than doubled last year, jumping from $52,000 in fiscal year 2007 to $117,000 in 2008. The rise continues a four-year trend of growth in alumni contributions, and reflects strong alumni response to an end-of-year appeal from the Office of Institutional Advancement to push alumni giving over the $100,000 mark.

“Over the last year we’ve done over 82 alumni events, we’ve been communicating with our alums, and we’ve seen an increase in the number of high-profile alumni who want to reinvest in Columbia,” said Josh Culley-Foster (B.A. ’03), national director of alumni relations. “It’s been a nationwide effort.” Culley-Foster said his office’s goal going forward is to establish more relationships with Columbia’s alumni. “With increased participation we believe we’ll see increased support,” he said.

Kim Clement, associate vice president for advancement and alumni relations, said part of the reason alumni giving is up is that the college has had a “comprehensive” approach with its chapter networks. “We’re aggressively putting together a chapter network,” Clement said. “It’s a process of educating, and this is the first time we’ve seen a huge jump, which shows that the message is getting across. It’s a long-term relationship.”

Not all philanthropic areas saw increases. Revenue generated from corporations and businesses and contributions from Columbia’s trustees were down somewhat from 2007, although trustees still gave about $388,000 more than they did in 2006. Revenue from alumni giving surpassed the $10 million mark. "We are getting the word out to them, too.” said Clement. “We’re getting the growing awareness among parents who want to reinvest in Columbia,” she noted. The two-year total is the largest in the college’s history.

Other areas that saw growth were contributions from foundations, which donated $1.8 million (up 26 percent), and parents, who gave $51,000 ($24 percent from last year). “There is a growing awareness among parents about our fundraising efforts,” Clement said. “We’re getting the word out to them, too.”
only Northwestern university and students among the 147 colleges, said. Columbia is now the third students match the model of what demographics of those schools’ in and out of state, where the target specific high schools, both lies in recruitment efforts that undergraduate enrollment growth the success behind Columbia’s academically prepared.” Part of enrolling more students who are increased diversity, and we’re admissions office. “We’ve actually of admissions in the undergraduate changed the geographic profile, “The really big deal is we have students this fall.

Columbia admitted 3,855 new freshmen spiked 7.7 percent. for fall. undergraduate enrollment record 12,464 students enrolled 3.7 percent over last fall, with a Columbia’s population rose college’s trend of annual growth. show a continuation in the to set records student body represents minorities. percent of the total undergraduate rose this year to 3,317. About 28 the number of minority students then growing slightly last year, also saw growth this year. After undergraduate student population Columbia’s total minority increased 70 percent, he said. Kelly also noted a “sea change” in academic preparedness among new students. The number of freshmen who come in with a high school GPA of 3.7 or above has increased 146 percent, and the number of freshmen with ACT scores of 26 or higher has increased 70 percent, he said. Columbia's undergraduate enrollment growth lies in recruitment efforts that target specific high schools, both in and out of state, where the demographics of those schools’ students match the model of what Columbia is looking for, Monroe said. Columbia is now the third largest importer of out-of-state students among the 147 colleges and universities in Illinois, behind only Northwestern University and University of Chicago.

The number of new graduate students decreased 7.5 percent, a trend that Mark Kelly, vice president of student affairs, said the college is aware of and has taken steps to combat. He noted that graduate admissions has recently been aligned with the Office of Student Affairs, which will, he said, provide graduate students with more services and assistance. “We’re going to have more graduate students enrolled.”

Several other alumni received Emmy nominations this year, including Michael Goi (B.A., ’80), cinematographer, nominated for Outstanding Cinematography for a Half-Hour Series for “My Name is Earl”; Stake a Motorcycle (MBC); David Vianello (’91), camera operator, nominated for Outstanding Cinematography for Reality Programming for “Project Runway”; En Gardel (Bra); and Ron Walters Jr. (B.A., ’97), music director, nominated for Outstanding Music Direction for Barry Manilow, Songs from the Seventies (PBS). Over the past five years, Columbia alumni have received 33 Emmy nominations for producing, editing, writing, cinematography, animation, and design.

Student Designs Hit the Runway in Dress Code

Since Fashion Focus Chicago began four years ago, Columbia’s fashion design and fashion retail management students and faculty have been key players in this celebration of Chicago’s thriving fashion industry. Throughout the first week in October, some of the city’s most talented designers showcased their skills in runway shows, fashion installations, retail and design events, and industry seminars—with Columbia front and center at every event.

The highlight of the week came on October 3 at the Chase Promenade North in Millennium Park, as Columbia fashion design students joined their peers from the Illinois Institute of Art–Chicago, the International Academy of Design and Technology, and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Dress Code, the first Fashion Focus runway show to feature student designers from Chicago’s four design schools. Columbia students Jen Broman, Amy Penderson, Liz Klimek, Yuka Takeda, and Regina Valdez were selected by faculty to represent the college in what we hope will become a regular feature of this annual event.

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Marilyn Sward, the founding director of Columbia’s Center for Book and Paper Arts, died August 5 after a battle with cancer. She was 67.

Sward, who earned her master’s degree in interdisciplinary arts, helped launch an art program in Evanston schools, then created Paper Press, which she merged with Arts’ Book Works in the late 1980s to form the Center for Book and Paper Arts at Columbia College. She was the director of the center in its early years. Shortly after, she persuaded the college’s administration to construct a $1 million art facility in the 1104 South Wabash building.

“More than almost anyone else I have ever known, Marilyn was completely remarkable in her ability to bring ideas into reality,” wrote Jeff Abell, faculty in the interdisciplinary arts department and a friend and colleague of Sward’s for 25 years. “Marilyn would look at a situation, see a problem, come up with a solution, and make that come to be.

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Eight years ago, Jenny Brown (B.A. ’93) found herself in Texas, driving from stockyard to stockyard in a rented truck shooting undercover video of “downed” animals—cattle that are too ill and weak to walk onto the trucks for slaughter. “They are dragged, kicked, prodded with electric prods, and raised by forklifts,” she says. “They come off the trucks the same way because they must be alive when they reach the slaughterhouse.” Her footage was shown at congressional hearings about downed animals, although Congress was more concerned with the threat of mad cow disease entering the food chain than with the treatment cows receive. “That was the week that changed my life,” recalls Brown. “After seeing such cruelty to animals, I decided I wanted to start my own sanctuary and dedicate my life to becoming an advocate for them.” She and her husband, well-known documentary film and television editor Doug Abel (The Fog of War, “30 Rock”), opened the not-for-profit Woodstock Farm Animal Sanctuary in Woodstock, New York, in 2004. It marked a convergence of her passion for animal advocacy and her filmmaking skills that she couldn’t have imagined as a young film and video student at Columbia.

In 1993, Brown was waiting tables at the Chicago Diner and taking a documentary production class with Professor Emeritus Michael Rabiger. She struck up a conversation one day with a customer, a member of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals who was in Chicago to oversee PETA’s “Fur Funeral,” during which 100 or so activists carried caskets filled with fur coats down Michigan Avenue chanting, “Bring out your dead.” Brown attended and filmed the “funeral” for Rabiger’s course. She sent her edited video to PETA, which used the footage for a press package and asked her if she would volunteer to cover more events. She began doing undercover investigations for the organization—in Fargo, North Dakota, she captured the first-ever footage of pregnant, catheterized horses in small, dark stalls at a facility that collected equine urine for the manufacture of a popular hormone-replacement drug. The footage was aired on news broadcasts around the world. “This is America’s beloved companion,” says Brown. “It was a real shock for people to see that.”

Following graduation, Brown worked in the film and video industry, including as postproduction supervisor for “Frontline” and for filmmaker Errol Morris on the 2004 Academy Award-winning documentary The Fog of War (where she met Abel). In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, however, Brown had difficulty finding work that felt important. Opening the sanctuary became increasingly compelling.

Locating the Farm Animal Sanctuary in Woodstock, with its bustling film scene and proximity to New York City, permitted Abel to continue working as a film editor. Most of the 140-plus chickens, turkeys, cows, goats, sheep, and pigs at the sanctuary arrived there due to cruelty and neglect or were escapees from live-kill markets in the New York area, as in the case of Albie, a white goat whose infected front leg had to be amputated. An amputee herself, having lost a leg to cancer as a child, Brown had a prosthetic made for the animal by Erik J. Thompkins, the prosthetist who designed Brown’s own leg. Benefactors covered the cost. The story made the New York Times, Cosmopolitan, and several papers in the United Kingdom in addition to the regional media.

As busy as Brown is these days, she hasn’t put her film and video experience aside for good. “Doug and I have done films for animal welfare organizations and now we are gearing up to create a film about the work we are doing here,” says Brown. “Farm animals are deserving of our compassion. Animals live for their own purpose; they are not here for our use.”

—ANDREA BARRIST STERN
No, I got into Columbia College—not University
For students tired of having to explain the difference. [2,257 MEMBERS]

I go to Columbia and can still form a coherent sentence
Where students annoyed at having to explain the difference between “you” and “you’ve” can vent their frustration. [808 MEMBERS]

I go to Columbia College but I’m not a pretentious art-school hipster
For those who don’t find it necessary to join the hipocracy of a popular counter-culture movement we call ‘Hipsterism!’ just so we can walk around Wicker Park with a chip on our shoulders, Elvis Costello glasses and unwashed hair.” [74 MEMBERS]

Frustrated straight girls of Columbia College Chicago
“Where be all the straight boys? Don’t get us wrong, we love our homosexual brothers and sisters. The nights are just getting lonely for us heterosexual gals.” [97 MEMBERS]

Not pop, not Coke, Just sodal
For those of us who cringe when people refer to soda as pop. [29 MEMBERS]

I used to be a high school cheerleader but I can’t cheer because Columbia has no sports
A group for former cheerleaders who miss cheering—Columbia isn’t known for its athletics. [25 MEMBERS]

I witnessed the Columbia fire!
For those who witnessed the blaze at the old George Diamond Steakhouse last year, which cancelled classes and smoked up Michigan, Wabash, and State Street. [50 MEMBERS]

— ALISON SHIPLEY (B.A. ’08)

Ron Falzone’s Favorite American Comedies
About the Artistic Process
Fifty the poor artist: unloved, antisocial, and as crazy as a mad dog in the noonday sun. At least that’s how Hollywood likes to view us. Occasionally, though, the clichés get turned on their ear with sidesplitting results.

1. Unfaithfully Yours (1948): A conductor with a jealous streak, convinced of his wife’s infidelity, makes three separate plans to rectify the situation, each scored to a piece he the situation, each scored to a piece he


3. Bullets Over Broadway (1994): Woody Allen was once funny. A playwright finds that his fear of mediocrity isn’t just a fashionable neurosis—he really is mediocre. Desperate to make his name play work, he surreptitiously enlists creative support from a mob hit man.

4. The Fountainhead (1949): Technically not a comedy, but: A megalomaniac who figures the best way to control people is to become an architecture critic? Gary Cooper as an intellectual? Trust me, this one is funny.

5. Unfaithfully Yours (1948): A conductor with a jealous streak, convinced of his wife’s infidelity, makes three separate plans to rectify the situation, each scored to a piece he

“It wasn’t just a great opportunity, it felt like the only opportunity.”

DAN SINKER

In 1994, a 19-year-old Dan Sinker banded together with a few others and founded Punk Planet, an alternative music, literary, and culture magazine. The magazine made a national impact, helping to establish a cultural voice for Chicago. But last year, financial pressures forced the dissolution of Punk Planet, and Sinker found himself at Stanford University, on a Knight Fellowship of Journalism. “As things got worse and worse financially at the magazine, suddenly the possibility of the fellowship emerged,” says Sinker. “It wasn’t just a great opportunity, it felt like the only opportunity.”

Supported by the fellowship, Sinker spent the year studying concepts for publishing on mobile phones. His fellow fellows represented Salt Lake City to Zimbabwe, but most worked in traditional media outlets. “At the start I was a bit of an exotic flower,” he says. “It ended up that the things we shared—a belief in the power of journalism and of storytelling, a strong sense of shared values and outrage—and a critical eye—far outweighed the things we didn’t.”

His return to Chicago is also a return to his role as publisher of Independent’s Day Media, with efforts shifted toward the still-kicking Punk Planet book line. However, his focus is on his new faculty position at Columbia College, charged with bringing a digital media and entrepreneurial journalism perspective to the department. “A more abstract thing I’ve taken from the year is once again having reinforced that I’m still learning too,” he says. “Doing Punk Planet for 13 years, you get very used to the small world of punk rock and underground culture. The fellowship reminded me just how huge the world actually is. And I loved it.”

— JESSICA RUD (B.A. ’01)
In its 118-year history, Columbia College Chicago has never built an academic building.

It’s astonishing, really. From the Columbia School of Oratory’s first digs in 1890 at 24 East Adams Street to its current campus comprising 17 academic buildings and five residence halls, the college has been masterful in its reuse and recycling of existing structures. It was a partner with other universities, in the construction of a “superdorm” at the corner of State Street and Harrison. But it has never constructed a building of its own. That will change in January 2009, when construction crews break ground at the corner of 16th and State streets, the site of Columbia’s new Media Production Center. An innovative 35,000-square-foot facility comprising two soundstages, a motion-capture studio, an animation lab, four classrooms, and spaces for production design, costumes, and equipment storage, it will be a building designed from the ground up to accommodate a new way of teaching filmmaking and media production.

And it all started with an elevator ride.

It was late September 2001, and Bruce Sheridan was in an elevator. Sheridan had just moved halfway around the world from his native New Zealand to chair the film and video department at Columbia College Chicago, lured to the American Midwest by the potential he saw in Columbia to create a new paradigm, a new way of teaching filmmaking. “Warrick Carter [Columbia’s president] walked into the elevator,” recalls Sheridan. “The doors closed and Warrick said, ‘We’ve got to build a studio.’” Sheridan agreed. But he also knew that to do it right would require a groundbreaking approach. “Film schools were all just created out of what already existed,” he said. “I wanted to start a new conversation. Rather than keep on doing what we already did, why shouldn’t we take that moment and say if we were starting from zero—magic wand time—what would a film school look like? And that’s how it started—with a conversation in an elevator.”

“How can you have the biggest film school in the world and all the shooting’s done in Grant Park in the snow?”
—Bruce Sheridan, chair, Department of Film and Video

The need for production space was glaring. “Almost all of our advanced filming was taking place offsite, it was all location shooting,” says Sheridan. “How can you have the biggest film school in the world and all the shooting’s done in Grant Park in the snow?” Sheridan and Carter weren’t the first ones to recognize the lack of a proper soundstage as a liability for the school. “When Chap Freeman and I were cochairs of the film department, in the ’90s, we were on a quest to find a soundstage where we could actually teach directing—we didn’t even have that,” says Doreen Bartoni, now dean of the School of Media Arts. “It was one of the things that Dr. Carter noticed as a major absence when he came to Columbia.”
“I arrived at Columbia in 2000,” says Carter, “and as I got a better sense of who we were and what we were trying to do as a college, it became obvious that while we might have been the largest film program in the country, we didn’t have all that we needed to be the best. We had the best faculty; we had really well-prepared, innovative, creative students; we had the diversity that is so important to us; and we had course offerings that covered the whole scope of what is required in the industry. We had all of that. But what we didn’t have was a proper group of soundstages.” Carter recalls the elevator conversation as vividly as Sheridan does. “From that point on,” he says, “we’ve been on a mission.”

By spring 2010, that mission will be accomplished. Construction begins this winter on the $21 million building, designed by Studio Gang Architects. It is a groundbreaking moment for Columbia on several levels. It is the college’s first new-construction academic building, and the first educational facility of its kind anywhere. It is designed by a young architect whom Metropolis magazine has called “bold and ingenious” and Stanley Tigerman has dubbed “as good an architect as they get.” It is a manifestation of a new, collaborative model of arts and media education that the college has been developing for years. And it is supported by a successful fundraising campaign, led by several $1-million-plus gifts from members of the college’s board of trustees. It is made possible, says Sheridan, by a fortuitous convergence of “the right people in the right place at the right time.”

Bartoni agrees. She is dean of the School of Media Arts, which comprises the three primary departments—film and video, interactive arts and media, and television—the building is designed to serve. She is quick to point out, however, that many more departments, including journalism, audio arts and acoustics, dance, and art and design, will benefit from the facility as well. “I’ve always thought that within the School of Media Arts, one of our guiding principles is the collaborative nature of our disciplines,” she says. “This process has been a model example of collaboration and willingness to always put our students first, to always think, ‘What is best for our students?’”

“Really, when you talk about convergence, you have to credit Allen Turner.”

—DOREEN BARTONI, dean, School of Media Arts

The clincher to realizing the project, says Bartoni, was getting total support from the board of trustees. “Really, when you talk about convergence, you have to credit Allen Turner.” Turner, a partner in the Pritzker Organization, became chairman of Columbia’s board of trustees in 2005. As chairman of the board of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, he oversaw the construction of the museum’s new building in the 1990s, and he is founding trustee of the Pritzker Architecture Prize. It was Turner, Bartoni believes, who provided the catalyst to bring the project to fruition. “He saw the larger potential in this,” she says. “He had the vision to do an architectural selection contest. He saw this as an amazing opportunity to not only fulfill an educational need, but to highlight and raise the profile of the school.”

It was through that process that the college selected Studio Gang Architects, a relatively young Chicago firm headed by Jeanne Gang and Mark Schendel. “We had a really fun meeting at Jeanne’s office,” says Berg. “You could just tell that they were very collaborative and that our cultures really meshed.” Gang came on board with the project just as her practice with Studio Gang was rocketing her to “starchitect” status. Studio Gang has received accolades for a number of innovative projects, including the Bengt Sjostrom Starlight Theatre in Rockford, Illinois; the SOS Children’s Village Environmental Center in Calumet, Illinois; and the Ford Calumet Environmental Center in Calumet, Illinois; and the SOS Children’s Village.

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Cinematic Architecture

Architect Jeanne Gang asked Doreen Bartoni, dean of the School of Media Arts, for a list of her five favorite films, watched for a list of her five favorite films, watched

—Doreen Bartoni, dean, School of Media Arts

Alica Berg, formerly commissioner of the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, joined the Columbia team in 2004 as vice president of Campus Environment. “We were working on the Campus Master Plan [a long-term vision for the physical campus] when Allen became chair,” says Berg. “He really got it. He understood how to build consensus on the board.” She also credits Turner for bringing to the table people like Martha Thom, executive director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, who helped construct a list of 30 architectural firms that would be invited to submit qualifications. Howard Sulkin, fresh from a similar building project as president of the Spertus Institute for Jewish Studies, and Bob Wislow, chairman of the international commercial real estate firm U.S. Equities and a member of Columbia’s board of trustees, were also instrumental in establishing a selection process that allowed the committee to really get to know the architects, says Berg.

“Really, when you talk about convergence, you have to credit Allen Turner.”

—DOREEN BARTONI, dean, School of Media Arts

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—JEANNE GANG, architect

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Gang’s concept for the building grew out of a dialogue with Bartoni, Carter, Berg, and others about the educational needs the building must serve. She and her team studied the processes of film and media production, trying to gain a deep understanding of the requirements their design would need to fulfill. “What has become the most interesting thing for us,” says Gang, “is realizing how much there is in common between making films and making architecture. When we think about space, we think about it in very similar ways: What do you see when you come around this corner? What is in the foreground and the background? Setting up a long shot, a frame within a frame, you’re constructing space too, but film has a different language for it.” To prepare for the project, Gang asked Bartoni for a list of her favorite films and watched them, as well as other classic films, with an eye toward realizing how much there is in common between making films and making buildings. When we think about space, we think about it in very similar ways: What do you see when you come around this corner? What is in the foreground and the background? Setting up a long shot, a frame within a frame, you’re constructing space too, but film has a different language for it.”

Gang particularly enjoys working on technically demanding projects, and has a reputation as a problem solver. So it’s no surprise that the Media Production Center breaks new ground not only in the way it serves its precise educational function, but in the way it’s built. Environmental sensitivity and sustainability were important to the college, which will apply for LEED certification for the project. They were important to the City of Chicago as well, which mandated, among other things, that the building have a partial “green roof,” or rooftop planted with vegetation to reduce energy consumption and the urban heat island effect. “We were able to do the green roof and satisfy our acoustical requirement simultaneously,” says Gang, explaining how her team developed ways the rooftop plantings could do double duty as sound buffers. “We were able to substitute some of the cost of an acoustical requirement to bring it into cost with the green roof.” Gang also applied a green solution to air handling. “We’re here to help them create work that never existed before.”

“Other institutions have built buildings, of course, although I don’t think anyone has a building as dynomite as this one.”

—WARRICK L. CARTER, president, Columbia College Chicago

“It’s a little like Wagner’s idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk, the total artwork,” says Annette Barber, chair of the Department of Interactive Arts and Media. “His operas were not just about the music, but about all the elements of the production: the set design, the costume, the libretto. This building acknowledges that all these different parts are required to make a contribution to the central effort of creating some sort of media that communicates and inspires. Our students, across departments, will get to know one another, and learn from each other. I’m hoping this will help us break down some barriers. Convergence is upon us. As a college, we have to consider that. Everything we do is fundamentally about education.”

Amid all the excitement about the building itself, Carter likes to circle back to its real significance for the college. “Other institutions have built buildings, of course,” he says, “although I don’t think anyone has a building as dynomite as this one. It’s going to be beautiful. But remember, it’s also going to be a very functional building, and that’s the most important thing. Jeanne built it from the inside out, understanding the function, our educational needs, the use of space, getting all that clear before deciding what it should look like.” That functionality will not only serve the current needs of multiple departments engaged in teaching media production. Faculty and administrators also believe it will significantly affect how media production is taught. “What we do now will influence how film is taught for the next century,” says Sheridan. “With this facility, the day students walk in as freshmen, they will be exposed to the culture of filmmaking, and by the time they’re seniors, they will have worked at the shoulders of other people who preceded them—not like a trade-school apprenticeship, but through a mix of empirical knowledge, mentoring, and hands-on learning. We’re not here to teach people how to regurgitate ideas and push buttons on a keyboard. We’re here to help them create work that never existed before.”

“We’re not here to teach people how to regurgitate ideas and push buttons on a keyboard. We’re here to help them create work that never existed before.”

—BRUCE SHERIDAN
Mountaintop removal is an issue that has only recently been placed in front of the public,” say Kroeck, who earned a B.A. in theater and journalism in 2007 and handles media relations and photography for the group. Mostly occurring in West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, mountaintop removal is favored by coal-mining companies as an economically efficient way to completely recover coal seams.

“The most compelling reason for mountaintop mining is that’s where the coal is,” says Luke Popovich, vice president of external communications for the Washington, D.C.-based National Mining Association. “Because coal supplies are being stretched and there is a record demand, mountaintop mining is an efficient way to keep costs down and supplies up.” He adds that the method, which accounts for about 14 percent of all coal mining in the United States, allows mining companies to remove 95 percent of the coal seam, versus 65 percent with traditional approaches. “That is a good return for all the disturbance you are causing to nature,” he says.

Opponents beg to differ. They say the procedure, in which as much as 1,000 feet of mountaintop is blasted away, has more serious consequences than changing topography: Native hardwood forests are destroyed, communities of people are driven from their homes due to blasting and flooding, and waterways are polluted. About 470 Appalachian mountaintops have been destroyed since federal laws were eased to allow the practice about six years ago.

Unlike climate change, mountaintop removal is not a widely known environmental issue. But it is gaining awareness, thanks to the efforts of groups such as Topless America. “These students are completely committed to this issue and have really learned a lot about it,” says Mary Anne Hitt, executive director of Appalachian Voices, headquartered in Boone, North Carolina. “Efforts such as Topless America are what we are trying to encourage and inspire. No matter where these students are located geographically, they can educate local people and officials.”

“They think we’re trying to sell them some sort of strip-club,” says Mary Kroeck, describing people’s initial reaction when she tells them about Topless America. But Topless America is about strip mining, not striptease. It’s a group of ten Columbia College Chicago students and alumni who are working to stop the environmentally destructive practice of mountaintop removal.

Topless America began with a casual meeting of friends in the fall of 2006. “We were sitting around an apartment in the South Loop when a friend and neighbor of ours came in with her laptop,” recalls recent film graduate Parson Brown (B.A. ’08), who grew up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. “She was awestruck because she had come across ilovemountains.org’s website, which documents mountaintop removal. We watched a video from the site and were completely shocked.”
The group repeated the trip to Washington in May 2008, when they interviewed Senator Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) to discuss the Clean Water Protection Act. Back in Chicago in June, several of the crew met with Congressman Daniel Davis (D-Ill.) to confer with him about his support, as one of 146 cosponsors, of the Clean Water Protection Act (H.R. 2169). Introduced in May 2007 and sponsored by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ), the act, which proponents hope will be heard this year, amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act by extending federal protection to ban the dumping of coal waste into bodies of water as a result of mountaintop removal.

Over the next year, the Topless America crew, which has funded the entire project themselves, traveled to Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, recording hundreds of hours of interviews and footage of ravaged areas. “The first time we took the crew to a mountaintop-removal site, all of us were moved to tears,” remembers Nicholas Brown, who serves as creative consultant to the group. “To see the earth raped and destroyed by mountaintop removal produces a very powerful emotion.”

When the film is completed, the group plans to screen it at Columbia College and submit it to the festival circuit, Kroeck says. “We hope to have the first cut of the film by early 2009,” she says. In October, Topless America linked up with Columbia’s “Critical Encounters: Human|Nature” program, participating in a panel in conjunction with an on-campus screening of Michael C. O’Connell’s documentary, Mountain Top Removal.

“What we would love to see happen is for mountaintop removal to stop completely,” Kroeck says. “I doubt one piece of work such as our film will do that. But hopefully, our film and actions will open enough eyes to get people to lobby their congressmen to support the Clean Water Act. That is the first step.”

“The goal of this is to spread awareness of mountaintop removal, to shed light on this rising movement to stop it, and to demonstrate that anyone can be an activist,” Parsons Brown says. “For me, the most exciting part of this is seeing people come together. Now I can say that I have been able to take part in an actual movement in America.”

Members of Topless America not quoted in this article include film graduates Christina Bright (B.A. ’08), producer; senior fashion design major Lindsay Safian, researcher; former music student Stephanie Tark, producer and music coordinator; senior film student Blake Haaschke; and dance graduate Amy Ormrod (B.A. ’10). Learn more at toplessamerica.org or myspace.com/chimountains.

Jim Slabiak (B.A. ’04) is a professor in Columbia’s journalism department and faculty advisor of the award-winning student newspaper the Columbia Chronicle. He is a regular contributor to Shore Magazine, Midwest Construction News, CSS, the Chicago Journal, and other publications.
**Lectures**

**Conversations in the Arts: The Founders Lectures**

The Founders Lectures Film Row Cinema. 1104 S. Wabash Ave., 8th floor

312.369.6600 or colum.edu/conversations

The 2008–09 program series focuses on themes central to Columbia's core mission and values, reflected in the works of speakers including Anne Deavere Smith (January 27) and Richard Florida (April 30).

**Theater**

**The Pirates of Penzance, or The Slave of Duty**, by Gilbert and Sullivan

February 18 – March 1

Geta Theater

72 E. 11th St.

Tickets $10 – $14 at 312.369.6126

Frederic’s hard-of-hearing nurse apprentices him to a band of pirates instead of the pilot his father had envisioned. Despite their warm hearts, Frederic’s life is not what he had expected. Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta is witty and the tunes are eminently hummable.

**Theodore Ward Prizewinning Play**

March 24

New Studio Theater

72 E. 11th St.

Tickets $10 – $14 at 312.369.6126

Hürup’s transparent city vie for the Theodore Ward Prize for African American Plays, a prestigious first prize for many plays that have gone on to professional productions in Chicago and nationwide.

**Galeries**

**Michael Wolf: The Transparent City**

November 14 – January 31

Museum of Contemporary Photography

500 S. Michigan Ave.

312.663.5554 or mcp.org

Internationally renowned photographer Michael Wolf brings his perspective on changing urban environments to a city known for its architecture, focusing on issues of voyeurism and the contemporary urban landscape in flux.

**Criteria**

January 15 – February 28

Av付り and Bernard Leviton A+D Gallery

629 S. Wabash Ave.

312.369.8687 or colum.edu/adgallery

“The Transparent City” is a multimedia exploration of the ethics and politics that embody contemporary notions of sustainability, curated by Emilia Goody and Jimena Acosta.

**Loaded: Hunting Culture in America**

March 18 – April 25

Glass Curtain Gallery

1504 S. Wabash Ave.

312.369.6643 or colum.edu/cspaces

This group exhibition takes a deliberately ambivalent view toward the morality of hunting and hunting as the subject as a social, cultural, regional, and artistic phenomenon, ideally situated to question their own preconceptions regarding hunting.

**Dance**

**All dance performances are at The Dance Center**, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., at 8:00 p.m.

Tickets $20 – $28 at 312.369.6600 or colum.edu/tickets. Info at colum.edu/dance_center

**Japan Dance Now**

February 5 – 7

Japan Society, 33 W. 42nd St.

Tickets $20 – $28 at 312.369.6600 or colum.edu/tickets

1104 S. Wabash Ave., at 8:00 p.m.

Tickets $20 – $28 at 312.369.6600 or colum.edu/tickets

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Tickets $20 – $28 at 312.369.6600 or colum.edu/tickets

**Story Week Festival of Writers**

March 15 – 20

Full schedule at colum.edu/storyweek

This annual festival offers readings, conversations, panels, performances, and book signings featuring nationally and internationally renowned literary voices.

**David Rousseve / REALITY**

Chicago Premiere

March 23 – 30

Known for its highly original and expressivist dance theater, David Rousseve’s troupe performs its newest evening-length work, Saudade, an ode to the idea of “bittersweet.”

This work weaves dance forms with stories of disenfranchised southern African Americans.
Cultural critic Debra Dickerson, whom artist Rashid Johnson (B.A. ’00) frequently references, was among the first to articulate a new phase of African American identity in her 1995 book, *The End of Blackness*. Dickerson posits that “blackness is collapsing under the weight of its contradictions, just as overt racism did.” She addresses a lot of sticky questions about race and identity, provoking discussions that the art world has been having for years and the 2008 presidential campaign brought to the living rooms of mainstream America. Are we living in a “post-black” America?

“I think there are two ways you have to try and think about that framing,” says Johnson, 31, whose New York debut was in the 2001 exhibition “Freestyle” at the Studio Museum of Harlem, where curator Thelma Golden is often credited with having coined the term “post black.” “One is that I am from a generation that grew up after the civil rights movement, so do I have a different perspective? Absolutely. Whether that perspective can be canned in a term like ‘post black,’ I’m not positive. Am I disappointed when it’s used? Not necessarily.”

Johnson, a native of Evanston, earned a B.A. in photography from Columbia and an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and launched his career here, showing in Chicago galleries such as Schneider, G.R. N’Namdi, Gallery 312, and Law Office. He now lives in New York and exhibits around the world, with solo shows this year at moniquemeloche and Richard Gray in Chicago, Nicole Klagsbrun in New York, Kunstmuseum Magdeburg in Germany, and annarumma 404 in Italy.

Johnson works in a variety of media, often incorporating images and materials that are symbolically loaded. “My mom always had this big jar of black-eyed peas sitting on the sink,” he says. “It’s astonishing how many black-eyed peas I ate as a child.” As an adult, he scattered those peas on canvas and spray-painted over them, using them as stencils to create the star-scarves in his recent show at moniquemeloche, “The New Escapist Promised Land Garden and Recreation Center.” And while he acknowledges the cultural symbolism of those particular beans, he’s more interested these days in the performative aspect of the work. Walking around and scattering the beans recalls the painting techniques of Jackson Pollock, as well as “uprocking,” the act of walking in a circle to define one’s space in break dancing.

“There’s a generation of black artists before me who made work specifically about the black experience,” says Johnson. “But I think for my generation, having grown up in the age of hip-hop and Black Entertainment Television, there’s less of a need to define the black experience so aggressively to a white audience. I think it gives us a different type of opportunity to have a more complex conversation around race and identity. It’s not a weapon for me, it’s more of an interest.” And what does he think of having this artistic conversation in the context of his country electing its first African American president? “I was very proud when Barack got the nomination,” says Johnson. “But I wasn’t proud for black people—I was kind of proud for white people.”

—Ann Wiens

*RASHID JOHNSON*

Self-portrait as the black Jimmy Connors in the finals of the New Negro Escapist Social and Athletic Club Summer Tennis Tournament 2008. Lambda print, edition of 5 + 2 AP, 60” x 48”. Courtesy of the artist and moniquemeloche, Chicago
Americans’ penchant for casual wanderlust has long persisted as a kind of psychic birthright. Recent circumstances—national security dictates and the rising cost of gasoline among them—have encroached on this assumption. For some, however, the act of travel and moving from place to place has long been a much more complex experience, enacted for any number of reasons, and pleasure may be the least of them.

The recent exhibition “Are We There Yet?,” examined, through a range of lens-based imagery, the ways in which a shifting sense of place is visualized through various visual and conceptual strategies. The exhibition was on view March 28 through May 3, 2008, at GASP/Gallery Artists Studio Projects in Brookline, Massachusetts, and July 20 through September 28, 2008, at the Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago. Of the nine artists whose work is included in the exhibition, six are alumni or faculty of Columbia College Chicago’s photography department.

Taken together, the various works in “Are We There Yet?” challenge any easy sense of just where “there” is in the physical, geographical, political, and psychic landscape.

Christine DiThomas’s (M.F.A. ’01) photographs, made in passing from the windows of trains during numerous rail trips, describe an experience that will appear familiar to many, even as the motivations for those trips are as different as the persons engaged in them. Nonetheless, the scenes themselves exude a quality of déjà vu that makes us feel as though these experiences are ours as well, and that we remember seeing them before ... somewhere.

Text by Dawoud Bey, curator
Photography by Howard Henry Chen, Alan Cohen, Christine DiThomas, Aaron Gent, Rula Halawani, Surendra Lawoti, Curtis Mann, Oscar Palacios, and Adriana Rios
Curtis Mann (M.F.A. ’07) employs a radical material means to deconstruct the sense of place in his pictures. Beginning with appropriated photographs, he then prints and chemically removes a good deal of the visual information in them—along with the attendant specific narrative of place—leaving just enough information on which to then create his own fantastical landscapes of the imagination.

Howard Henry Chen

In the photographs of Howard Henry Chen (M.F.A. ’06), we confront the artist’s own dual sense of home, his attempts to visualize the back-and-forth journeying, and his attempt at cultural and personal retrieval.
For Aron Gent (B.F.A. ’07), the rather bucolic sense evoked by his photographs of his family gathered at their summer lake home is offset by the presence of his aunt, who has Down syndrome. Deftly staging these pictures, in which he often appears, Gent creates photographs at once rich in behavioral nuance and the evocation of leisure place.

The transient experience of recent immigration is the subject of Surendra Lawoti’s (B.A. ’99) photographs. Nepalese himself, he has been photographing among this particular immigrant community. The images are rich in their visual evocation of impermanence, and contain signifiers for an urgent moving from place to place, without ever setting down deep roots.

Surendra Lawoti

Fish Tank, 2004. C-Print, 24” x 20”. Courtesy of the artist
Columbia faculty member Alan Cohen’s photographs depict the sovereign borders of nations, states, and institutions throughout the world. Using a highly formalized and consistent visual strategy to achieve his ends, he reduces these sites to cryptic descriptions that are as visually restrained as they are loaded with social history and tension.

Alan Cohen
04-07, from the series “Lines of Authority [Panama Canal Zone],” 2001.
Silver gelatin print, 16” x 16”.

In Oscar Palacio’s photographs we are made to confront the distances between the mythology of historical sites and the actual, underwhelming experience that often occurs when one visits them.

Oscar Palacio
Plymouth Rock, MA, 2007. Archival inkjet print, 42” x 50”.
Courtesy of the artist and Howard Yezerski Gallery

In Rula Halawani’s pictures, we see not the faces of the Israeli soldiers and Palestinians whose encounters at the Qalandia checkpoint she photographs, but the isolated gestures of an unequal exchange of power and need.

Rula Halawani
Digital inkjet print, 16” x 24”.
Courtesy of the artist.

The subjects of Adriana Rios’s video There Is No Time occupy socially and politically charged spaces that suggest a host of lingering tensions pulling at the edges of daily interactions.

Adriana Rios
There Is No Time, 2005-07. Video, size variable, 12 minutes.

There Is No Time
“When the walkway ended, we stopped into a convenience store and said, ‘Hey, which way to Indiana?’”

SHRED AMERICA

Childhood buddies Michael Kosciesza and Arthur Swidzinski hatched a plan last summer. The two Columbia College Chicago film students would skateboard from Chicago’s Millennium Park to Times Square in New York City. They’d shoot a documentary of the adventure. That’s about where the planning ended.

“We walked out of Millennium Park and started skating down the lakefront,” Swidzinski, 21, says. “When the walkway ended, we stopped into a convenience store and said, ‘Hey, which way to Indiana?’”

The Niles, Illinois, natives enlisted a couple of friends—James Laguen and Columbia student Tony Michael—to tail them on bikes throughout the nearly 1,000-mile trek. The bikers did some of the filming and towed the gear. On June 2, the foursome put wheels to ground; 35 days later, they arrived in Times Square. They braved packed highways and navigated mountain ranges. They fueled themselves on fast food and ramen noodles. They slept in motels and at the homes of strangers. “We went up to random people and said, ‘Hey, can we stay in your backyard?’” Swidzinski says. “As dangerous as that sounds, most Americans opened their hearts. What we’re hoping to show with this documentary is the true nature of America.”

Traversing the Allegheny Mountains proved the most physically challenging segment of the trek. But the most harrowing moment came on an Indiana highway, when a truck tire exploded, not 100 feet away. “I didn’t know how serious it was,” Swidzinski says. “Apparently a truck tire can take off and explode, not 100 feet away. “I was worried mom called often, but Swidzinski remains philosophical. “It’s important to go out there and live your life. It’s important not to live inside your head off.”

As dangerous as that sounds, most Americans opened their hearts. What we’re hoping to show with this documentary is the true nature of America.

The true nature of America.
new books by Columbia alumni and faculty

send publication notices to demo@colum.edu

The Screwed-Up Life of Charlie the Second
By Drew Ferguson
[Kensington Books, 2008. 258 pages. $15.00 paperback]
Reviewed by Kevin Riondar

If a book can make you squirm, it’s likely that you’ve been pinnen. This coming-of-age first novel takes the form of a journal written to practice for a college admission essay. However, self-described “walking hard-on!” Charles Stewart II can’t control himself and spews his teenage anxiety and corrosive contempt into every line and an impressive array of unsuspecting targets: the old, the young, the dumb, the clever, successes and failures, all skewered in hyperbolized hyperbole. The three months chronicled encompass the start of his senior year in a Crystal Lake high school, his father’s state attorney election campaign, his parents’ impending breakup, and above all the arrival of a heart-throbbing soul mate. The urbane Rob Hunt is Charlie’s ideal, although not without his own baggage, including a dying mother whose mysterious situation is about the only thing in the book not written in hormone. Ferguson’s grasp of teen speech is convincing and hence amusing; there are at least two dozen euphemisms for you know what (genital organs, anyone?), and so much inverted purple prose that it leaves you wishing for just one entendre that’s single. There is a word for this type of material (hint: rhymes with “com”), but of course the book has more to offer.

Charlie goes to such lengths to paint himself a nerd that it cools the steam off what might otherwise be overly explicit. At least some of the action takes place on the soccer field, and the narration is brisk, what happens above the belt mostly concerns Charlie’s resentment at being in his father’s shadow, and his panasonic, headstrong, angry kid, and we know it. The two come together in a story line that’s sincere and searching, both in the music that so deeply moves and motivates her, and in the family that feels so incomplete.

The “Emily Black, punk rocker” story is written with such attention to detail that it feels decidedly autobiographical—I may have been reading this book in my living room on the “L”, but I could see the small-town Wisconsin backyards and basements, smell the sour beer and pre-smoking ban haze of the Fireside Bowl, and hear the opening chords of Shirley Laquatra’s first gig at the Metro as clearly as if I were there. The “Emily Black, motherless daughter” story feels as though it’s written from a greater distance, with less nuance, but plenty of twists and turns and the melodramatic pacing of a made-for-TV movie—but it’s a compelling, can’t-look-away (or put-down-bookdown) made-for-TV movie.

Just as she’s teetering on the brink of punk-rock stardom, Emily ditches her band to cross-country the country on a quest to find the mother she’s never known, Louisa, who “left to follow the music” and took with her a secret that Emily’s father has kept close for years. It’s a genuinely suspenseful story, which the Chinese government has made a huge investment in keeping secret what life is like for the average Chinese person: “The cold dishes are presented … It is made of rare veal on jellyfish, fish on bone-white, paper-thin china, it is so striking that the dish could go directly to an art gallery.”

The Banquet Bug by GeLing Yan is a story that challenges the sham of the Chinese media. The main character, Dan Dong, loses his job at a factory and unexpectedly happens upon a sumptuous banquet in a hotel where he has gone to look for work. Being somewhat well dressed and good-looking, not hunched over in an apologetic bow like most people of the working class, Dong is mistaken for a journalist by one of the hotel employees, who ushers him into the banquet hall. At the end of the banquet Dan is given an envelope with a sizable amount of cash, “for his trouble.” Dan decides to have a press pass forged and uses it to get into banquets all over the city. Dan’s work, nerve-wracking enabling him to eat like a king, and he is paid enough money to buy his own apartment. He begins to have pangs of conscience, though, when he is approached by desperate people who have been terribly wronged by greedy employers and want him to tell their stories. He can’t bring himself to tell them that he isn’t what he appears to be—not only because he doesn’t know how to help them, but also because he doesn’t want to jeopardize his newfound lifestyle. Dan encounters a prostitute whose sister has been kidnapped, construction workers who have not been paid and have nowhere to live, and a nationally recognized Chinese artist whose boozed-added grandson/parasite behavior makes Dan an indespensible member of his inner circle. All of them want their stories told, and Dan digs himself in deeper, leading them to think that he can help them.

The Banquet Bug is a satire of the complexities of the Chinese psyche. Dan is both a victim and a rascal, but he is also the book’s protagonist. He knows that he has come by his livelihood through deception, but the alternative is grim. The Chinese media are praised for reporting the “news,” but their story is a lie that everyone agrees to believe. There is no journalism per se, only propaganda. The book suggests that if you want to live a good life in China, or even just stay out of prison, you must internalize the propaganda as truth.

GeLing Yan was born in Shanghai and earned an M.F.A. in fiction writing from Columbia College Chicago in 1999. She is the author of a dozen novels and short-story collections, all originally written in Chinese. The Banquet Bug is her first novel written in English. She currently lives in Berkeley, California, and Taipei, Taiwan.

I Wanna Be Your Joey Ramone
By Stephanie Kuehnert
[MTV/Pocket Books, 2008. 352 pages. $13.00 paperback]
Reviewed by Ann Winsa

Catcher in the Rye. Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. The Adventures of Muckleby Finn. Jane Eyre—we love coming-of-age novels. I Wanna Be Your Joey Ramone, the first book by Stephanie Kuehnert, is a coming-of-age novel for the girls-rock-'n'-roll crowd.

The term “banquet bug” refers to someone who sneaks into the lavish banquets the Chinese government holds for journalists to entice them to write only positive stories about life in China. It is obvious to the extreme expense and ostentation of these banquets that the Chinese government has made a huge investment in keeping secret what life is like for the average Chinese person: “The cold dishes are presented … It is made of rare veal on jellyfish, fish on bone-white, paper-thin china, it is so striking that the dish could go directly to an art gallery.”

The Banquet Bug by GeLing Yan is a story that challenges the sham of the Chinese media. The main character, Dan Dong, loses his job at a factory and unexpectedly happens upon a sumptuous banquet in a hotel where he has gone to look for work. Being somewhat well dressed and good-looking, not hunched over in an apologetic bow like most people of the working class, Dong is mistaken for a journalist by one of the hotel employees, who ushers him into the banquet hall. At the end of the banquet Dan is given an envelope with a sizable amount of cash, “for his trouble.” Dan decides to have a press pass forged and uses it to get into banquets all over the city. Dan’s work, nerve-wracking enabling him to eat like a king, and he is paid enough money to buy his own apartment. He begins to have pangs of conscience, though, when he is approached by desperate people who have been terribly wronged by greedy employers and want him to tell their stories. He can’t bring himself to tell them that he isn’t what he appears to be—not only because he doesn’t know how to help them, but also because he doesn’t want to jeopardize his newfound lifestyle. Dan encounters a prostitute whose sister has been kidnapped, construction workers who have not been paid and have nowhere to live, and a nationally recognized Chinese artist whose boozed-
DEAR ALUMNI,

We did it! It is my great pleasure to let you know that we surpassed our goal for alumni giving in fiscal year 2008, raising more than $116,000 to support scholarships and programs. This is a milestone—it’s significantly higher than past alumni giving, and the first time alumni giving has broken the $100,000 mark.

Thank you to everyone who supported the college over the past year, as your contributions, both large and small, make a huge difference in the lives of students and in the quality of programs at Columbia College Chicago. As we look forward to the future of our students and the school, we do so in confidence that we are on the right track and that our alumni support our efforts.

Here are some ways the Columbia Alumni Association and Network (CAAN) and the Office of Alumni Relations are supporting our alumni:

- We hosted more than 80 events for more than 2,000 alumni across the country last year, including networking meetings, workshops, social outings, and our marquee celebrations for Manifest, Reunion, the L.A. Oscar®Party, and the Chicago impact Awards.
- We continued to improve Columbia’s online alumni community, theLoop, which features chapter websites, individual blogs, and customizable communications at colum.edu/alumni.
- This fall we will pilot an alumni job board and online career resource center where alumni can post and view jobs for free and search a million more communications at colum.edu/alumni.
- Our growing team of alumni volunteers from all over the country has invested their time and talents with the college and alumni chapters.
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- Our growing team of alumni volunteers from all over the country has invested their time and talents with the college and alumni chapters.
- To get involved in our growing alumni network, visit colum.edu/alumni and register at theLoop to keep yourself on the front lines of the new Columbia alumni movement.

Thanks for your support,

Bill Cellini Jr.

President, Columbia Alumni Association and Network
Member, Columbia College Chicago Board of Trustees

Contact your local CAAN chapter leader:

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Bill Cellini Jr. (B.A. ’94)
cellalum@warblin.net

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Los Angeles Chapter President
P.A. Cadichon

“It’s all about relationships, this entire film industry,” says P.A. Cadichon (B.A. ’01), Los Angeles chapter president of the Columbia Alumni Association and Network (CAAN). “It’s not just about knowing who people are—it’s about getting to know people, and that’s how you build your career.” Like other creative fields, the film industry is a web of relationships created through networking and know-how. “L.A. is the Mecca of the industry,” Cadichon says, “and there are more people trying to break into this industry than are actually in it. What I do is give them access to each other to make stuff happen.” One way he does this is through Indie Film Social, a monthly networking event he hosts at a Hollywood sports bar. Sometimes relationships are forged: At the last meeting, Cadichon says, a director and a director of photography began talking and decided to work together on a future project.

This year Cadichon also teamed up with Sarah Schroeder (B.A. ’00), Columbia’s West Coast director of alumni relations, on a project called CAAN Connect, which allowed actors, screenwriters, and other alumni involved with film to pitch their work to producers and creative executives. In L.A.’s film industry, this isn’t the usual way to make connections; a referral is generally necessary to meet executives. “As long as people are getting connected and finding their way into the industry, we’re successful,” he says.

For more information on CAAN: L.A. visit colum.edu/alumni and click on “CAAN/Alumni Chapters.”

—BRETT STEVEN WHITE
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT THERE? WE WANT TO KNOW!
To submit your news, log in to the alumni community at college.edu/alumni.

The listings here are edited for length; the website features expanded news, notes, and pictures.

1970s
Len Amato (B.A. ’75) won a 2008 Emmy Award for Executive Producer, Outstanding Original Made for Television Movie. Len was recently promoted to president of EVP Films at Hallmark and will also be writing it. He is currently editing on the E! reality show for a 2008 Emmy Award for project photographing the wars of our time, which Chronic Books will publish in the fall of 2009 as a fine art monograph.

Alisha Horton (B.A. ’06) recently started working at Sundance Film Festival as an account executive and distribution manager. Alisha previously interned for Women in Film in Chicago.

Reagan Bloom (B.A. ’02) is a reporter for The Orange County Register in Santa Ana. Reagan also recently paid off with offers coming his way.

Alisha Horton (B.A. ’06) recently started working at Sundance Film Festival as an account executive and distribution manager. Alisha previously interned for Women in Film in Chicago.

No Country for Old Men, There Will Be Blood, Michael Clayton, and The Diving Bell and the Butterfly. They represent such talents as Halle Berry, Meryl Streep, Martin Scorsese, and others.

Stephanie Kusik (M.A. ’03) wrote her debut novel, Wanna Be Your Jamie. This was published this summer by Hyperion in New York, and is now available at bookstores everywhere (see our review on page 316). Visit stephaniekusik.com.

Aleem Lee (M.A. ’06) has been awarded a Fulbright Student Scholarship to South Korea in design. Aleem is among 1,450 Americans who will receive Fulbrights for the 2008-09 academic year through the program.

Ronald Lehman (B.A. ’05) directed Jazzy and the Angels, which screened this past spring in Beverly Hills, California, as part of the SSG series. Jazzy and the Angels has been accepted in 24 festivals since its completion; has won a number of awards, including Best Comedy, Best Feature, and Best Fast for Short Film. Jazzy and the Angels won the first place award for Jazzy and the Angels at the Chicago Horror Film Festival (CHFF) and was the mother of a fallen soldier. She was able to bring a puppy out of Iraq that went to the mother of a fallen soldier. Visit chicagohorrorfest.com.

Jennifer Edge (B.A. ’06) was recently hired at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company of Fort Worth as a website designer.

Jesse Mercier (B.A. ’05) is a founder and CEO of a web-based music company, Live Hub, which offers original, live music performances in audio and video formats for users to download, free and legally. Live Hub also has a platform of services that cater to independent artists, venues, and others that are interested in the DIY music business.


Alex Pfadich (M.A. ’03) resides in the San Francisco Bay area and has followed a path in fine art and documentary photography. Alex previously taught photography at Colleges and was a staff photographer for City 2000. Currently, Alex is finishing up a project photographing the wars of our time, which Chronic Books will publish in the fall of 2009 as a fine art monograph.

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In Memoriam

James J. Sheenan (B.A. ’85) First Impressions Communication April 2, 2008

Chris M. Burritt (B.A. ’97) Film and Video January 7, 2008

Jeoffrey Halmon (B.A. ’73) Photo and Design January 22, 2007


Scott J. Martin (Film and Video) Film Festival December 30, 2007

Byron D. Jones (B.A. ’95) Newspaper October 21, 2007

Marlly S. Swart (M.F.A. ’86) Interdisciplinary Arts August 5, 2005


Janine Knibbe (B.A. ’96/Marketing Services) May 22, 2008

Dayne M. Canova (B.A. ’99/Video) February 27, 2008

John David Chisholm (B.A. ’93/Film and Video) June 2008

James J. Sheenan (B.A. ’85) First Impressions Communication April 2, 2008

Dawood Boy (Photography) created the Chicago-based band Madman and was an early arrival report design. The publication also won a Silver medal in the Print category at the Advancement of Education (CASE)” 2008 Circle of Excellence Awards.

Heather Gilbert (Theater) was the lighting designer for Euphrosyne Rising with Chicago Children’s Theatre at the Goodman Theatre.

Charles “Chuck” Harrison (Art, Design) and an industrial designer at Sean, ReDesign Company for more than 30 years and member of Columbia’s product design faculty since 2002, has been honored with the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award of the National Design Awards from the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in the Smithsonian. One of the first African Americans to succeed in this field, Harrison has designed more than 750 products to improve the life of the average consumer from the classic Visa-Master to the plastic garbage can.

Deborah Holdstein (Liberal Arts and Sciences) and Science) essay “The Internet and the Innermost: A Philosophy of Education” is part of the annual Eastman Art Show and has been honored with the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award at the Hyde Park Art Center. Harrison is one of the first African Americans to succeed in this field. Harrison has designed more than 750 products to improve the life of the average consumer from the classic Visa-Master to the plastic garbage can.

Bob Thall (Politics) was one of four CBS News correspondents to cover the 2008 presidential election. Thall’s work was featured in Graphic Design USA’s September issue. “There was success, but that Midwestern respect for modesty remains intact,” said Times.

Teresa Puente (Journalism) was one of three recipients of a $10,000 New Reporting and Enactment award from the McCormick Foundation to launch a new media project highlighting subjects generally overlooked by mainstream media. Puente’s project, “Latina Voces,” is a website that will offer daily news and commentary written by women on politics, immigration, health care, education, and family life.

Tony Sancho (Theater) co-starred in The Buddy Holly Story at Marriott’s shriner’s hospital for children in the city, their monologues like short stories you want to clutch to your chest. “Wrecked” last winter. “Wrecked” may have been the biggest hit of the season, but that Midwestern respect for modesty remains intact,” said Times.

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We put the question to Naomi Sheridan (M.A. ’84), an alumna of the Interdisciplinary Arts and Media program, and Matt Pierce, a current M.F.A. thesis candidate in that program. Here’s what they told us:

Where do you find inspiration?

different cultures
ideas, words, rituals
people talking
children playing
emergencies, thinking quickly
animals, nature, bodies of water
movement, energy
dance

unfamiliar neighborhoods
high places
professor feedback
hometown visits
free writes
crowded city spaces
quiet city spaces

Bill T. Jones

“fearless imagination is the first tool of the writer”

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Author of
“Cafe Boccata Of The Mind”
“Cafe Boccata: On the Other Side of the Rainbow”

will read from his work Thursday, April 3 of 7:00 p.m. in the Ferguson Theater of Columbia College, 600 S. Michigan, first floor. Free Admission. Open To The Public.

Sponsored by the Writing Center, Department of English

Photo: Sarah McKeane (B.F.A. ’08)
On August 24, 2008, Alumni Relations hosted the first-ever Chicago CAAN and SAA (Student Alumni Association) day at the White Sox game. More than 120 alumni, friends, family, and students turned out for this fabulous day of fun, networking, and baseball!

Columbia celebrated its very own alumni Emmy Award nominees and winners on September 17, 2008, at the Mosaic Hotel in Beverly Hills.

Alumni from all over the country took a trip down memory lane on October 3–4 to participate in Alumni Reunion 2008—RetroForward! Highlights included a Story Workshop session and tour of Jack Kerouac’s original manuscript of On the Road, performances by Fernando Jones and the Columbia Blues Ensemble, and so much more. A wonderful time was had by all—

we can’t wait till next year!
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Artwork by Callie Humphrey, Suzette N. Croute, and Jenna García

Columbia College Chicago
INNOVATION IN THE VISUAL, PERFORMING, MEDIA, AND COMMUNICATION ARTS
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For Alumni & Friends of Columbia College Chicago