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Fueling THE ARTS

AN AMBITIOUS BUILDING PROJECT PROMISES TO BRING NEW LIFE TO THE FINE ARTS. SEE PAGE 10
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Education issues
I read with amusement the article, “Education Next” (Spring 2009). George Theoharis ’93 says we need to develop a new understanding of inclusion yet he provides no insight as to what this looks like and how it works. He says we need to develop master teachers yet he does not provide justification for a master teacher to enter education when there are fields of employment that pay and reward people with these skills. He says we need to develop a sense of belonging yet when students’ families are as dysfunctional as they have become, how can a student develop a sense of belonging? The dichotomy that Kurth-Schai suggests for universal education needs to be reunited into one singular goal. The basics of education should lead every student to being prepared for the adult world; something we have abandoned.

M. Doug Johnson ’76
San Antonio, Texas

Huh? How about if we make sure all third graders can read at grade level before moving on to the fourth grade? After all, public education is this country’s most important tool for fostering equality. I’d suggest that nothing is more important in achieving educational equality than making sure all young children can read, and read well, during their elementary school years.

Phil McDade ’83
Monona, Wisconsin

Macalester–St. Olaf
Although two of my sons are at Macalester, my father, mother, four sisters, and I are St. Olaf College alumni with family ties to Norway. I was interested in the article about Mary Griep ’73, her St. Olaf connection, and her project sketching sacred structures. Please send a copy of the spring issue to my father, so he can have an overview of the tremendous energy and internationalism of the Macalester student body, which is so well presented in this magazine.

Mary Satre Kerwin P ’10, ’12
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Kudos
Wow! I just received the Winter 2009 issue of Macalester Today, and it is, in a word, stunning. Lynette Lamb, Brian Donahue, and their staff are doing an amazing job with the publication. Because this publication contains no advertising and goes free to all alumni, its purpose must be to promote feelings of connection to the old alma mater and encourage greater financial support. If this publication does not do that, I don’t know what would. Well done!

Karen Windland Anderson ’69
Portland, Oregon

Corrections
• We identified the photo of the deer skull on page 22 of the Winter 2009 issue as a white-tail. However, Dale Schmidt ’70 writes from Grand Rapids, Minnesota: “Any deer from Montana with that antler conformation would have to be considered a mule deer, unless DNA analysis could prove it to be a mule deer/white-tail hybrid.”
• The academic advisor for Rhodes Scholar Michael Waul ’09 (Winter 2009) should have been listed as geography professor Laura Smith.
• Betty Lou Hevle Johnson ’46 was 84 years old when she died November 30, 2008, in Montevideo, Minnesota. We regret the errors in her obituary.

Editor’s note on Macalester Today frequency:
To help the college reduce expenses and balance its budget, we did not publish a Summer 2009 issue of Macalester Today. This fall issue is appearing in your mailbox about a month earlier than usual.

Letters Policy
We invite letters of 300 words or fewer. Letters may be edited for clarity, style, and space and will be published based on their relevance to issues discussed in Macalester Today. You can send letters by email to: llamb@macalester.edu. Or: Letters to the Editor, Macalester Today, College Relations, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105-1899.
The Hidden Beauty of the World

BY | BRIAN ROSENBERG

I have come to believe that there are few truths about the world we inhabit that were not spoken in some form by the great writers of the 19th century. (Full disclosure: I am hopelessly biased by the fact that I devoted a good portion of my life to reading, studying, and teaching precisely those writers.) Take, as an example, the question of the centrality of the fine arts—music, visual art, theater, and dance—to a liberal arts education of the highest quality. I can write with some clarity and much conviction about the value of appreciating beauty and about the ability of the nonverbal arts in particular to transcend cultural boundaries and bring disparate parts of the globe closer together. But in reality I can do no better than to point to the insights of my much more articulate Romantic and Victorian predecessors.

In his dramatic monologue “Fra Lippo Lippi,” Robert Browning assumes the voice of a Renaissance painter and writes that “we’re made so that we love / First when we see them painted, things we have passed / Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see / and so they are better, painted—better to us./ Which is the same thing. Art was given for that.” Browning is writing about the process of what critics later came to call defamiliarization or estrangement: the ability of art to make the world around us appear unfamiliar and fresh and thereby to renew and intensify sensation. In effect, some would argue, without great art we would lose the ability to perceive and appreciate the world in all its fullness. The repetition and overstimulation of daily life cloud our perception; art acts as a restorative antidote.

Stated more concretely, we are being reminded that a great painted landscape or portrait has the power to make us see (or re-see) the contours of the physical world or the human form; that an aria movingly sung or a ballet gracefully performed reminds us of the human capacity for beauteous action; that King Lear or Angels in America reawakens us to the limits of our endurance and our ability to draw strength from suffering. To paraphrase Percy Shelly, great art “lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar.”

Still more important, perhaps, is the ability of the arts to create and strengthen an empathic response to the people and events around us: to allow us, even for an instant, to see the world through the eyes of others. The concept of empathy was first defined by German theorists in the 19th century, though it is captured most precisely, in my view, by the English poet John Keats, who wrote that “if a sparrow comes before my window I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel.” It is Keats who coined the famous term “negative capability,” by which, I believe, he meant the ability of the great artist to temporarily negate the self and understand the world from an alternative perspective—and, by extension, to allow the reader or viewer or listener to do the same. Even instrumental music, which is not mimetic and tells no literal story, generates an emotional quality that may be even more powerful than language.

Any list of the abilities that should be inculcated by a first-rate liberal arts education would surely include both the capacity to see the world clearly, honestly, and with appreciation for its beauty, and the desire and capacity to empathize with the worldview of those who are unlike ourselves. Indeed, it would not be difficult to argue that a good number of the troubles we currently face are the result of the widespread absence of these abilities. We have suffered collectively from an absence of clear vision and an even more profound absence of empathic understanding. To the extent that the fine arts develop and enhance these critical dimensions of our humanity, they are essential to the education that colleges such as Macalester should provide: as essential as our commitment to bringing a diverse group of students to our community and to inspiring in them an abiding sense of social responsibility.

I suppose there is a rather straightforward syllogism that captures all of this. Vision and empathy—each of which is strengthened by exposure to and participation in the arts—are essential qualities for our leaders of the future. It is the responsibility of Macalester to educate those leaders. Therefore we at Macalester should keep the arts at the center of our work.

Simple.

BRIAN ROSENBERG, the president of Macalester, writes a regular column for Macalester Today. He can be reached at rosenbergb@macalester.edu.

SHARING A RIDE to work or all the way across the country has never been easier, thanks to Macalester’s new Zipride website. It’s that old standard, the ride share bulletin board, gone digital. Register and you can immediately post a ride you’re offering or seeking. Only interested in jazz fans or non-smokers? Be as specific as you like.

The Macalester student government recently purchased user rights to the online ridesharing program, based in Massachusetts.

“The program is attractive to solo drivers because it’s nice to have company, it’s easier to stay alert when you’re chatting, and it saves money,” says Mark Stonehill ’09, a geography major who has worked on greening Macalester’s transportation sector.

Alumni can also use the service. First, set up a “permanent” forwarding email address in MacDirect, our online community found at macalester.edu/alumni/macdirect. Then use your @alumni.macalester.edu address to set up your account in zipride.

Zipride complements Macalester’s sustainability goals, and, along with programs like the short-term rental Hourcar, makes it possible for community members to live with one less car, or without one entirely.

WEB CONNECT:
Macalester.zipride.com
Macalester.edu/sustainability/hourcar
Tenured Teachers

Molly Olsen, Hispanic and Latin American Studies Department, and Tonnis ter Veldhuis, Physics and Astronomy Department, received tenure last semester.

Tonderai Chikuhwa ’96, senior program officer in the U.N. Office for Children and Armed Conflict, was the keynote speaker at the Class of 2009’s commencement. In his talk he described the challenges and grave circumstances facing many of the world’s children: “You will always have opportunities to contribute to fundamental change to improve the human condition. It is a battle that must be relentlessly pursued. It may be, certainly, to do big things in the future. But perhaps more importantly, it must be a determination to do whatever one is able in the here and now. ... We must challenge, without compromise... injustice.” Chikuhwa also was honored with the first-ever Charles J. Turck Global Citizen Award at Reunion 2009 (see page 45).
Swill to swine

What’s pink, has a curly tail, and reduces trash from Café Mac by 50 percent? A pig on Barthold Farms, headquartered in St. Francis, Minnesota. Since February 9, food waste from café mac has been picked up by Barthold Farms, cooked to kill bacteria, and transformed into feed for free-range pigs.

Diverting food waste keeps organic material out of the landfills and reduces waste hauling fees. Macalester’s Sustainability Office presented its Green Star Award for sustainable practices to those who collaborated to make it happen: Natalie Locke ’11, Abe Levine ’11, campus food service’s Deb Novotny, and Mark Dickinson ’76, Jerry Nelson, Laurie Salden, and Jim Davidson from Facilities Services.

Barthold picks up five or six barrels a day, six days a week, Facilities Services director Dickinson told Mac Today. “Because we pay for waste hauling by frequency and weight, we expect the savings in hauling costs to more than offset the $3 per barrel we pay Barthold.” Food waste doesn’t all come from food left on the plates of overambitious eaters, either. Because Bon Appétit (Mac’s food service) uses so much fresh food, waste includes peelings, and other leavings from food preparation.

KOFI ANNAN ’61, former Secretary-General of the United Nations and Nobel Laureate, visited campus in May for the unveiling of a life-size bronze bust in his likeness. The bust is housed in the lobby of Markim Hall, home to the Institute for Global Citizenship. Speaking to students before the unveiling, Annan said, “Globalism starts at home. Get involved in your local community. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes.”

Extreme Galaxy

A Macalester physics and astronomy professor made national science waves last spring when he co-published a report of the discovery of a very extreme galaxy: one where gas is distributed over an area much larger than researchers had expected to find.

Professor John Cannon explains that, compared to other systems investigated to date, this “giant disk” dwarf galaxy has the largest size difference between stars and gas of any known galaxy. This result is important for furthering our understanding of how galaxies form and how they remain stable over time.

Cannon and his collaborators made the discovery during recent astronomy research at Macalester, using data from the Very Large Array (VLA) telescope in New Mexico and the Kitt Peak National Observatory (KPNO) in Arizona.

The KPNO data show the stars in the galaxy; this is how the object would appear to our eyes. Looking at this data, the galaxy has a very small and compact stellar component. The VLA data, on the other hand, show the gaseous component of the galaxy—the material from which those stars form.

“Because the stars are so compact, we expected to see a system that has a similarly compact gaseous disk,” says Cannon. “To our surprise, the gaseous disk is enormous—some 44 times larger than the size of the galaxy as seen in stars. This is certainly a little galaxy doing big things.”

This galaxy, named ADBS1138, is considered an extreme galaxy because instead of having stars distributed throughout it, all its stars congregate in a very dense center. This suggests that most of the gas—the raw material for star formation—has not been used; no stars are seen in the outer regions of the gaseous disk.

This discovery raises important questions about disk stability and the nature of the mysterious “dark matter” seen in most galaxies.

Cannon’s research about this curious galaxy was published in the May 10, 2009, edition of The Astrophysical Journal.
Transitions

Two Macalester faculty retired this spring and three entered the Macalester Senior Faculty Employment Option (MSFEO), a graduated retirement program.

Diane Glancy and Robert Warde of the English Department fully retired from the college, having completed the MSFEO.

Entering the MSFEO, in which professors transition to retirement by working part time for a few years, are David Itzkowitz of the History Department, Karen Warren of the Philosophy Department, and Vasant Sukhatme of the Economics Department.
Kris Kristin Riegel '10 (Batavia, New York) is fascinated by how people are represented—or misrepresented—in the media. Expanding on a project that she and some classmates developed in a “Media Institutions” class, she designed the ¡Yo, Latina! program to address the lack of young Latina voices in the Twin Cities media. The Phillips Family Foundation thought she was onto something and granted her more than $15,000 to develop workshops to teach Latina teens how to publish an electronic magazine of their own.

Riegel has worked with peer educators at her community partner organization, Casa de Esperanza, whose mission is to mobilize the Latino community to end domestic violence. She also received a Carter Academic Service Entrepreneur grant and an Action Fund award to expand her project.

After a year of preparation, Riegel launched the workshops last June. The group met twice weekly for four weeks at Casa de Esperanza and at Macalester. Through the workshops, five Latina teens learned the media skills necessary to publish an e-zine, including digital photography, creative writing, and graphic design. “I would have never seen myself doing anything like this,” says participant Nallely Castro, “so it’s been really cool to learn how to write articles and design the magazine.”

The workshops also provided a safe space for group discussion and leadership development. Guest speakers included award-winning photographer Wing Young Huie; a representative from TVbyGIRLS, which deals with messages about women in the media; and Adriana Rimpel, a former Phillips Scholar now working as a photographer. Part of Riegel’s work during her senior year will be to help these young women sustain their e-zine project, which is designed to serve as a resource for the larger Latino community.

Although the prototype e-zine is not publicly available, Riegel’s long-term goal is to help the teens produce their ¡Yo, Latina! magazine twice a year.

After graduation, Riegel may attend divinity school to become a minister. She will be able to consider that goal more easily now, thanks to having also won a $2,000 Fund for Theological Education Undergraduate Fellowship grant, designed to help college students explore the possibility of ministry as a vocation.

Phillips Scholarships
Phillips Scholarships provide opportunities for students to address unmet community needs. Students from 16 private Minnesota colleges and universities are eligible to apply for the awards, which include scholarship money for the winners’ junior and senior years as well as a $4,000 award for implementing the summer project.
WOLVES, VIDEO GAMES, and micro-lending are the passions that led three Macalester students—Skadi von Reis Crooks ’09, Keaton White ’09, and Eshita Sethi ’11—to win important awards this spring.

Von Reis Crooks, a biology major from Bainbridge Island, Washington, won a Watson Fellowship to study wolf conservation efforts in Canada, Spain, and Sweden as well as the political and cultural conflicts that underlie the battles over those efforts. Watson Fellowships are $25,000 one-year grants for independent study and travel outside the United States. “People are so black and white in the way they feel toward wolves,” says von Reis Crooks. “I want to get a better perspective as to why we are still having such troubles here with conserving this charismatic and challenging species.”

White, an economics and Japanese major from Denver, won a Fulbright award that will take him to Japan to research why consumers often choose domestic products over foreign ones. He’ll be specifically looking at the video game market. “If I can understand how these consumers and game developers are interacting, I should be able to use that information to help American companies better appeal to Japanese audiences and vice versa,” he says.

Sethi, an economics major from New Delhi and Dubai, won a Goldman Sachs Global Leaders Award. She competed against students from across the globe for the $3,000 award, which also includes the chance to attend an upcoming leadership institute with world business and political leaders.

Last summer Sethi and some friends led a successful microfinance project in a New Delhi slum. This summer she will work with an NGO in India on education and health issues. She is gearing all her educational and vocational efforts, she says, toward her ultimate goal: “To empower underprivileged women and girls in rural India.”

A TITLE-WINNING COACH from Washington University in St. Louis will lead the Macalester men’s basketball team this year. Last spring the college named Tim Whittle as head coach, replacing Curt Kietzer, who resigned last winter after heading the program for 12 seasons.

Whittle was the Bears’ top assistant coach since 2004, helping to lead Washington University to back-to-back Division III national championships the past two seasons. He also played for Washington University for four years. Although the decision to leave his alma mater was tough, Whittle says he’s looking forward to the chance to shape his own basketball program, especially at an institution with an “excellent academic reputation.

“It was an easy decision to want to become Macalester’s next head men’s basketball coach, but the hardest decision of my life to leave Washington University,” Whittle says. “The opportunity to build my own program with strong student-athletes excites me because I was one, and I know the commitment, motivation, and determination they have.”

A Michigan native, Whittle grew up in Columbia, South Carolina. A self-confessed numbers nerd, he graduated from Washington University with a degree in finance and management, and started his career working for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta and SunTrust Bank.

While working as finance manager for the Florida Marlins in 2001, coordinating efforts to raise funds for a new baseball stadium, he was approached to coach at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. During his time at the University of the South, Whittle also worked as the men’s golf coach and as an assistant cross-country coach.

Three years later, his former head coach at Washington University, Mark Edwards, invited Whittle back as an assistant. “I jumped at the opportunity to return to my alma mater and continue to build on the tradition I experienced as a student-athlete,” he says. “It was a great decision then but now I’m ready for new challenges at Macalester.”
Unlike many students who double-major, anthropology and music graduate Morgan Roe ’09 found that studying two disciplines actually reduced her stress. “I could focus on creating something beautiful, which is extremely satisfying,” she says of studying piano and singing in the choir. “The mental focus it took to prepare for my senior recital improved the quality of my writing and critical thinking in other subjects.” Majoring in music also expanded Roe’s worldview. “The arts curriculum reflects Macalester’s commitment to multiculturalism and internationalism,” she explains. “The arts are a universal way to connect with people who may not speak the same language.”

Roe is not alone among Macalester students in valuing the fine arts. In 2008, 12 percent of students majored or minored in fine arts subjects, from studio art to music to theater to dance. Still more benefited from a class or two (four fine arts credits are required for graduation), or participated in the college’s growing number of extracurricular arts programs. About a quarter of Macalester students, for example, take a music course or take part in a music group each semester.
A welcoming two-story commons in the new fine arts center will house a large gallery and classrooms and will foster cross-disciplinary collaboration.
The large ensemble rehearsal hall, like other parts of the complex, will feature generous-sized windows that will connect students with their surroundings.

Once completed, the new fine arts complex will not only be a showcase for a first-rate fine arts education but also an enriching and stimulating focus of campus life.
And 200-plus students take an art history class each year.

To meet the fine arts departments’ needs, the college is embarking on an ambitious plan to expand and renovate the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center. Once completed, the new complex will not only be a showcase for a first-rate fine arts education but also an enriching and stimulating focus of campus life.

Although many elements of a fine arts education—practicing scales on a piano or brushing paint onto a canvas—have remained the same for centuries, there have also been dramatic changes over the past 20 years in the ways students study and create art. Photography chemicals have given way to computer software. The yellowing slides that were once a mainstay of art history lectures have been replaced by multi-screen PowerPoint presentations. Theater departments create their sets using computer-aided design. Painting and sculpting classes are taught in the round instead of traditional classroom rows.

And today, increasing numbers of students consider themselves to be multimedia artists, including studio arts major Annie Henly ’09, whose senior project was a performance that combined hand-carved marionettes with originally produced music. The growing drive to collaborate across disciplines is not facilitated by the college’s 40-year-old fine arts complex, in which each discipline works in a distinct area. “In the new building a theater class may be right across the hall from a music class,” says Music Department chair Mark Mazullo. “That never happens now.”

At Macalester, fine arts course offerings have changed over the years. For example the Music Department in the past five years has started two new instrumental and choral ensembles and added courses that encompass everything from sitar lessons to Civil Rights-era folk music. “Multicultural traditions are entering the canon and the curriculum,” says Mazullo. “Our hope is that any student can study any music tradition.”

Unfortunately, the three separate buildings that make up the current fine arts center don’t meet these 21st century needs. Built in 1964, the classrooms and rehearsal spaces are almost universally cramped, resulting in waiting lists for many classes that can’t admit all the students who want to enroll. Those same classrooms aren’t able to be fully wired for today’s teaching and learning needs, either. Theater and music groups compete with one another for rehearsal and performance space, which in turn limits the college’s opportunities to host performances that can reach out to the greater Twin Cities community. And there is little ability to control temperature and humidity levels in the buildings, which has resulted in cracked instruments that cost tens of thousands of dollars a year to repair and maintain.

Administrators, faculty, and students agree that the fine arts center is in need of an overhaul to improve teaching and learning and increased rehearsal and performance areas will provide many more opportunities for music, theater, and dance groups, which currently compete for limited and cramped spaces.
“In the liberal arts setting, students actively and intentionally connect their work in the arts to the wider world of knowledge. Their other studies influence their art, and their art influences their other studies.”

—Provost Kathleen Murray

bring it up to the standards of the rest of the college. “Macalester is a world-class institution,” says Provost Kathleen Murray. “The one academic facility on campus that isn’t world class is the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center.” On both a symbolic and practical level, the current facility doesn’t foster the kinds of dynamic, cross-disciplinary dialogue and collaboration that are vital to a contemporary learning community. “The buildings as they currently exist are freestanding structures that aren’t interconnected,” explains Murray. “They are closed to each other by a series of doors. There is a feeling that the buildings look in on themselves.”

The envisioned 156,000 square-foot expansion and renovation aims to turn that focus inside out. The new plan connects the buildings and opens them up to literally put the arts on display. Through a generous use of interior and exterior glass, passersby will be able to see what’s happening in a dance rehearsal or a scene-building class, for example.

In addition to more spacious, technologically modern classrooms and studios, other improvements will include a larger, more inviting concert hall, a new choral rehearsal hall that will double as a recital hall or seminar room, an instrumental rehearsal hall, a renovated thrust theater, a black box theater, a sculpture studio, and a dance studio that can double as an informal performance space. Art history classes, which are currently held in a patched-together Theatre Department space, will have their own designated classrooms. Those same classrooms will in turn be available to the classics and archaeology programs, which need the same technology for viewing ancient texts and artifacts.

Studio art classrooms will be designed for teaching in the round and for access to one another. “There will be a much more sound pedagogical use of space,” explains Murray. “A student will be able to take what she is working on in a sculpture space and move it to woodworking or the metal shop without having to go up and down stairs.”

An environmental hygienist was consulted to ensure that the entire complex meets green standards. As a result, studio art classrooms will include ventilation systems that will properly eliminate fumes from toxic substances such as turpentine, etching acids, and fixatives. “It will be a huge improvement,” says Christine Wilcox, associate professor of art. “Right now we have makeshift solutions. The students go outside to apply spray fixative to their work.”

The renovation will center on creating a new common space with art gallery in the middle of the complex. Murray believes the soaring glass ceilings—designed to bathe the space in light on even the most dismal winter days—will create an engaging center for campus life that will facilitate important discussions. “The arts ask ‘What is it about the world you want to speak about?’” says Dan Keyser, chair of the Theatre and Dance Department. “Understanding what you can do to an audience helps us understand how we can impact our community.”

Not to mention connect with and understand new communities. The new complex will further Macalester’s commitment to multiculturalism and internationalism. “The arts explore cultural and political differences,” explains Mazullo. “You don’t just study it, you live it out.”

Building those connections with the college’s neighborhood and beyond is a key Macalester goal; college leaders believe the new performance spaces will allow the college to bring more of the Twin Cities community to campus.

The plan is to build the complex in two phases. Phase One, which is part of the Step Forward campaign, will include an overhaul of the music building (including a renovated concert hall and two new rehearsal halls), new art history classrooms and faculty offices, and construction of the central common space. College leaders hope that this project can break ground next summer, but that schedule is dependent on successfully raising gifts and pledges of $18 million by May. The total cost of Phase One is currently estimated at $31 million, $24 million of which will be privately raised.

Phase Two, which will house the art and theatre and dance departments, will cost $41 million, $30 million of which will be privately raised. Murray says that the exact timeline for both projects will depend on the generosity of donors who are committed to strengthening the college.

Although today’s economic climate is not ideal for funding such an ambitious project, leaders feel strongly that this is the right time to act. Many colleges across the country are postponing similar construction projects. Completing the new fine arts center is an opportunity for Macalester to distinguish itself from its peers.

It’s also a way to ensure that Macalester students are receiving the best education possible. “Right now the arts at Macalester are doing a lot with just okay facilities,” says music major Ian Boswell ’09. Boswell thinks that’s a missed opportunity given all the benefits of studying fine arts. “A lot of people who don’t do the fine arts think it’s a mysterious talent, a magical gift that you either have or don’t have,” he says. “They don’t realize the arts require the same kind of academic focus as economics or anthropology do. You integrate analyzing with the intuitive. I think it’s so cool to develop your mind in that way because it makes you an extremely diverse thinker.”

Boswell’s experience illustrates why an exceptional liberal arts education demands fine arts training. “Many people attempt to justify the study of the arts based on the other skills it helps people to develop—the whole ‘Mozart makes you smarter theory,’” says Murray. “That’s fine—and true—but it’s important for us to make sure our students develop an appreciation for the arts as arts. Artists see and understand the world in a particularly interconnected and integrated way, and all educated people need some experience with this. In the liberal arts setting, students actively and intentionally connect their work in the arts to the wider world of knowledge. Their other studies influence their art, and their art influences their other studies.”

Minneapolis-based ELIZABETH LARSEN writes for Mother Jones, Parenting, and other national magazines, and is a regular contributor to Macalester Today.
A larger concert stage will better accommodate the full orchestra or multiple groups, such as those shown above. Generous windows, as in the large ensemble rehearsal hall (shown here from the exterior), will put Macalester’s arts programs on display.
THERE ARE WRITERS who bemoan the Internet, and the ways it has transformed books and reading. And then there are writers who embrace it, distractions and all. "I am an Internet junkie, that’s my problem," says creative writing professor Marlon James, who maintains the literary blog "Among Other Things," fights a tenacious Facebook addiction, and can be found on YouTube promoting his latest novel, *The Book of the Night Women*.

"The web is one-third blessing, two-thirds curse for the writer who doesn’t want to write," he says. "I don’t know where I stand as a writer, but I am the finest procrastinator of my generation." In other words, he knows exactly what his students are doing when they should be doing their homework. "But rest assured there will be three Armageddons before I hook up with Twitter."

At 38, the Jamaican novelist is one generation older than his students, and it’s a critical divide; he was raised in a pre-online time and place, loving books. His students can’t imagine a world that isn’t at their fingertips, and that world is a veritable playground of amusements that keep them from writing. But it also can be a powerful tool: James says he researched most of *Night Women*, which takes place in slavery-era Jamaica, online. "I would never have attempted that novel without it. If I’d had to use conventional methods of research, it would have taken years," he says.

James came to writing—and teaching, for that matter—in a roundabout way, after first spending six years in advertising and film production. "Yeah, it was fun," he admits. "But it did nothing for me as a writer. I wasted those years. I believe that if you are a creative person and you spend too much time in a compromised career, eventually it’s going to affect you. You will lose that talent."

He got out in time. One day, while reading Salman Rushdie’s *Shame*, James looked up and thought, "I should write." He enrolled in the low-residency master’s of creative writing program at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, living in New York half the year and Jamaica the rest of the year. (He has a bachelor’s degree in literature from the University of the West Indies.) He wrote his first
Creative writing professor Marlon James is now working on his third novel.
The Book of Night Women

Marlon James’s The Book of Night Women (Riverhead, 2009), his second novel, came out last spring to rave reviews. Here are excerpts from a few:

NEW YORK TIMES: “Marlon James’s second novel is both beautifully written and devastating… James’s book is so disturbing and so eloquent. Writing in the spirit of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker but in a style all his own, James has conducted an experiment in how to write the unspeakable — even the unthinkable. And the results of that experiment are an undeniable success.”

THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE: “The Book of Night Women is hard to pick up, even harder to put down. It doesn’t have the poetry of Morrison’s recent novel Mercy, but it does a better job of engaging our deepest emotions on the greatest cultural issue of the Americas, that of race, and it deserves to be read.”

MIAMI HERALD: “The author has carved strong and compelling female figures out of the harsh landscape of 19th-century British-ruled Jamaica.”

BOOKMARKS MAGAZINE: “Powerful and eloquent, The Book of Night Women is narrated in a lilting Jamaican patois that at once underscores and eerily conflicts with the disturbing images of violence and degradation that James conjures. Though the novel is filled with familiar figures — dissolute masters, jealous mistresses, house and field slaves — James never lets them devolve into clichés or ciphers; instead, he creates convincingly human characters. A stunning testament to the dynamics of ultimate power and powerlessness, Night Women will keep readers up at night.”

“Every time you start a new story you’re supposed to feel anxious, you’re supposed to feel nervous, you’re supposed to think, This is the one that is going to destroy me. I am going to fail. When my students tell me that, then I say, ‘Good! Now you’re ready.’”

 bookmark: marlon-james.blogspot.com

A new novel by Marlon James, the author of the critically acclaimed The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, is set in a post-colonial world where magic is real. Night Women is a work of art that explores the complexities of power, identity, and belonging. The novel follows the lives of two women, one a. book, John Crow’s Devil, and watched 70 publishers reject it before he destroyed it — or so he thought. When the manuscript resurfaced months later, he found a publisher. (Discouraged writers, let that be a lesson.)

Now he pushes his own students to use their time wisely. The dreadlocked, supremely easygoing James guides his classes past the pitfalls that befall many young writers. “The margins of my notebooks from his classes are filled with the words from his ‘banned words’ list. We aren’t allowed to use these words in our writing… words like ‘wafting’ and just about every adverb,” says Anna Rockne ’10, who signed up for James’s “Crafts of Writing” class after taking his creative writing class, because she knew “I would be getting a lot of blunt feedback and suggestions for improvement, and laughing a lot.”

Says James, “The one thing that separates brilliant people from everyone else is that in-

exhaustible capacity for hard work. I’ll say, ‘This is very good. Now rewrite.’ If you feel confident in your talent, then the work is not ready. Every time you start a new story you’re supposed to feel anxious, you’re supposed to feel nervous, you’re supposed to think, This is the one that is going to destroy me. I am going to fail. When my students tell me that, then I say, ‘Good! Now you’re ready.’”

James came to Macalester in 2007, first as a visiting professor. Now on the tenure track, he’s found a nurturing community in Mac’s English Department. “I lean on all of them,” he says. “The creative writers here are really cool — Peter Boghanni, Wang Ping; it’s cool having people I can talk to on multiple levels, as a professor, as a writer. The level of discussion here, even on trivial matters, is pretty high.”

Meanwhile, he’s back online, researching a new novel to be set in 1920s Europe. The Kingston native has quickly become one of the young lions of post-colonial literature, in the company of Junot Díaz, Zadie Smith, and Sherman Alexie, although his penchant for the past has earned him comparisons to Toni Walker and Gabriel García Márquez. His inimitable island patois in Night Women makes vivid the unspeakably cruel lives endured by the millions of slaves who worked Jamaica’s sugar and coffee plantations under British rule. “There’s nothing you can do about history. But grab a pen and suddenly, you have power. There’s a reason why the oppressors burn the books first,” says James, adding that the horrors he encountered in his research nearly caused him to shut down.

Perhaps the ghosts of the past spur James to join his students in the distractions of the modern world. Online, the self-described nerd writes passionately and cantankerously about Buffy the Vampire Slayer, rock music, politics, and race. As an outspoken black writer, he is a lifeline to Mac’s students of color. “While our department is incredibly diverse, especially for a very white-dominated field—permanent faculty include Chinese, Turkish, Indian, and Latino women, and our current chair, Daylanne English, specializes in African-American literature—having Marlon here has been very important to our African American English majors,” says department coordinator Anna Brailovsky.

James sees the Internet as a staging place for the next wave of African literature, a place where kindred voices can gather. “I wished I had a community of writers back when I started writing, somebody to tell me I wasn’t crazy for trying to do this,” says James—who only now knows that he wasn’t.

AMY GOETZMAN ’93 is a Minneapolis writer who appears regularly in MinnPost and Salon.com, among other publications.
ALLERGY INNOVATOR

Christy Haynes ’98 has won acclaim from the scientific community for her plan for watching allergic reactions on the cellular level.

BY | LAURA BILLINGS

WHEN CHEMIST CHRISTY HAYNES ’98 first heard that the National Institutes of Health was directing a new grant for groundbreaking research toward young investigators, she wasn’t sure she had the kind of outside-the-box proposal they were looking for. The call for applicants made it clear that the nation’s largest medical research agency expected radically new, previously unexplored, “paradigm-disrupting” proposals that had the potential to revolutionize biomedical science.

“No pressure there, right?” laughs Haynes, an assistant chemistry professor at the University of Minnesota. She already had quite a lot on her plate—a general chemistry class with more than 300 undergraduates, a series of research projects exploring the toxicity of nanoparticles, along with some previous explorations into the rise in worldwide rates of allergies and asthma, she began to wonder how researchers could watch what happens on a cellular level during an allergic reaction.

That’s when she came up with what she calls a “blue sky idea”—a plan to build the human immune system from the bottom up, linking one cell to the next on a chip the size of a credit card, to chart and measure how cells react and relate to each other when exposed to an allergen. Haynes turned in her application the same morning she checked into the maternity ward. Her son, Clark, was delivered safely soon after, “I figured this probably wasn’t my year.”

Yet, when their son missed his deadline, Haynes found herself with three extra weeks for hers, “being too pregnant to go to the office, but having plenty of time to think.” Drawing on the work she began while earning her doctorate at Northwestern University researching nanoparticles, along with some previous explorations into the rise in worldwide rates of allergies and asthma, she began to wonder how researchers could watch what happens on a cellular level during an allergic reaction.

If you measure this? How have you measured this? Whenever you ask questions from a technological perspective—“Why do we assume this? Have you measured this? How have you measured this?” Whenever you develop new tools you’re going to ask new questions.”

Among the questions Haynes and her research team of graduate students hope to answer: How do cells “talk” to one another during an allergic reaction? Why are certain allergy treatments effective for some people but not for others? Do acute and chronic allergic reactions look different? And why do allergies appear to be a growing problem, with nearly 50 million suffers in the United States alone? Malcolm Blumenthal, director of the allergies and asthma clinic at the University of Minnesota, is one expert who welcomes Haynes’s fresh eyes on the problem. “Until now, we’ve really just been treating allergy symptoms. But to understand a disease, you have to get down to a molecular level,” says Blumenthal. “It’s going to be very exciting.”

Only a third of NIH New Innovator grant winners are women, and even fewer are chemists—Haynes is one of just two tapped by the NIH. She’s hopeful that her groundbreaking work might inspire more women to go into the sciences, just as Macalester chemistry professor Rebecca Hoye inspired her. “She gave her students a lot of opportunities, and it was important for me to see that a woman with children could also be a chemistry professor,” says Haynes. “It’s kind of ingrained in me what was possible.”

Another Macalester lesson was that not knowing the answer to every question is part of the fun. “For me, chemistry is not the easiest thing,” says Haynes. “It doesn’t come naturally. I have to work really hard at chemistry. I think one of the reasons I chose it is because it challenges me—and will challenge me for the rest of my life.”

LAURA BILLINGS, a St. Paul writer, is a frequent contributor to Macalester Today.

WEB CONNECT: chem.umn.edu/groups/haynes
Just a decade past her college graduation, Christy Haynes ’98 won a National Institutes of Health grant for young investigators doing groundbreaking research.
When the economy tanked last fall, the Class of 2009 faced its biggest challenge yet. How have they fared?

BY DANNY LACHANCE

It’s one of the hardest questions a potential employer can lob at you during a job interview: “Tell me about a time when you experienced conflict with a co-worker. How did you respond to the situation?” Answering it well is difficult: If you talk about something too banal, the interviewer will feel as if you’ve dodged the question. But if you bring up a complex and painful experience from the past, you may come across as difficult or melodramatic.

Last February, at a weekly meeting of Macalester’s Job Search Group, a five-week “how to find a job” seminar run for seniors by the college’s Career Development Center (CDC), students had a chance to practice answers to that and other challenging questions while their peers looked on. As one student took the hot seat, she offered an answer to the conflict question that nobody anticipated.

“She said, ‘Well, I don’t have conflict. I’m from Wisconsin, and we’re all passive aggressive,’” recalls Mary Emanuelson, assistant director of the CDC and co-facilitator of the group, laughing. The group cracked up. It was a much-needed moment of levity in a season of job hunting that has been inordinately stressful for college seniors across the country.
Last spring, the National Association of Colleges and Employers reported that employers expected to hire 22 percent fewer new college graduates in 2009 than they had the previous year. Fortunately, by July it was obvious that these dire national predictions had proven wrong for Macalester students. In 2008, 45 percent of Mac graduates had jobs by Commencement and in 2009, 43 percent did, according to Career Development Center statistics.

In other words, the news wasn’t as bad as expected. But what did change is the kinds of jobs that new graduates had accepted. In a year in which people with newly minted degrees were urged to be flexible, Mac grads truly were: Almost 20 percent of those who reported getting full-time work had accepted volunteer jobs, compared to 11 percent in 2008. Forty percent of those with jobs in 2009 were making less than $20,000 a year, compared with 27 percent in 2008. And 13 percent of the employed had settled for summer-only jobs, compared to 5 percent in 2008.

Volunteer jobs, internships up
That volunteer job statistic, with a 75 percent increase over last year, really startled career center associate director John Mountain, although he and his office had urged students to do this kind of creative thinking. Whether it’s volunteer work or internships, getting that foot in the door is crucial, Mountain says. “You do a good job, and all of a sudden you’ve got their connections. They can pass your name on, or things uptick and they have a position for you.”

That’s the strategy Katie Clifford ’09 (Olympia, Wash.) adopted. An environmental studies major, she was looking for an entry-level position doing environmental advocacy or policy work. As she scanned employment ads last fall, she noticed entry level positions for office assistants at environmental agencies. They sounded like good back-up jobs at the time. “I’ve been a secretary and a receptionist, and I’ll have a bachelor’s degree in environmental studies,” she recalls thinking. “I can be super-competitive.” But months later she received letters saying that, due to the volume of applications, only candidates with master’s degrees or experience were being considered.

So Clifford pursued a summer job, landing a paid internship as a naturalist at the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies. She spent the summer working with the center’s educational outreach programs, leading hikes and scheduling guest speakers. It was temporary, but Clifford is looking on the bright side. She built her communication and outreach skills, and throughout the summer met environmental studies professionals and scholars, which gave her opportunities to try out the networking skills she learned in the job search group. Says Clifford, “Getting a summer job gives you one more experience, one more thing on your resume.”

Grad school applications up
Graduate school, of course, is a popular choice for Mac students, and this bad economic year not surprisingly saw that figure go up 3 percent to 14.2 percent among 2009 graduates. Victoria Harris ’09 (Plymouth Meeting, Penn.) was one of those students. She had been on the fence about whether to head directly to a graduate program in urban and regional planning or to start out in an entry-level position. When the economy plummeted last fall, however, she decided to head to grad school right away. “I figured that in two years it’s going to be better: more money, more jobs. And it’ll definitely be worth having a competitive advantage if the market keeps getting worse,” she says. She is enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania this fall, and feels lucky. All four of the schools she applied to had record increases in applicants this year; some applicant pools grew by as much as 130 percent.

Job hunting strategies vital
Those who decided to stick with job hunting were smart, availing themselves of the CDC’s services in increasing numbers. In past years, the job-hunters support group was spottily attended. This past year, thanks to the poor economy and a successful overhaul of the program by intern Lisa Novack, attendance was way up: twenty-five students came to the first session, and most attended every session. “That just didn’t happen in the past,” Mountain says. “It wouldn’t be uncommon for us to have an event and maybe only four or five people show up.”

An annual Communications Careers Conference sponsored by the Minnesota Private Colleges Career Consortium has usually attracted three or four Macalester students. This year, 20 Mac students signed up. Attendance at drop-in days, during which students can get advice without an appointment, was so strong that CDC staff members decided to continue holding them after spring break, when they usually pull back on events as students turn their attention to end-of-the-year commitments.

Even in the best economies, finding a job can be a daunting proposition for liberal arts college graduates, including Macalester students. If Macalester is like a four-year cruise ship for the mind, then graduation often feels a bit like hitting an iceberg. The shrewdness and marketing savvy required for a successful job search can seem oceans away from 4 a.m. residence hall debates over political theory.

On the one hand, Macalester seniors have a wider set of career options available to them than do their counterparts in more narrow and vocationally oriented undergraduate programs. And once they’re in the door, their talents are quickly recognized. On the other hand, a kind of paralysis can ensue as graduation approaches and, for the first time in 21 years, there’s no clear path in front of them.

Fortunately, the CDC has the expertise to guide seniors (and alumni) through the job search process. Part of her job, explains Christina Cowens Gholson, a CDC career counselor, is to teach basic marketing skills that aren’t learned in class. She’s found that self-promotion doesn’t always come naturally. “Some Macalester students do not see themselves as economically valuable. They may not always see that a service experience was important or they think they have to be paid for something for it to count on a resume,” Gholson says.

Some Mac students don’t realize how exceptional their experiences are, since those experiences may be almost run-of-the-mill among their Mac peers. Katy Petershack (Madison, Wis.) was searching for jobs doing international poverty relief. After meeting with career center assistant director Emanuelson, she rewrote her resume to include a section called “international experience,” which highlighted
her study abroad term in Tanzania and her participation in archaeological digs in Israel with the Classics Department. When she interviewed with prospective employers in Washington, D.C., over spring break, she was surprised at her interviewers’ reactions. “Their response was something like, ‘You’re actually worth my time. How do you have all this international experience?’” she says. “I had internalized a sense that no one would want to hire me.”

To help students like Petershack realize their job potential, CDC staff focus on two messages in particular: versatility in strategy and flexibility in outcome. In a bad economy, Mountain says, networking is more crucial than ever. “It really gets down to those personal connections. Employers often don’t advertise because they have so many people trying to get a position. So they send an email and ask, ‘Does anyone know of any recent graduates? Send them my way.’ Then all of a sudden, if you’re connected to that informal network, you’ve got an interview even though that position was never posted formally,” he explains.

Hours spent on job-posting boards, then, might be useless. “There might be 1,000 people applying for the same position,” Mountain says. He urges students to use online job postings only along with other tools, such as LinkedIn, a business-oriented social networking website, and MacConnect, the CDC’s database of alumni who have agreed to become contacts for career-seeking Mac students. For example, if a student sees an opening online for a specific company, he’s encouraged to seek alumni who work in that company. He could then leverage those contacts, Mountain says, to get his application noticed.

Alumni network proves useful

Networking with Macalster alumni proved invaluable to Todd Copenhaver ’09 (Wellesley, Mass.), an economics major. Copenhaver remembers waking up on September 15, the day Lehmann Brothers announced that it was filing for bankruptcy, and “opening up my web browser to a picture of the most depressed Wall Street analyst you’d seen in your life. That’s the look I had on my face as well because I knew it was going to be difficult for all of us,” Copenhaver recalls. And indeed, it has been a particularly brutal hiring season for economics majors. Copenhaver estimated that 30 of his fellow majors were gunning for jobs in the financial industry but as of July, only 11 had received offers.

He counts himself among the fortunate ones. Following the advice of friends, he started networking early. From July to October, he did about a dozen informational interviews. The stated purpose of such meetings, of course, is to gather information about how to best position oneself to enter an industry. But if they go well, those meetings can often be valuable networking experiences that can translate into job interviews.

Using a contact from an economics faculty member, Copenhaver scheduled an informational interview with an alumna working at Wells Fargo. Buttressed by references provided by other Mac alumni with whom he’d met over the summer, Copenhaver made it through three rounds of interviews and by spring had accepted a position as a financial analyst for Wells Fargo’s U.S. Corporate Banking Unit in Minneapolis. In July he noted of his new career, “A lot of work, but loving it.”

In a year in which many of his peers did not secure jobs, Copenhaver admits to having some survivors’ guilt. “There is a bit of an awkwardness there, but not as much as I would have expected. People understand that there was a certain amount of luck involved.”

Petershack also saw the value of an alumni network. Her spring break interview in D.C. was part of a larger trip she and a friend designed to explore what it would take to launch a career in the District. The two were weary before their trip: all the media would talk about, it seemed, was the dire state of the economy and rising unemployment rates. But by the end of a week spent meeting with Mac alumni, they felt much more hopeful.

Alumni offered to write letters of recommendation and volunteered space on their couches as temporary places to crash when they first moved to the city. And they were reassured that everyone starts off in D.C. paying their dues in temporary positions. The D.C. job that seemed elusive on the flight out seemed, on the flight back to Minneapolis, possible. By summer Petershack’s optimism was proving to be well founded. She was interning at the White House’s Office of Presidential Correspondence and shadowing various Mac alumni—including United Nations Population Fund attorney Sarah Craven ’85—to learn more about permanent jobs. Says Petershack, “The Mac alumni in D.C. have been wonderful.”

That sense of possibility that Petershack feels is one she senses in a lot of her Class of 2009 friends as well. Yes, they’re making compromises. And no, it’s not a great year to be graduating. But it’s still their year. “We know we can do this,” she says. “We just know it’s going to be a little bit harder.”

DANNY LACHANCE is a graduate student, teacher, and writer living in New York City.

WEB CONNECT: Alumni interested in helping current students with career information can link to macalester.edu/cdc/alumni/alumnetform.
IT CAN BE IRREVERENT or sincere, rebellious or mild. Depending on who occupies the editor’s chair, the Mac Weekly, Macalester’s nearly 100-year-old student-run newspaper, takes on a different personality every semester.

While that shifting editorial profile is part of what gives the spunky little paper its charm, for many members of the campus community the Mac Weekly represents tradition and a quirky stability. No matter what else happens on campus—or in the outside world—there will always be a stack of papers in the campus center each Friday.

Nevertheless, recent economic events could cause anyone to wonder whether the Weekly can continue indefinitely in its current form. Times in the journalism business are tough. Daily newspapers are in down-size mode, cutting back on print editions and seeking refuge on the web. Some prominent student newspapers are also feeling the heat and dropping editions, including those at the University of Minnesota, the University of California–Berkeley, and the University of Maryland. It would be easy to assume that student newspapers are on their way out.

Happily, fans of the Mac Weekly can relax. The news is markedly different at Macalester and many other liberal arts colleges than it is for the newspaper business in general. According to a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, the financial state of student publications at many schools across the country remains fundamentally sound. Advertising dollars are stable, and readership is high.

Explaining why papers like the Weekly can survive while other publications struggle is easy, says Howard Sinker, sports coordinator at StarTribune.com and adjunct professor in the Humanities and Media and Cultural Studies Department.

It’s a classic story of apples vs. oranges, Sinker explains: “Comparing the Minnesota Daily to the Mac Weekly is like comparing a struggling metro daily to a healthy local weekly with a committed readership and a captive advertising market. The Weekly—and other papers like it—are healthy because they’re serving an irreplaceable purpose for a strong audience.”

College administrators understand the important role a student-run newspaper plays on campus, says Laurie Hamre, vice president for student affairs. “From the institutional point of view, the Mac Weekly plays a huge role in campus communication,” she says. “It builds a sense of community. It’s an essential marker of campus life. Everyone—students, faculty, staff—wants to see it.”

I’m glad to hear that the Weekly’s heart is still beating—and that folks remain committed to resuscitating it should its steady rhythm falter—because for most of my years at Macalester, the paper was a central part of my life. I was a reporter, an arts editor, and in the fall of 1989 co-edited the paper with Martiia Lohn ‘90, now a political reporter for the Associated Press.

Laboring away in the Weekly’s stinky, chaotic offices, studying journalism with the late, great Ron Ross, I built a love for words and writing. I didn’t play sports at Mac, but I felt like our ragtag group of editors scored the winning goal every Friday when fresh copies of the paper were hauled into the student center.

Editing the Mac Weekly inspired me to make a career out of writing, which has been the path of many of its editors over the paper’s almost century-long history. (In the college’s earliest years students published the Macalester Echo, according to college archivist Ellen Holt-Werle. The first edition of the Mac Weekly was published in 1914.)

For this story, I tracked down a number of former editors, all of whom agreed that the Weekly experience—campus controversies, demanding deadlines, junk food, all-night production cycles—taught them that they could build a professional life around words.

“It would be a real shame if there was nowhere to let students put on training wheels and give it a shot,” says Dan Fierman ‘97, a GQ editor who edited the paper in 1995. “That’s what we did when I was there. We weren’t perfect, but a lot of us moved on to pursue successful careers in journalism. It was a great training ground.”
The Mac Weekly

Macalester’s Independent Student Newspaper Since 1914

Vol. 99, No. 20 | March 24, 2006

In This Issue

News

Dr. Elmer Allen Bess of Iowa is the New President of Macalester

Present Head of the Department at the State University of the Presbyterian Board of Education has Accepted the Invitation From the College Towers.

Many New Faculty New Girls Meet Mothers This Year at Wallace Hall

MANY NEW FACULTY NEW GIRLS MEET MOTHERS THIS YEAR AT WALLACE HALL

Le Voir To Introduce Queen at Convocation

Le Voir, the annual social society, will introduce its new queen at the fall assembly on Tuesday, October 31, in the gymnasium.

Apps Up for Fall Study Abroad

Push to balance numbers per semester may have proved effective

By Amy Liberman, News Editor

The administration’s recent attempts to balance study abroad numbers, changing the program so 150 students per semester appear to have worked—a feat for now. According to Provost, Phineas McChesney, 129 students—117 new applications and 12 from last semester—are expected to apply for spring semester. While Macalester students traditionally study away this spring, 176 students entered a record-high number of applications for the fall semester, whose numbers exceed the usual. According to Provost, the most popular destinations this year were Europe and South America.

Mac 1917 Football Mac Men Respond Season to Open at Minneota’s Call Hamlene Saturday

The Mac Weekly

Chapel Service Opens Mac Year

The Mac Weekly

All Together Now to Hamline

The Mac Weekly

Little Man on Campus

Little Man on Campus

Presented Monday

A paper will be presented on the history of bacteriology up to 1960 by Hazel Rainier, at a meeting of the Biology Department on Monday, November 4, at 7:30 p.m., in room 26, Science Building.
Chank Anderson ’90 experimented with designing the Mac Weekly to look like other publications. Above are his take-offs on Reader’s Digest (left) and the now-defunct Twin Cities Reader (right). The issue in the center is from the late 1960s.

**Name:** MORDECAI SPECKTOR ’72, (known as Mitch Specktor when he was a Macalester student from 1968 to 1970)

**Major:** Political science

**Mac Weekly editor in:** 1969

**Job today:** Editor and publisher of American Jewish World

Memorable *Weekly* moment: I became editor of the Weekly thanks to a cabal. Beforehand, I remember a discussion in the dining commons, where a plot was hatched to take over the publications board and make me editor of the paper. I’d edited an underground newspaper at my high school, so this group thought I had enough experience to run the Weekly. Somehow we got a majority of my buddies elected to the board, and they made me Weekly editor. We thought the paper was too “straight,” too mainstream, so we tried to poke fun at the conventions of the “normal” world. Once we ran a fictitious story about the theft of drugs from the campus health service. That really ticked some people off, but it was our goal to make every issue of the paper test the credulousness of our readers.

**Name:** CLAUDE PECK ’77

**Major:** History, English core

**Mac Weekly editor in:** 1976

(That semester the paper was edited by an editorial collective of six; Peck was a member.)

**Job today:** Senior editor, arts and interactive, StarTribune

*His Weekly mission:* Most of us working on the paper that year were more interested in politics than journalism. We prided ourselves on being non-provincial: We didn’t want the paper to just have campus news. We were interested in the campus’s relationship to the city and the world. We reported on issues in the city at large and even had a digest of world news.

Why an editorial collective? This was the mid-’70s. Several of us had been involved with the growing grocery store co-op movement, so the cooperative angle naturally developed that way. We wanted to smash the hierarchy. When we presented the collective idea to the publications board, I remember someone saying, “You’ll need to have an editor-in-chief to call the shots,” but somehow we convinced them we could make it work. With so many of us working together, the process took longer. Everything had to be chewed over and discussed. It was frustrating, but somehow we managed to get out a paper each week.

Making their mark: We didn’t like the sound of the Mac Weekly, so we changed the name to The Macalester Weekly. We thought the whole “Mac” thing sounded too peppy and sports-oriented. The next semester the new editor changed the name back.

What he gained: When you’ve struggled to get something finished as a team, you develop a sense of mission and commitment that only undergraduates can have. When you’re working hard with friends to accomplish something, you get this great feeling of accomplishment, of “Wow. We got another issue out!” During that time, the newspaper fever got into me. It has stayed with me all these years.

**Name:** GRETCHEN LEGLER ’84

**Major:** Political science

**Mac Weekly editor in:** 1983

**Job today:** Creative writing professor, University of Maine at Farmington

*Life plan:* I thought I’d major in political science and become a for-
Joan Meisser Chosen HC Queen

Dance, Parade, Game Climax Homecoming Festivities

Mac Students With Poetic Talents Wanted

Joan, Queen of Scots

Exam Dates For Civil Service Announced

No One Hurt

MCA Will Send Newsletters To Students

Science Hall Explodes

Damage Exceeds 1 Million Dollars

MCAW College, St. Paul, Minn., April 1 Minus 2, 1951

No. 17

The Mac Weekly

WINNER OF THE NATION'S HIGHEST JOURNALISM AWARDS

The Mac Weekly

Macalester, College Of Scots

The Troubles Class Prizes Awarded To Top Twenty

Foreign Student Meeting

D. Wallace's Give 159 New Books To Library

Mr. James Ten Speaks In Convoc. Tuesday

Hungry Hobo

Omn Nohl & Thrus. Evenings

RENT A TUX

SPECIAL DISCOUNTS TO STUDENTS

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St. Paul 2-7-711

St. Paul 2-7-4351

1655 Grant Ave.
College newspapers throughout the country are being squeezed along with their urban daily peers.

Last fall Inside Higher Ed reported that both The Daily Californian (UC-Berkeley) and The Daily Orange (Syracuse University) were scaling back their print editions from five issues a week to four. Independent papers like these, which rely heavily on advertising, are hardest hit, while fee-supported papers [such as the Mac Weekly], are affected less, Logan Aimone, president of the Association of College Press told Inside Higher Ed.

For both kinds of campus papers, however, online versions are becoming increasingly important, particularly for off-campus readers. With 30,000 hits a month, the Mac Weekly website is a vital component of the operation, says editor Zac Farber ‘10. Farber purchased a video camera last summer, whose use he hopes will enliven the paper’s website.

However, at least for now, print versions of student papers “remain at the forefront” for student readers at most colleges, the PBS online publication MediaShift reported in January. That’s true at Mac, as well, says Farber.

The Weekly is in the interesting position of being financially beholden to the college yet editorially independent. While other colleges cut back or even eliminate their newspapers, Macalester has no such plans. Farber maintains that having an independent student paper like the Mac Weekly is “valuable to the openness of the community,” adding, “It’s important to foster that.”

A political science senior from Olympia, Washington, Farber has worked for the student paper since his first year on campus. He leads a group of more than 20 editors, writers, and advertising staff, most of whom are Mac Weekly veterans.

Fresh off a political journalism program in Washington, D.C., Farber plans to include more investigative stories, expanded food and book coverage, and a thorough roundup of state and local news.

Farber expects that this last initiative, which he plans to run on page two, will supplement the news knowledge of “the many out-of-state students who only read the Mac Weekly and the New York Times.”

“There’s a lot of interesting local news beyond the possibility of a Snelling Avenue median,” he adds.
There was a real cadre of committed journalists. When I started out, everyone was nurturing, and I grew to be fiercely loyal to the paper. We never missed an issue, no matter how hard it was to pull off. It was exhausting but fun.

**Paying the price:** Those Thursday nights were really horrible. On Fridays, it was all I could do to stay awake. Jack Weatherford would say, “Lynette, you’ve got to do better.” He was right: Friday mornings I’d be nodding off in class or I’d show up late—if I showed up at all. Jack went through that with all the Weekly editors. I also ran track, and when we had meets on Friday afternoons it was tough. To stay awake enough to compete I’d drink coffee and eat jelly beans. Thank God caffeine and sugar aren’t considered doping.

**The things they covered:** During my time on campus, the paper was a hotbed of social and political activity. We focused on the [Austin, Minnesota] Hormel strike and on the college’s investments in South Africa. Also, Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale ‘50 ran for president and we were all over that story. Some of our stories stirred up controversy among students and the administration, and some of their reactions gave me a real sense of the power journalists wield.

**Memorable moments:**

Name: **CHARLES ANDERSON ’90**

(a.k.a. Chank Diesel, Charles Andermack)

Major: Studio art

*Mac Weekly* editor in: 1989

Job today: Typeface designer, owner of Chank Co, Minneapolis

**How he got the job:** I was interested in design, but I couldn’t find an extracurricular activity where I could focus on that interest. I ended up hanging out at the *Weekly* office, and one year when the time came to pick an editor, everybody with editorial qualifications was too busy to apply. So I said I’d do it and they let me, which was crazy because I was not taking it seriously.

**Style over substance:** In my paper, content was an afterthought. Design was the focus. It still boogles my mind that they let me be the editor. My paper was goofy, but it helped me work on my design chops. I redesigned it every week, making the *Weekly* look like the *Twin Cities Reader*, the *Star Tribune*, the *Carletonian*. I wanted people to see a fresh newspaper.

**His legacy:** I got asked back to Mac sometimes to talk to students, and there are still people who come up and say, “Are you the guy who blew the whole year’s budget on a full-color issue?” It’s true. I did that. The issue looked great, by the way.

**Perks of the job:** The *Weekly* office was my favorite place to hang out. It was a great environment where we could write on the walls with markers and eat all the pizza we wanted. It was a clubhouse, an all-night party every Thursday night. I also got to learn a lot of things that helped me later on. It was an awesome part of growing up.

Name: **DAN FIERMAN ’97**

Major: History

*Mac Weekly* editor in: 1995

Job today: Senior editor, *GQ*

**How he got the job:** When I became editor, the *Weekly* was the redheaded stepchild on campus. It was run by three dedicated people and basically ignored by everyone else. I was only a sophomore, but they were desperate for somebody to take it over, so they gave it to me. I tried to make working on the paper fun again, to build a sense of a great shared endeavor.

**Memorable moments:** At that time, we were still printing out individual pages, pasting them onto boards, and sending them to Iowa to be printed. A truck would come each week to pick up the boards, but if we missed the deadline, we’d have to drive them to Iowa ourselves. This was after being up all night. It was a long haul.

**What he gained from the experience:** Macalester allows students to find their space, to succeed or fail on their own. Not many colleges would let a sophomore with zero experience take over the student paper. But they did, and I’m happy for that. I’m a senior editor at *GQ* magazine today, and I’m not sure that would’ve happened without the experience I had at the *Weekly*.

Name: **ELIOT BROWN ’06**

**Majors:** History and geography

*Mac Weekly* editor in: 2006

Job today: Reporter, the *New York Observer*

**The hardest part of the job:** Staying up all night every Thursday was a pain. When I was editor, I tried to get things done earlier, before four or five in the morning, but it never worked out. A group of people should be able to get that paper finished in two hours, but somehow the stories would keep coming in late and then we’d have to change a page and then the server would be slow and so on. It was exhausting.

**Most-read stories:** There was a small series of student muggings that we covered extensively. We also tried to run stories that were more relevant to a weekly format, broader pieces on the rising cost of college, admission rates, grade inflation, and energy consumption. We realized we couldn’t break news, so we were into analysis. We had a really competent ad manager, so we were cash rich and produced an extra Sunday supplement–style magazine.

**WEB CONNECT:** themacweekly.com

ANDY STEINER ’90 has been an editor at Minnesota Women’s Press and Utne Reader magazine. She is now a freelance writer living in St. Paul.
Two years after graduating, Ben Finkenbinder ’07 is working in the White House.

BY | DAVID MCKAY WILSON

ON PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA’S 100th day in office, Ben Finkenbinder ’07 took off on Air Force One at 7 a.m. with the nation’s 44th president for a town hall meeting later that morning in Missouri.

Finkenbinder, one of Obama’s assistant traveling press secretaries, returned to Washington that afternoon to get ready for a prime-time press conference about Obama’s first months in office. Work wasn’t over until 11 p.m. It was just another day at the office for Finkenbinder, 24, who was called by Vanity Fair (February 2009) one of Obama’s “whiz kids” and featured in a photo by Annie Leibowitz.

“The president is a great boss,” says Finkenbinder. “He has a mentality that is very beneficial—there are things you can control, and there are things you can’t control. So you need to control everything you can, and keep a steady demeanor to solve the things that come up. And things always come up.”

Finkenbinder splits the press pool responsibilities with Katie Hogan, who he has worked with for two years. Their job: to make sure the press pool is where it needs to be, when it needs to be, and to help with the logistical issues that inevitably arise with deadline reporting from the road. “Ben is light-hearted and never takes any problem too seriously,” says Hogan. “And he’s the first one to get to the office and the last one to leave.”

Finkenbinder grew up in Bethesda, Maryland, a Washington, D.C., suburb, and learned about federal issues from his father, who serves as executive vice president of the National Mining Association.

But it was at Macalester that Finkenbinder, a political science major, became truly political. He knocked on Minnesota doors for Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry in 2004. And then in his junior year, he landed an internship in Washington at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, working for five months under communications director Bill Burton, who went on to become the Obama campaign’s national press secretary. In his final semester at Macalester, as Obama’s improbable campaign was gaining traction, Finkenbinder contacted Burton.

That call paid off. Right after graduation he had a job in the press shop on the fledgling Obama campaign. “I was motivated by Obama’s ideals and where he wanted to move the country,” recalls Finkenbinder, who now lives on Capitol Hill. “I decided, at whatever level I could, to put my full effort behind the campaign.”

Finkenbinder quickly learned what “full effort” means on a presidential campaign. Assigned to Obama’s Chicago headquarters as
a media monitor, he kept track of stories produced by newspapers, television, and bloggers. He arrived for work at 3 a.m. to check online websites to see what the media were saying about the campaign. He’d send each story to his superior, then create a more comprehensive document for the rest of the staff.

By the end of the campaign, his desk held two computers and six television screens. His 15-hour days would end right before the nightly television news—just in time for him to get some sleep and do it all over again the next day. “There was a pretty constant push,” he says. “It was fascinating to see how the media worked with such a compressed news cycle.”

The long hours don’t seem to faze Finkenbinder, who says he keeps awake by focusing on the work in front of him. But if staying awake isn’t a problem, waking up on time is. On this spring’s whirlwind trip of Europe with Obama, he estimates he slept about two hours a night over ten days. He’d set the alarms in his hotel rooms and on his wristwatch and also ask the front desk for a wake-up call. “The hardest part is making sure you set enough alarms and remember what time zone you are in,” he says.

Heather Higginbottom, the Obama campaign’s policy director, says it was Finkenbinder’s work ethic during the 2008 campaign that brought him a promotion from behind the computer screen to assistant press secretary on the campaign team. After the Democratic convention in August, he was on the road, living out of a suitcase until Obama’s election in November.

“The amazing thing about Ben is that he had impossible hours during the primary campaign,” says Higginbottom, now the White House Policy Council’s deputy director. “He had to get up in the middle of the night to begin preparing the clips, which was a critical function of the campaign. And despite his 3 a.m. wake-up call, he was always in a good mood and one of the nicest people to be around.”

After the election, Finkenbinder and Higginbottom were among a handful of campaign workers who remained in Chicago, helping with press conferences at which Obama announced his cabinet appointees. Then he flew with Obama to Washington on January 3 as the president-elect made his triumphant arrival in the nation’s capital. “There was lots of nervous energy,” says Finkenbinder. “We were leaving Chicago, which had been our home.”

Now he has an office in the West Wing of the White House, flies on Air Force One, and passes the ball to the president on fast breaks in basketball games at the Department of Interior gymnasium. Not bad for a onetime Macalester benchwarmer.

As for what’s next, Finkenbinder either doesn’t know or isn’t saying. “I’m not trying to look ahead too much,” he says. “I’m seeing things that in a million years I never thought I’d see.”

DAVID MCKAY WILSON is a frequent contributor to numerous alumni magazines around the country.
Nine outstanding alumni were honored at the Macalester College Alumni Association Awards Convocation at Reunion.

**Distinguished Citizens**

H. Kris Ronnow '59 graduated from Macalester and went immediately to McCormick Seminary in Chicago, where he earned master’s degrees in divinity and social work. A mentor encouraged him to work for the Church Federation of Greater Chicago, where he helped many churches to collaborate on their social work goals. There Ronnow trained with famed community organizer Saul Alinsky and organized civil rights marches when Martin Luther King Jr. came to town. He later worked in community relations and public affairs jobs, and in 1988 became vice president of McCormick Theological Seminary. Since retiring in 1996, Ronnow has served on the Habitat for Humanity Board, traveled with the Presbyterian Peace Delegation to Colombia, and worked with the National Conference for Community and Justice, which awarded him its Founders Award.

Jessie Parker Strauss '59 earned a master’s in engineering 30 years after earning her first master’s degree and for the last 10 years of her career worked with large downtown Seattle firms to encourage their employees to carpool and use mass transit. Since 1997, Strauss has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, organizing trips to areas in desperate need of affordable housing, working on builds in 11 countries. She also organized a Habitat build/reunion in Brookings, S.D., with fellow Brookings High School alumni. Strauss organizes the trips, working with Habitat affiliates in the destination countries. Last March she went to Zambia and in August she made two trips to Guatemala, bringing her to a total of 24 trips. As a result of her volunteer work, families on four continents have decent homes.

Arthur “Bud” Ogle ’64 graduated from Macalester with majors in history and philosophy. In 1965 he married Donna Sederburg ’64, his high school sweetheart, and the next year respectfully returned his draft card. After being ordained a Presbyterian minister, Ogle in 1985 became director of Christian campus ministry at Northwestern University, where he involved students in addressing poverty in a nearby neighborhood. In time, the Ogles moved into that poverty-impacted Evanston neighborhood to help end homelessness one family at a time. To meet the need for safe, low-cost housing, they bought and rehabilitated the Jonquil Hotel and thus Ogle’s mission expanded into Good News Partners, which he serves as president. Today, the Jonquil is a thriving community, and Good News rehabilitates housing units, manages several buildings, and builds community through tutoring, employment training, and support services. In 1994 Macalester presented Ogle with an honorary degree.

Pamila Brown ’76 was inspired as an eighth grader by the courtroom work of defense attorney and civil rights activist William Kunstler in the trial of H. Rap Brown, which took place in her Maryland hometown. The experience convinced her she could make a difference in the world as a lawyer. Further inspired by professors Ted Mitau, Chuck Green, and Dorothy Dodge, Brown earned a law degree and served in the justice system in various capacities before being appointed an associate judge for the District Court in Howard, Maryland, in 2002. Brown frequently lectures on topics from gender equity to ethics, serves as chair of the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence, is past president of the Baltimore YWCA, and received their Leadership Award in 2008. In 2005, The Daily Record presented her with its Leadership in the Law Award.

Mihailo Temali ’76 grew up on St. Paul’s East Side, the son of World War II refugees. East Side people came from many cultures and worked hard to make their way in the world. It was the ideal beginning for the future founder and executive director of the Neighborhood Development Center, which provides small business training, lending, technical assistance, and a business incubator development program for inner-city, low-income entrepreneurs. Working in five languages, the NDC staff has trained almost 4,000
professionals. is a key resource for development community economic development trustees. Temali’s book on NDC’s model to Ford Foundation Chile. In 2007 he presented the did development work in Santiago, the University of Minnesota’s has a public affairs degree from well-known Midtown Global incubator projects including the help develop five business low-income entrepreneurs, and helped more than 600 start their own businesses. Temali has helped develop five business incubator projects including the well-known Midtown Global Market in Minneapolis. Temali has a public affairs degree from the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute, was a Bush Leadership Fellow in 1998, and did development work in Santiago, Chile. In 2007 he presented the NDC’s model to Ford Foundation trustees. Temali’s book on community economic development is a key resource for development professionals.

2009 Young Alumni Award

Fred Swaniker ’99 graduated from Macalester with an economics major, joined the consulting firm McKinsey & Company in South Africa, and obtained an MBA from Stanford. Although poised to live a soft life, Swaniker had another dream: To found the African Leadership Academy, a two-year, coeducational boarding school that would develop leaders and entrepreneurs with dual passions for Africa and public service. Having lived in six African countries, Swaniker was uniquely qualified to launch a school with lofty pan-African goals. Located on the outskirts of Johannesburg, the African Leadership Academy opened in 2008 with a class of 106 students from 29 countries. In its first year, its admission process was already more competitive than Harvard’s. At least 50 percent of ALA’s students will pay nothing to attend, but this is no grant; it’s a “forgivable loan,” forgivable only if graduates employ their talents in Africa. “Over the next 50 years, African Leadership Academy will develop 6,000 leaders for Africa. Simply put, this academy aims to transform Africa,” says Swaniker.

In Iowa, Harris volunteered with at-risk youth at Clarinda Academy, where his Bible study class had rival gang members studying side by side. From 2000 to 2006 Harris served on the Macalester Alumni Board. Harris now has a surgery practice in southwest Virginia, where he is one of only a few surgeons in the largely rural area.

2009 Catharine Lealtad Service to Society Award

Chuck Harris ’75 earned a medical degree and began a life of service as a physician and surgeon, teacher, author, and missionary. For eight years Harris served in the U.S. Army, receiving commendations for his service in West Germany and at the Pentagon. In 1988 Harris become a medical missionary in Haiti, traveling to the interior to provide medical services to the poor. When Haiti became too unstable for foreigners to remain, Harris, his wife Karen, and their three children left on an emergency flight with only what they could carry. Since then Harris has served as a surgeon in locations around the United States.

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Alumni Service Award

Louisa Chapman ’75 is a medical epidemiologist with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. As a commissioned member of the U.S. Public Health Service, she is Captain as well as Dr. Chapman. As part of various teams, Chapman has addressed nearly every public health challenge of the last 20 years, including hantavirus, smallpox, anthrax, terrorism, and the health of Hurricane Katrina victims. Most recently, she collaborated with colleagues around the world to develop science and policy around xenotransplantation, the use of non-human tissue in human beings, treatment that holds great promise as well as risks. Chapman has long provided extraordinary service to the college, organizing Day of Service events and alumni gatherings as an Atlanta chapter leader, serving on the Alumni Board from 1997 to 2003, and co-chairing this year’s “74-75-76 cluster reunion. Always ready to recognize the work of others, Chapman nominated 14 alumni for awards. Five others nominated her.

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Charles J. Turck Global Citizen Award

Tonderai Chikuhwa ’96, this year’s commencement speaker, had a truly global upbringing. His father, hailing from what was then called Rhodesia, met and married his mother in Ukraine, and the family settled in Sweden. Chikuhwa attended the United World College in Swaziland, and then majored in political science and international studies at Macalester, where he received the Internationalism Award for 1996. He subsequently earned a master’s degree in political science at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. In 1999, Chikuhwa began working in the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict at the United Nations. He spent years as a child protection advisor in Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and Liberia, going into the bush to negotiate with commanders and persuade children to lay down their AK47s. He secured the release of nearly 3,000 children conscripted into the armed forces or rebel armies. Now based in New York as senior program officer in the United Nations Office for Children and Armed Conflict, Chikuhwa advocates for stronger protection measures for children in such places as Sudan, Somalia, and Sri Lanka, and is working toward better monitoring and reporting on child rights violations in these and other conflict zones. He is driven by his personal encounters with children ravaged by warfare. As he says, “Once you have been with the children, it is not possible to turn your back on them.”
In Memoriam

1932
Henrietta Bonaparte Ridley, 98, of Chicago died Dec. 24, 2008. Survivors include daughter Yolanda Ridley Scheuenmenn ’63.

1933

1934

Earl H. Wood, 97, died March 18, 2009, in Rochester, Minn. As a physiologist with the Aeromedical Unit of Mayo Foundation Laboratories, he played a critical role in the development of the G-suit, a pressurized suit designed to prevent fighter pilots from blacking out during flight. His research on human circulation led to a patent for an ear oximeter and helped lay the groundwork for cardiac catheterization, among other advances. Dr. Wood was honored by the American Heart Association and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and served as president of the American Physiological Society in 1980. He retired from Mayo in 1982. Dr. Wood is survived by his daughter, Phoebe Wood Bush ’64, three sons, and four grandchildren.


Frederic H. Bathke, 90, of Hayward, Wis., died April 23, 2009.

Roger A. Hultgren, 88, of Richland, Wash., died Jan. 28, 2009. He participated in research for the Manhattan Project in Kankakee, Ill., and at the project’s Hanford site in Washington state.


Marjorie Dixon Maki, 87, of White Bear Lake, Minn., died Feb. 12, 2009. President John F. Kennedy appointed her collector of customs of Minneapolis in 1961, and she served as director of the southern Minnesota customs district for 22 years.


Jeanette TenEycyk Moran, 85, of Bozeman, Mont., died Sept. 27, 2008.

Marjorie Dawson Clamons, 85, died May 11, 2009. She was active in community organizations, the Methodist church, and with Macalester. Mrs. Clamons is survived by a daughter, four sons (including Lawrence Clamons ’69), 13 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and sister Shirley Dawson Gist ’43.

Robert S. Clark, 87, of Bloomington, Minn., died May 18, 2009. Survivors include daughter Anne Clark Collins ’69 and brother Bruce Clark ’50.

Roy E. Eldred, 80, died June 2, 2004.


Phyllis Snyder Waidelich, 86, of Roseville, Minn., died April 16, 2009.


Donald M. Meisel, 85, of Minneapolis died Feb. 23, 2009. During his tenure as senior pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church from 1972 to 1992, he contributed to the social and economic transformation of downtown Minneapolis. He also marched with Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Ala., served as chaplain for the Minneapolis House of Representatives, and co-founded and moderated the Westminster Town Hall Forum, which is broadcast on public radio stations around the country. Macalester President Brian Rosenberg told the Minneapolis Star Tribune that Mr. Meisel, who served as a Macalester trustee for 21 years, “embodied the values of the college in his life and work.” Rev. Meisel is survived by a daughter, three sons (including Timothy Meisel ’90), nine grandchildren, and brother Arthur Meisel ’40.

Bruce L. Fetzer, 86, of Newport, N.C., died March 31, 2009.

Christine Drakakis Jardetzky, 78, died Feb. 15, 2009, in Far Rockaway, N.Y. She co-authored some of the first papers on the application of nuclear magnetic resonance to the field of biology.

1951

Constance Kane Gagnier, 79, of North Barrington, Ill., died March 2, 2009.


Arlene Bremer Kock, 77, of Rhinelander, Wis., died Sept. 6, 2008.

Ronald Wiesner, 85, of Naples, Fla., died April 13, 2009. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He taught economics and sociology and coached various sports at Edina West High School, and retired from a nearly 30-year career in education in 1984. He established a scholarship fund at Macalester in memory of his late wife, Patricia Wiesner, who was athletic director and women’s cross country coach at the college.

1952

Frederick H. Voigt, 80, died March 13, 2009, in Minnetonka, Minn. Survivors include his wife, Joan Nelson Voigt ’51, and brother John Voigt ’52.

1953
John W. Burger, 77, of Silver Bay, Minn., died April 28, 2009.


1954


Henry Patterson, 81, of St. Paul died Aug. 12, 2008.

Helen E. Willson, 77, died May 6, 2009, in Bettendorf, Iowa.

Carolyn Acton Wuthrich, 76, of Englewood, Colo., died April 14, 2009.

1955


1956
Barbara Olds Anuta, 74, of Boulder, Colo., died Feb. 24, 2009. She worked as a medical technologist while her husband, Karl Anuta ’57, attended law school. She also worked for the Boulder County Clerk, Elections Office, from 1975 to 2000. She was a founding member of the Boulder Council for International Visitors and was honored by the Daily Camera for her community service. Mrs. Anuta is survived by her husband, a daughter, three grandchildren, and sister Dorothy Olds Woodside ’55.

1957
Guillermo Guzman, 76, died April 22, 2009.

Alice Matayoshi Njus, 83, died March 29, 2009, in Santa Rosa, Calif.


Stephanie A. Wishnick, 74, of Bloomington, Minn., died Feb. 23, 2009. She was a retired medical technologist and a good friend to Macalester.

1958
Leonard L. Larson, 72, of Eagan, Minn., died March 20, 2009. Survivors include his wife, Lois Pugh Larson ’58, and son Justin Larson ’83.

Bruce L. Peterson, 72, of Jacksonville, Fla., died April 12, 2009.

1959

Blythe Johnson Strawn, 72, of Lakeland, Fla., and Coloma, Wis., died March 19, 2009. Survivors include her husband, James Strawn ’60.

1963


1967
Jack S. Cain, 63, of Stroudsburg, Pa., died March 27, 2009.

Joan Ellison Saxerud, 64, died Jan. 24, 2009, in Fargo, N.D.

1968
Donald P. Helmeke, 62, of Maple Grove, Minn., died Feb. 18, 2009. He helped develop numerous hunting products, including the first civilian leafy camouflage, and was best known for his design for duck nesting boxes.

Marcus A. Alexis, a former member of Macalester’s economics faculty, died May 27, 2009. He was 77. He was a former chairman of Northwestern University’s economics department and taught at Northwestern and the Kellogg School of Management for 29 years, retiring in 2005. Mr. Alexis is survived by his wife, Geraldine, a daughter, two sons (including Marcus Alexis ’81), and three grandchildren.

Dottie Dietz of North Oaks, Minn., wife of Charlton Dietz ’53, died Dec. 11, 2008. She was 78. She was a founding member and early president of the Lawyers Wives of Minnesota. Mrs. Dietz is survived by her husband, three children, and six grandchildren.

Patricia A. Donovan of St. Paul, who taught at Macalester in the 1960s, died May 17, 2009. She was 77. She also taught at Florida State University and the University of Illinois, and was director of college admissions counseling at St. Paul Academy/Summit School. Mrs. Donovan is survived by her husband, William Donovan (professor emeritus of art at Macalester), daughter Maura Donovan ’85, son Kevin Donovan ’80, and four grandchildren (including Macalester student Alexander Whitman ’13).

Irene D. Soltis, mother of former Macalester trustee Bruce Soltis ’66, died April 15, 2009. She was 95. After earning a nursing degree from the University of Minnesota, Mrs. Soltis worked at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, Minn., for many years. In addition to her son, she is survived by a daughter and three grandchildren.
Style Derby

BY ANDY STEINER ’90

THE GAME WAS MY IDEA. I’m sure it had a clever name that I can no longer remember, so let’s just dub it “Style Derby.”

A seasonal pastime, Style Derby wasn’t really a game of skill but more a game of observation. Each fall, when the incoming first-year class arrived on campus, my friends and I would take a close look at these newbies. We’d note their hairstyles and clothing choices—zeroing in on those with the most complicated looks—and then predict how long it would take for those looks to change, for the stiffly sculpted Mohawk to go limp, for the elaborately permed curls to lose their bounce, for the expensive leather backpack to get shoved into the back of a dorm-room closet.

I know firsthand about the transformations that college inspires. In the fall of 1986, I’d arrived at Macalester with a carefully cultivated look: jet-black hair cut in a heavily Aquanetted asymmetrical style topped off with liberally applied dark eyeliner and lipstick. I was the small-town Minnesota version of an ’80s punk-rock chick. And though this look took serious effort to achieve, I was determined to stick with it. But my resolve began to waver a few months into college, and by the end of my first year I’d relaxed into a hippie-inspired look. I even bought a peasant skirt at Coat of Many Colors and wore it to Springfest.

For me, these style changes were an inevitable part of growing up. Other friends went through their own transformations: sporty blond cheerleader to brown-haired grungster, fresh-faced prepster into unwashed artiste, Madonna lookalike to earnest scholar.

While my exterior evolution was obvious to everyone—my late first-year granola Barbie image soon morphed into a no-makeup feminist look—my interior evolution was of far greater significance. The friends I made in college, the classes I took, the study abroad experiences, all added up to transform me in profound ways that wouldn’t have been the same had I never set foot on Macalester’s campus. Those internal changes happened to all of us, of course. Style Derby was based on appearances, but the changes that truly mattered at Macalester were made to people’s substance, not their style.

I’ve stayed close with many college friends. Somehow they looked past my contrived hair and makeup and saw the real person inside. Those friends also morphed drastically over their college years, yet something good and true remained constant about each one of them.

THIS PAST JANUARY one of my dearest Mac friends got married. We met in first-year seminar and bonded during a cigarette break (another misguided effort to strike a pose). Like me, this friend has gone through many changes—on both the outside and the inside—and I’m glad to have been by her side for many of them.

Her midwinter Minneapolis wedding drew classmates from around the country. The night before the big event, a group of us gathered at a coffee shop we’d hung out in during the years following graduation. When my husband (whom I started dating freshman year, when he sported a long ponytail) and I walked in, our college friends were all there, clustered around a large table.

On the outside, the changes were obvious. We’re older. Some of us have wrinkles and less or grayer hair. One held his newborn baby; many had left kids home with babysitters. Seeing everyone together again made my heart swell with happiness. These are people who’ve seen me at my silliest, most pretentious, most confused moments, but somehow they still love me.

Style Derby judges would note that most of our carefully cultivated college styles faded long ago. What hasn’t faded is the bond created by growing up together, the intimate history we all share. Connections like these will never go out of style, and I’m thankful for that.

ANDY STEINER ’90 is a St. Paul-based writer and editor and a frequent contributor to Macalester Today.
Courses taught: 204
Students mentored: 5,618
Exams proctored: 21,262
Donors needed to support exceptional scholarship and learning: All of us

David’s Annual Fund gifts ensure that Macalester has the resources to provide a rigorous, intellectually challenging education taught by faculty who are leaders and innovators in their fields. These numbers represent just a few of the thousands of ways your contributions are used to strengthen and improve our college. Your participation matters—support the Annual Fund and be part of Macalester’s bright future.

David Lanegran ’63
Donor to the college since 1973
Majors: Political Science, Geography
Hometown: St. Paul
Profession: John S. Holl Professor of Geography at Macalester College

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Marvin Plaza, located near the library’s main entrance, was completed this summer. It is dedicated to the memory of Margaret Wallin Marvin ’39 GP ’09, ’03, a Macalester Distinguished Citizen and former trustee.