INSIDE:

• Muslim at Macalester
• Inside Mac’s Rankings
• Artful Life in Charleston

Double Major

Double Dare

For a quarter of Macalester students, **one major** just isn’t enough.  PAGE 12
Features

Conscious Cuisine  10
Persian-American eco-chef Louisa Shafia ’92 cooks for a sustainable, more connected world.

Double Dare  12
For some Mac students, one major just isn’t enough.

Campaign Conquers  17
In a tough financial climate, Macalester’s Step Forward campaign—that thanks to generous donors—surpasses its goal.

Muslim at Macalester  20
More than 30 Muslim students diplomatically juggle fitting in with representing their Islamic faith and culture.

Breaking Rank  26
A look at what the rankings get right—and wrong—about Macalester.

Housing Honcho  32
A quadriplegic friend plus a Macalester class led to a thriving nonprofit that creates housing for people with disabilities.

Artful Life  34
In Charleston, Helen Rice ’03 and Josh Nissenboim ’03 are running a flourishing marketing business and transforming a historic home.

ON THE COVER: Zoe Tomasello ’13 majors in both studio art and classics (photo by Steve Niedorf ’73)
Letters

Kudos for 3rd Culture Kids
Macalester's attention to Third Culture Kids (“At Home in the World,” Summer 2011) is long overdue. As a Mac TCK in the 1970s, I was fortunate to find several other students with similar backgrounds who provided support. As a fourth generation American in Korea with missionary parents, I was thrilled when the Korean librarian told me that Rev. Kagin, who'd been a missionary in Korea with my great-grandparents, was working on the library’s third floor. A Korean church held services in the chapel, and there was a Korean restaurant on Lexington Avenue. Other Third Culture students may not have been as lucky in finding connections. Did I ever meet all the others? I wonder what we could have shared with each other, and through our collaboration, shared with other students to enrich their time at Mac. The programs described in your article give me hope that Macalester is now embracing TCKs and continuing to provide the great experiences and education we treasure as alumni.

Fred Underwood ’76
Alexandria, Va.

Represent the rest of us
I’m frustrated with the emphasis Macalester publications put on economics graduates and lawyers and doctors. I’d really love to see more coverage of the other paths taken by Macalester students—journalists, chemists, painters, actors, community organizers, or geologists. I still love Mac; I just wish our institutions, painters, actors, community organizers, were written up in the alumni magazine, despite the fact that our lifestyles were inspired in part by our experiences at Mac.

Alese Colehour ’09
Eugene, Ore.

More on Davis
Thanks to Macalester Today and President Brian Rosenberg for your tributes to John B. Davis (Fall 2011). He truly embodied the Macalester spirit and played such an essential role in the college’s achievements. I was a student during the last years of John’s presidency and fondly remember his upbeat demeanor and jaunty stride. In 1997 John and Joy Davis were the first guests on our Gastronomic and Viticole tours of Burgundy. My husband placed my graduation picture on the guest room dresser and when they entered the room I heard John say, “Hail Macalester!” After a week spent touring Burgundy, a lovely friendship took root. Whenever I returned to Minneapolis, John and Joy would kindly invite me to their home, and we’d discuss the latest news and changes at Macalester, along with the arts, education, and world events. With each opening of the front door, John would invariably greet me with “Hail Macalester!”

John B. Davis’s impact on Macalester is concrete and lasting. His friendship will be missed but his memory is indelible.

Toni Rymanowski Tindillier ’81
Etigny, France

Correction
I can identify three of the women in the photo (above) labeled “Girls at Frosh Camp, 1939,” which appeared in a recent issue of Macalester Today (“Bagpipes and Bells,” Spring 2011). That’s Louise Nelson Carter ’43 seated at right, and me, Connie Cronon Thurber ’43, standing left of center next to the blanket roll.

Connie Cronon Thurber ’43
Newtown, Pa.

More on Davis
Thanks to Macalester Today and President Brian Rosenberg for your tributes to John B. Davis (Fall 2011). He truly embodied the Macalester spirit and played such an essential role in the college’s achievements. I was a student during the last years of John’s presidency and fondly remember his upbeat demeanor and jaunty stride. In 1997 John and Joy Davis were the first guests on our Gastronomic and Viticole tours of Burgundy. My husband placed my graduation picture on the guest room dresser and when they entered the room I heard John say, “Hail Macalester!” After a week spent touring Burgundy, a lovely friendship took root. Whenever I returned to Minneapolis, John and Joy would kindly invite me to their home, and we’d discuss the latest news and changes at Macalester, along with the arts, education, and world events. With each opening of the front door, John would invariably greet me with “Hail Macalester!”

John B. Davis’s impact on Macalester is concrete and lasting. His friendship will be missed but his memory is indelible.

Toni Rymanowski Tindillier ’81
Etigny, France

Reunion magic
There is snow in the mountains, and the gold exploration field season is winding down. This includes the process of packing up my monthly rate motel room and sorting through accumulated periodicals before going home for the winter. While doing so I came across several issues of Macalester Today, which I stopped to read. Thanks to Gabrielle Lawrence for her article on college reunions (“Back to School,” Spring 2011). The essay is insightful, astute, and nicely descriptive—I remember well the many hikes down Summit Avenue to the Mississippi. Lawrence has been an English major—or maybe psychology? I will seriously consider attending a future reunion.

Larry Pancost ’73
Lovelock, Nev.
Thank You for Stepping Forward

BY BRIAN ROSENBERG

Here is the goal I have set for myself: to write a column about the successful conclusion of the Step Forward campaign without mentioning a single number.

Elsewhere in this magazine is detailed enough information about numbers of dollars, scholarships, professorships, donors, and buildings to satisfy even the most quantitatively minded among us. These are powerful numbers—inspiring numbers—and I don’t want in any sense to diminish their importance.

But for me Step Forward has always been less about numbers than about the fundamental question I ask of all our work at Macalester: how does it advance our central mission of educating young women and men to be smart, skilled, passionate, and socially responsible people? Every institution should have a job that matters, and Macalester’s job is to provide for local, national, and global communities the sorts of people those communities require to thrive. This matters.

What do we need to do this job well? First, of course, we need students with the intelligence and motivation to succeed at the highest level; we need those students to be drawn from every background, belief system, and place so they can challenge and educate one another. We need to bring those students into the company of faculty and staff who are the best in their fields. We need to provide the tools and experiences—challenging classes, appropriate facilities, intensive research opportunities, immersive study abroad programs, meaningful civic engagement activities—that together comprise a great education.

And we need dedicated and generous stewardship from those who care about and have benefited from Macalester College: alumni first and foremost, but also parents and friends who have in various ways been touched by our work. Without such stewardship, it becomes dramatically more difficult to create and sustain the kind of educational community that fires our imaginations.

At its heart, the Step Forward campaign has been about posing this central question: Would the Macalester extended family rise to the stewardship challenge? Five years ago we couldn’t know that the answer to this question would be complicated by brutal economic circumstances that would test both the financial resiliency of the college and the philanthropic determination of our donors.

Yet despite these circumstances, the question has been answered with a definitive “yes.” You have stepped forward and put to rest the notion that the Macalester community lacked either the desire or the capacity to support a college that means so much to so many.

Macalester is now a sprightly 138 years old. During that institutional lifetime, each generation has done its part to make it a better place: from the Minnesota Presbyterian congregations that kept the college alive in its infancy, to President Charles Turck and his colleagues who placed the college on the world stage in the mid-20th century, to the faculty members who sacrificed deeply to keep the college afloat in the ’70s, to the staff and donors who carried out the groundbreaking Touch the Future campaign more than a decade ago. Now this generation has taken its place in that grand tradition of service by strengthening in countless ways life on the campus.

You have, through your determination and generosity, set the bar high for the years ahead. It has never been the Macalester way to settle or to strive for less tomorrow than we accomplished today. We reach for that which is just beyond our grasp. We step forward. The step we have taken in this campaign is a large one, but I am certain that it will be neither the last nor the largest in the ongoing life of the college.

So to all the generous donors and gifted faculty members and tireless staff members and remarkable students reading this column: thank you for what you have achieved and for what you will someday accomplish.

Raising over $156 million in five years is quite a feat.

(Rats. I almost made it.)

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

President Rosenberg at the June 2011 Wallace Society dinner
GIVEN THAT TODAY’S college students grew up with Harry Potter, Hagrid, Dumbledore, and the gang, it’s not surprising they’d bring that passion with them to Mac. The latest manifestation of Potter-mania is a student-organized Quidditch team, which played each Friday afternoon last fall on the main lawn. (No, they didn’t actually fly.)

The team, started by Joey Frankl ’14 (Wilmette, Ill.) and Sophia Nikitas ’14 (Brooklyn, N.Y.), began meeting in September after 160 students signed up for Quidditch at the annual student organization fair. Most weeks about 30 people showed up with their brooms, which they must keep between their legs as they chase the snitch (a fleet-footed, golden-suited fellow named Nick Whittredge ’15 (Northampton, Mass.), avoid the bludgers (dodgeballs), and throw the quaffle (soccer ball) through the ring (hula hoop).

The motto, says Nikitas, is “keep it goofy,” though as co-director Frankl notes, “People really do get into it.”

There are no tryouts, no practices, and no one is cut. When the group gathers on Friday afternoons, they split into two teams, choosing whichever position they prefer. Some participants dress up as Dobby or other Potter characters; others mix it up: for the first game Frankl wore a Santa hat and Nikitas dressed as a referee.

Not surprisingly, Quidditch is taken more seriously at certain Eastern colleges and at rival Carleton than it is at easygoing Mac. “Those schools have multiple teams and competitions,” says Frankl. “But we’re just a club, a low-pressure, fun way to start the weekend.” (Alumni welcome, they add.)
Keillor Bookstore Moves to Mac

SINCE 2004, when Rumination Books—formerly Hungry Mind Books—moved out of its Grand Avenue space, there has been no trade bookstore near Macalester. That’s about to change.

Common Good Books, an independent bookstore owned by writer and public radio personality Garrison Keillor, is moving to campus this spring. The independent bookstore will be housed in the Lampert Building, on the northeast corner of Grand and Snelling.

The Mac-owned building also houses the college’s textbook store. “We’re delighted that Common Good Books will be part of the Macalester community,” says President Brian Rosenberg, “and look forward to having a bookstore of its caliber on campus. Macalester has had a special relationship with Garrison Keillor since the very first Prairie Home Companion took place in the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Theater in 1974, and he’s been back to campus many times since. It’s simply a good fit for us.”

Renovations began in December, and the bookstore is expected to open in April. The store is currently located in the basement of a building in St. Paul’s Cathedral Hill neighborhood. “We’ll be just behind my favorite bakery and around the corner from a terrific cheese shop and a few blocks east of the old Hungry Mind, where I used to buy all my books,” says Keillor. “And Wet Paint, where I buy pens and paper. And around the corner from St. Paul’s on the Hill, a good Anglo-Catholic church. It’s a good neighborhood, and with all those college students around, there’s a sense of high spirits in the air, and you need to inhale that if you’re in the book business.”

“Common Good Books has found a large and loyal clientele, and we hope they’ll like the new store,” says Martin Schmutterer, store manager. “The new space is larger and more convenient, and we’ll partner with Macalester for more literary events.”

When he opened Common Good Books in 2006, Keillor wrote:

A bookstore is for people who love books and need
To touch them, open them, browse for a while,
And find some common good — that’s why we read.
Readers and writers are two sides of the same gold coin.
You write and I read and in that moment I find
A union more perfect than any club I could join:
The simple intimacy of being one mind.
Here in a book-filled room on a busy street,
Strangers — living and dead — are hoping to meet.

Interfaith House

WHEN ELSE BUT in a Macalester dorm can students have roommates representing eight different faiths?

That’s what’s unfolding in Kirk Hall’s Section 8, which last semester took on a new identity as Interfaith House. The multi-faith living space gives students an opportunity to explore various religious practices experientially.

“Mac has a reputation for being famously secular, but this living space speaks to the spirit of Macalester, which is welcoming and honors diversity,” says Barry Cytron, the Jewish chaplain in the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life (CRSL). “The students who live there reflect that diversity.”

The initiative was driven by Macalester’s Multifaith Council student group, which received 18 applications before choosing the house’s 9 residents. Cytron and CRSL colleague Eily Marlow ’97 meet regularly with the students, who have weekly Sunday dinners. The residents also hope to host at least one campus-wide event each semester and to expand that schedule in the future.

According to Interfaith House resident Katie Fleckenstein ’14 (Duluth, Minn.), her roommates identify as Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Muslim, Confucian, and atheist. “I decided to live in Interfaith House because I consider myself very religious, and have always wanted to learn about how other people view their faith,” Fleckenstein says. “This is a place where residents can be open and comfortable with their beliefs, and where we can learn from others about the similarities and differences between our religions. I’m interested in finding a way for different faiths to cooperate and work together for common goals.”

NEW ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS

Three Macalester professors were named to endowed professorships last fall. They are (from left) Tom Varberg, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Chemistry; Satoko Suzuki, DeWitt Wallace Professor of Asian Languages and Culture; and David Blaney, James Wallace Professor of Political Science.
WOMEN IN SUBURBIA

GROWING UP IN A SUBURB of Providence, Rhode Island, Charlotte Fagan ’12 noticed that suburbia could be isolating and alienating for women, especially for stay-at-home moms.

So as a geography major at Macalester, she decided to explore for her honors thesis whether a new kind of development called New Urbanism works better for women. Although she’s still sorting through her findings, the early evidence is: Yes, it does.

New Urbanism is a form of community design that returns to many of the features of old-fashioned neighborhoods—front porches, sidewalks, walkable designs, a range of housing types, and easily accessible transit and retail. Fagan chose two New Urbanist developments in the Twin Cities area—Liberty on the Lake in Stillwater and Excelsior & Grand in St. Louis Park, and used a traditional Eden Prairie housing development as her control. “More than half of Americans live in suburbs,” Fagan points out. “New urbanism is changing how suburbia is being built and being done.”

Advised by geography professor Dan Trudeau and funded by a Mellon Curricular Pathways grant, Fagan spent last summer door knocking and mailing surveys. Her findings: Liberty on the Lake, which boasts a grade school and many parks, has a strong place-based sense of community; women know their neighbors and feel connected to them. However, those benefits accrue mostly to stay-at-home moms.

Excelsior & Grand, by comparison, is a more empowering community for nontraditional women, such as singles or retirees. They found living on multiple bus routes and close to retail and restaurants very convenient and a huge time saver. The retirees also took advantage of a nearby community center and park as a place to meet people and find recreational opportunities.

At the control site development, by comparison, people spend most of their time in their own homes, don’t know their neighbors, and have to call people outside the area if they need help. Fagan even had trouble getting people in this Eden Prairie housing area to answer their doors and speak to her. “It was demoralizing, to be sure, but Charlotte stuck with it and creatively enlisted participants to help her recruit other neighbors,” says Trudeau. “Moments like these revealed her impressive resourcefulness and knack for adapting.”

Fagan, who is active in MacBike and spent a year working in women’s bicycling programs in Ecuador, also had an internship with the Minneapolis Park Board. After Mac she’d like to do graduate work in urban planning. “I’m really interested in public space, and in having the physical space for democratic exchange within our communities. We need to be reminded that there are people unlike ourselves in our communities, that we’re all in this together.”

Itasca Project

Through his Huffington Post blogs, President Brian Rosenberg has been an active voice recently in the national conversation about education and economics.

Locally, however, he has been exploring those issues even longer. In October 2010 Rosenberg joined the Itasca Project, an alliance of more than 50 people—primarily private sector CEOs—whose goal is to bolster Minnesota’s economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Rosenberg, University of Minnesota President Eric Kaler, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Chancellor Steve Rosenstone are the only college presidents in the group. Rosenberg—whose participation extends Macalester’s commitment to civic engagement—is also part of an Itasca task force on higher education.
GOOD TEAM CHEMISTRY, they say, often develops when athletes have long played together. Given that truism, two members of Macalester’s women’s basketball team should play together quite smoothly by now.

Co-captains—and twins—Jessica Rene ’12 and Shannon Rene ’12 (Eau Claire, Wis.) have been playing basketball together for 15 years, having joined their first team in second grade. Now they’re an important part of the Macalester team’s recent upward trajectory.

When head coach Ellen Thompson started recruiting the twins, the women’s program was still recovering from its 2004-05 season, when the team disbanded because of a lack of players. Seven years later, the team’s quick turnaround has meant it reached the MIAC playoffs two years in a row and hopes to do the same this season.

When head coach Ellen Thompson started recruiting the twins, the women’s program was still recovering from its 2004-05 season, when the team disbanded because of a lack of players. Seven years later, the team’s quick turnaround has meant it reached the MIAC playoffs two years in a row and hopes to do the same this season.

Head coach Ellen Thompson gives the twins some of the credit for that rebuilding. “Jess and Shannon have been an integral part of our success,” Thompson says. “They’re very protective of each other, which shows up on the court, and they’re in tune with each other. They are mentors to our younger players.”

The sisters, drawn to Mac by the chance to combine academics with athletics, have grown into key contributors. Last year Jessica received All-MIAC Honorable Mention recognition and was named the college’s Junior Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year. Shannon started in all 26 games of the 2010-11 season and led the team in assists.

Neither sister can identify a downside to playing together but can easily list the advantages. “I definitely think we have a twin connection on the court,” Jessica says. “Since we’ve been playing together so long, we work really well together. We help each other if part of our game is off.”

This year, making the playoffs won’t be enough for Shannon and Jessica. Both sisters, as well as their teammates, say that their goal is to not only qualify for the playoffs, but to play farther into the tournament during this, their last season of basketball together.

“I love playing with her,” Shannon says. “Our connection is unexplainable—and we have fun confusing the opponents, too.”
CRITICAL THEORY CONCENTRATION

Beginning this year, Mac courses such as Darwin/Nietzsche/Freud, Metaphysics in Secular Thought, and Dead White Men are linked: they all fall under the college’s new concentration in critical theory.

German professor Kiarina Kordela, who will direct the critical theory program with German professor David Martyn, received emails from 20 interested students the same day the concentration was announced. Momentum to add the concentration was driven by students who’d taken critical theory courses in various departments but recognized that their studies lacked a coherent vision. The new program links those classes; students can add the concentration to their regular academic major.

Mariana Roa Oliva ’13 first encountered critical theory through Kordela’s class Value: The Bad, the Ugly, and the Cheap, which explores philosophical texts on the theoretical and historical background of capitalism and the relationship among economics, politics, and culture. She’s planning to apply the concentration to her French major.

“Even though we could take the classes before, it’s important to have more specific guidance and the opportunity to write an extended paper focusing on critical theory,” Roa Oliva says. “It’s providing me with tools to gain more depth in my study of literature, history, and cultural expressions in general.”

Students who plan to pursue graduate studies in the humanities, arts, or social sciences will especially benefit, says Kordela. “Critical theory tends to form the methodological core of graduate study programs in these fields, so students already trained in critical theory are both more desired and better prepared for their graduate studies,” she says. “I have no doubt that the Macalester student body is ideal for this concentration to thrive.”

OF CONSULATES AND KINGS

Although Even Kvelland ’12 is from Oslo, he didn’t meet royalty from his country until he worked as an intern with the Norwegian consulate in Minneapolis last fall.

When Norway’s King Harald V and Queen Sonja toured the Upper Midwest for eight days in October, Kvelland’s duties included organizing Norwegian college students studying in the Midwest to gather at Minneapolis’s Augsburg College for a church service held in the royal couple’s honor. About 200 students made the trip.

“The Norwegian royal couple is down-to-earth and genuinely interested in meeting people, especially students,” says Kvelland, a political science major who had previously interned at the United Nations Development Program in Norway. “I had the chance to talk to them, and they asked questions about my fields of study, my college, and how I liked Minnesota.”

During the royal tour week, Kvelland also met older Norwegian-Americans, including some whose perceptions of Norway differed from his. (For example, he heard his first “Ole and Lena” joke, a longtime tradition in Minnesota’s Scandinavian-American communities.) He also met former vice president Walter Mondale ’50, who has Norwegian heritage and was tapped to introduce the king at a dinner for the royals in Minneapolis.

“It was an official royal visit, so lots of invitations went out to people from the Norwegian State Department and the U.S. State Department,” Kvelland says. “I felt really privileged to have dinner with them.”
Conscious Cuisine

BY AMY GOETZMAN ’93 ➔ PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CROUSER

It’s probably been a while since you had a good Persian meal. Or more likely, you’ve never tasted this aromatic, flavorful, and venerable cuisine. Chef and cookbook author Louisa Shafia ’92 wants to change that. By introducing Americans—including Iranian Americans, such as herself, disconnected from ancestral traditions—to a taste of Persian culture, she hopes to build a bridge between the two lands.

Child of an American mother and an Iranian father, Shafia grew up with conflicted messages about her heritage. The Iranian hostage crisis dominated the headlines when she was a grade-schooler, and she noticed her father was uncomfortable identifying with his culture. “My dad actually told people he was German. He really did not look German!” she laughs. “I know that Iranians love Americans, that they are very well-educated, and they want to have a free society. But many Americans have trouble separating the Iranian people from the Iranian government. So in certain ways I thought it was something to be ashamed of.”

But, oh, that food! Her mother embraced the challenge of cooking foods from her husband’s homeland. “My dad’s family would visit from Tehran, and my aunt would be in the kitchen all day. We’d have this incredible food—rice, kebabs, and rich stew. That’s really where it began for me.”

Shafia filed away sensory memories of citrus, herbs, and Persian spices, then headed to Minnesota for college. “I liked Mac’s liberal politics and small size, which reminded me of the Quaker school I attended in Philadelphia. I also liked the option to study abroad, which was emphasized more at Mac than at other colleges,” she says.

Once she got to St. Paul she was pleased to find Khyber Pass, an Afghani restaurant near campus that serves food similar to Iranian cooking. Shafia double-majored in Spanish and women’s studies and studied yoga with Beverly White, wife of former philosophy professor David White. Says Shafia, “She and I talked about our love of cooking, and she told me about her 1977 book Bean Cuisine: A Culinary Guide for the Ecogourmet. By then it was out of print.”

Shafia studied in Spain for a year, and after college, volunteered at public radio station WHYY in Philadelphia. That led to freelance news reporting, producing, and finally editing Fresh Air with Terry Gross. But this wasn’t the work she was meant to do, Shafia felt, so she moved to New York to pursue an acting career. Nope. That wasn’t it either.

“Then I asked myself what I felt passionate about. I’d always loved to cook, so in 2000 I took a summer gig cooking at a vegetarian yoga retreat in Northern Maine.” At the end of that summer, a friend gave her a favorite vegetarian cookbook: Beverly White’s Bean Cuisine.

After all that creative wandering, the kitchen grounded her. She attended the Natural Gourmet Institute of New York, then worked in legendary kitchens, including San Francisco’s vegan Millennium, raw food emporium Roxanne’s, and New York’s Aquavit and Pure Food and Wine. She settled in Brooklyn and began doing what she was born to do.

In 2004 she founded Lucid Food, a green, sustainable catering company (now a consulting business), and developed a reputation that led to blogging on Rachael Ray’s Every Day cooking website and writing for DIY magazines like ReadyMade. Her cooking videos now regularly appear on Ray’s and other culinary websites. She teaches the old-fashioned kind of classes, too.

In 2009 Ten Speed Press published Lucid Food, Shafia’s favorite recipes for a fresh, sustainable, and seasonal lifestyle. Though eco-cookbooks are packed pretty tightly on the bookshelves these days, Shafia’s stands out. She has an activist’s passion for seasonal eating, and explains the health benefits of becoming more conscious of our food system. But this isn’t a hippie manifesto. Instead, it’s a hip, epicurious guide that easily incorporates global seasonings—including Iranian ones. Although the book includes a few Persian recipes, it’s her second book, due out in 2013 from Ten Speed, that will be a full collection of fresh, uncomplicated Persian recipes adapted for American cooks.

She’d hoped to visit Iran to research her new cookbook, but her father’s citizenship has made obtaining a visa difficult. So instead she’s heading to Los Angeles. “LA has the largest Iranian-American population in the country. People call it ‘Tehrangeles’ or ‘Irangeles.’ I’ll test recipes there. Writing this book will be a journey of self-discovery. I’ve spoken to a lot of Persian Americans who say they’d love to cook the way their grandmothers cooked, but it seemed so complicated, and they never wrote anything down. People want to reconnect with these flavors. I know I do.”

AMY GOETZMAN ’93 is a Minneapolis writer.

Persian-American eco-chef Louisa Shafia ’92 cooks for a sustainable, more connected world.
At Macalester, as at most liberal arts colleges, the choices are legion. Should you major in political science with a global health concentration? Or in media studies with a Spanish minor? What about the draw of Asian studies, art history, or archaeology?

About a quarter of Mac students, finding it impossible to narrow it down to just one major, end up taking on two. Not surprisingly, the majority of such combinations are exactly what you’d expect: economics plus math or political science plus international studies. In other words, industrious but predictable.

What’s more intriguing are those adventurous souls who take on truly disparate double majors—math and English, say, or religious studies and music. These are the students we wanted to meet, and we thought you’d like to meet a few of them, too.

Here, then, are four such young people, for whom a liberal arts education has led to a special kind of breadth.
Zoe Tomasello ’13

Hometown: Half Moon Bay, Calif.
Extracurriculars: Art Alliance, Art Gallery monitor

I attended an arts high school but really wanted a well-rounded liberal arts program in college instead of an arts conservatory. I got into classics because I really wanted to study Hebrew. Next I took an Introductory to Archaeology class with Professor Andy Overman and that got me interested in the major. Last summer I went on the dig in Omrit, Israel, which was an amazing experience—I’d love to go back. In art I do mostly drawing but have also taken technical theater, fibers, and 3D design. I want to work in a museum after college so I’ve taken classes exploring the cultural aspects of museums. In the spring I’m going to Florence and will take museology and conservation classes as well as art history. I just feel at home in museums; I could stay in them for days and be totally happy. My adviser, classics professor Beth Severy-Hoven, said that having a double major would help me get into the museum field. I hope so—I want art to be in my life forever.
Emmy Lim Yiran ’13

Hometown: Singapore

Extracurriculars: Thai kickboxing, gender-neutral housing

I’m from an Chinese family that has lived in Singapore for many years. I grew up speaking Mandarin, English, a Chinese dialect called Hokkien, and Singlish, a kind of Creole English. My parents had never heard of Macalester and only agreed to let me study here as long as I kept good grades. If you’re from an Asian family, you’re not going to be sent overseas to major in something like theater. So computer science was my first major—something that would get me a job. I’ve ended up really liking the program. I started taking Japanese because I had a friend from Japan when I was in junior college; she was my first teacher. The Japanese classes here have enchanted me. There’s almost no overlap between my classmates in computer science and those in Japanese. Next semester I’ll study at Waseda University in Tokyo. My ideal future job would merge my two majors. Or I might look for a computer science job here in the states because the laws protecting GLBT people are stronger here than they are in Singapore.
Ben Alterman ’12
Hometown: Boston
Extracurriculars: Men’s soccer goalkeeper, works four jobs

Everyone starts asking “Why?” when they’re two years old. I just never stopped. Physics helps me build a mathematical understanding of reality and philosophy helps me understand the reality of our relationships with other people. In one I’m studying theoretical particle physics, and in the other I’m exploring the relationship between individuals and community. I’m doing a capstone in physics with Professor Tonnis ter Veldhuis and an honors thesis in philosophy with Professor Martin Gunderson. I chose Macalester because I wanted to continue the classical humanist education that I had in high school at Latin Academy, by taking diverse courses and thinking across disciplinary lines. The faculty has been very supportive of my double major; it’s been a positive experience all the way around. As for graduate school, I’ll get there, but I’m not sure which discipline yet.
Joe Lalli ’12

Hometown: Simsbury, Conn.
Extracurriculars: Mock trial, moot court

I came to Mac thinking I’d be a lawyer like both my parents, so the political science major came first. Also, I’d enjoyed being involved in political campaigns in my home state. But I had a really good biology teacher in high school so I started taking some bio classes here. One class became two, which became a minor and then a major. Then last summer I did a full-time internship in a Seattle research lab looking into HIV antibodies, and it was fantastic. Now I think I may want to pursue that kind of work rather than politics or law. Or maybe I’ll end up doing science policy work, something that combines the two. What Mac allowed me to do was pursue my interests as they came at me. I didn’t expect to double major, but I didn’t want to abandon either passion. Only in a place like this can you end up with a double major like mine.

Says: “Political work can be frustrating; it’s hard to change institutions.”

Says: “Campaign politics can be a real high.”

Parents used to say: “What will you never be, Joe? A lawyer!”

Very involved in mock trial during his first three years at Mac

Might work as a bio tech in a lab for a year to see if it’s a good fit
The Leonard Center is a gathering place on campus, and it provides a much better forum for athletics and general wellness. New investments like this will continue to benefit the school for a long, long time.”

—Erik Jackson ’05, Annual Fund Class Agent

In what was arguably one of the worst economic periods in recent history, Macalester—thanks to the generosity of its alumni and friends—met its goal of raising a historic $150 million in the Step Forward campaign. Together we even managed to surpass that goal, ultimately raising over $156 million during the 2008–2011 campaign. And what a difference that money has made. >>>>>>>>

We made it. You made it happen.

“In a tough financial climate, Macalester’s Step Forward campaign surpasses its goal.”

OVER

$156 million

TOTAL MONEY RAISED
First, there are the buildings: The Leonard Center—the campaign’s first project—opened up fitness, health, and wellness opportunities for the entire campus community. Across Shaw Field, construction on the first phase of the Janet Wallace Fine Arts renovation and expansion will wrap up this summer. At the corner of Snelling and Grand, Markim Hall—home to the Institute for Global Citizenship—opened in 2009 as the state’s first higher education building to earn LEED-platinum certification. When Macalester’s Class of 2016 arrives this fall, they will have never known the college without these innovative spaces.

But Step Forward’s legacy—your legacy—isn’t just about buildings. It’s about 47 new scholarships and 8 new professorships. It’s about the more than 20,000 donors whose gifts combined to form a strong foundation for the college’s future. Your gifts will ensure access for deserving students, support for talented faculty, and state-of-the-art athletics and wellness, arts, and global citizenship learning opportunities for the entire community. Your generosity—the gifts of the entire Macalester community, scattered across the world—are an overwhelming show of support for the distinctive mission of the college you love. And for that we say, Thank you.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Raised</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$55 million</td>
<td>New and renovated facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$22.5 million</td>
<td>Annual fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1,177** Number of days between Twin Cities launch event on Oct. 10, 2008, and campaign close on Dec. 31, 2011

“The campaign results confirm my belief that Macalester alumni are determined to be good stewards of the college. Because of our donors, volunteers, and Advancement staff, we will be able to be more accessible to students with financial need and provide an even better education.” —Brian Rosenberg, President

$38 million for student support

$29 million for faculty support
“We were one of the first among our peer schools to have a global health program. There was a lot of student interest right away, and now community and global health is the largest concentration on campus. So it’s a great time for the Edens Endowed Professorship in Global Health, which will really be a catalyst for growth.”

—Devavani Chatterjea, director, Program in Community and Global Health

“Markim Hall represents a lot of Macalester ideals: rigorous scholarship, sustainability, and practical learning. By combining internships, study abroad, and civic engagement, the IGC separates Macalester from other colleges. There are record numbers of classes with civic components and student leaders in civic engagement.”

—Chris Fowler ’12, IGC Student Council member (Toronto, Canada)

“Endowed professorships allow us to honor the work of an extraordinary colleague while freeing up dollars we can then use to enhance academic programming—or perhaps sometime down the road, hire in another area of need.”

—Kathy Murray, Provost

“At Macalester I’ve made awesome friends from all over the world, met the high academic expectations of my professors, and benefited from their willingness to help me learn. The scholarship I received started my life here, and I’m extremely thankful.”

—Jose Rubio ’12 (Cumbaya, Ecuador)

**New chairs established**
- Franklyn J. and Julia N. Armstrong Endowed Professorship in Mathematics
- James F. Armstrong Endowed Professorship
- Charles and Kathleen Berg Endowed Faculty Fellow
- Lynn and Wesley Edens Endowed Professorship in Global Health
- Karl Egge Endowed Professorship in Economics
- Mark G. Leonard and Candace Hewitt Leonard Endowed Professorship in Mathematics and Natural Sciences
- Middle Eastern Studies Endowed Professorship
- Maxine and Winston Wallin Endowed Faculty Fellow

**From left:** Ethan Forsgren ’11, Mollie Mayfield ’11, and Maria Masha Kuzentsova ’12 were all Taylor Public Health Fellows in 2010.

**Markim Hall**

**Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center construction, December 2011**

**112**
NUMBER OF ENDOURED SCHOLARSHIPS ESTABLISHED OR AUGMENTED

**65**
PERCENT OF ALUMNI WHO CONTRIBUTED TO CAMPAIGN
More than 30 Muslim students juggle fitting in with their Islamic faith and culture.

When you are Muslim at Macalester, it’s the little things that are tricky. When Rayanatou Laouali ’12 (Niamey, Niger) is introduced to a man, he will often reach out to shake hands. But where Laouali comes from, women don’t touch men who are not blood relatives. Each time she wonders whether to explain why she doesn’t shake hands—and risk offending someone she has just met—or accept his handshake, knowing it’s only intended as a friendly greeting.

When you’re Muslim—and live in a culture that’s mostly not—there are always decisions to be made, and sometimes you don’t even realize you’re making them. Laouali’s first experience living outside Muslim culture came when she attended the United World College in Victoria, British Columbia. Coming from a Muslim country, she was accustomed to all meat being halal or acceptable, which means that it was slaughtered in a specific way. “At home I never worried about food,” says Laouali. “I never imagined there was meat I couldn’t eat, so for the first three months at UWC, I ate the meat.” By the time she arrived at Macalester, she understood that she’d be confining herself to the vegetarian fare at Café Mac.

Rajisa Abdulle Omar’14 grew up in Hopkins, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis. Her family moved to the U.S. from Somalia with a six-year stopover in Pakistan in between. Although Abdulle Omar had spent half her life in the U.S., her mother nevertheless worried about sending her off to college.

However, while attending an open house at the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life (CRSL), Mom was reassured by seeing the college’s mosque—a room located on the lower level of the chapel furnished with prayer rugs, Qur’ans, and other literature. “Any room could become a mosque,” explains Abdulle Omar. “Islam is a very portable religion, as long as you have a prayer rug.
Rayanatou Laouali '12 is a Davis UWC scholar and winner of a 2011 Davis Project for Peace grant.
Rajisa Abdulle Omar ’14 prays in Macal-ester’s mosque, located on the lower level of the chapel.
and a Qur’an.” There has been a mosque somewhere at Macalester for more than 25 years, according to a 1986 issue of The Mac Weekly.

Which doesn’t mean it’s always easy to pause five times a day for the traditional salah or formal prayers. Although most of the formal prayers—early morning, around noon, just after sunset, and at nightfall—don’t conflict with classes, the late afternoon prayer sometimes requires flexibility in observance, praying a little early, a little late, or acknowledging that sometimes fewer prayers will have to do.

Even within the Muslim Student Association there is variety in practice and background. The MSA meets weekly and discusses topics such as, How do Muslim life and college life coexist? What about women’s roles? How do we understand creation and evolution? The group has a core of about 10 regular attendees out of 32 Mac students who have self-identified as Muslim.

MSA often holds an Eid “festivity” dinner in Smail Gallery. (There are two Eid holidays. Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting, which happens early in the fall semester. Eid al-Adha occurs after the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, and is observed by those who have made the pilgrimage.) Last year MSA sponsored an event featuring the music and poetry of Muslim artists and this November they hosted a henna and Arabic calligraphy night. The group is also discussing holding an Islamic Awareness Week this year.

Salman Haji ’14 (Albuquerque) is originally from Arusha, Tanzania, but has lived in the U.S. for 11 years. He belongs to the Ismailism branch of Shia Islam and believes he is one of only two Shia Muslims at Macalester. Haji and Abdulle Omar both took the course Islamic World Past and Present. “Sometimes in class, we read literature critical of Islam,” says Abdulle Omar, “but when someone objected, the professor offered the chance to give another point of view.”

Asked his opinion about the climate in class, Haji says, “I never felt I had to speak for everyone Muslim, and I could speak up if a reading seemed biased. I felt great when students would ask me questions, and I could help them understand. For example, I have been asked, ‘How did you learn to recite the Qur’an and pray?’ To many it is fascinating that Muslims who don’t speak Arabic can memorize parts of the Qur’an at such a young age.”

Another popular question is about the differences between Ismaili Shia Muslim and Sunni Muslim. Haji also tutors Arabic, which is not the language he grew up speaking—that was Gujarati—but one he has studied intensively.

A still-powerful memory from his Tanzanian childhood, reinforced when Haji spent a summer in Egypt studying Arabic, was hearing the Azaan, the five-times-daily call to prayer. So when he was asked to participate in the 9-11 anniversary memorial service, he called people to prayer in this traditional way. Protestant Chaplain KP Hong had approached the MSA about participating in the service and Haji volunteered because “I felt we needed to have a voice. Every religion needs to remember and reflect on the 9-11 attacks.”

Despite the support of the CRSL and the fellowship of the MSA, being away from family during the holidays can be hard, especially when your holiday is largely invisible in the wider culture. But with the support of the Department of Multicultural Life, department coordinator and Muslim Afifa Benwahoud adds a touch of home by preparing special foods for Ramadan’s Break of the Fast.

She usually prepares a Moroccan garbanzo bean soup called Harira and a tagine with vegetables—chicken tagine with potatoes and olives or Moroccan meatballs and rice. The department coordinator also invites other members of the Muslim community to help cook or bake; some bring dates, walnuts, and milk; others a homemade cake, soup, or dish from another part of the Muslim world, such as Algeria, Tunisia, or Morocco.

Afifa also practices Arabic with Haji and lets the Muslim students know about cultural events around town, such as a discussion of Arab Spring at a local coffee shop or the Twin Cities Arab Film Festival.

Most Muslim students are hard to pick out on campus, but not Laouali and Abdulle Omar, who regularly wear a hijab or headscarf. Abdulle Omar explains that at home or on an all-girls residence hall floor she needn’t wear a headscarf inside, “but on campus I always have to wear it.”

“Some Muslim girls see the headscarf as a burden, something their parents oblige them to wear, but many of us want to wear it and cannot imagine coming out without it,” says Laouali. “At home in Niger people really respect me for wearing it. If I’m out walking with friends who are not wearing a scarf, it feels like boys greet me more respectfully.” In the
Although most people at Macalester have a basic understanding of Islam, Muslim students wish their fellow students knew more.

U.S., however, it can be a visual barrier, getting in the way of making friends. “It may cause people to see me as someone who doesn’t want to talk or be friends,” she says. “That changes when they get to know me.” Still, like most of their peers, these three students have developed friends from a wide variety of backgrounds through shared classes, dorm floors, and other social circles.

Apparel-wise, it’s not just the hijab that’s different. Shopping for clothes in the Twin Cities is difficult for Laouali because many items designed for the American market are too revealing, short, or tight. “Thank goodness for the Somali malls,” she laughs. Two of these malls—Karmel Square and Village Market—are located in South Minneapolis, home to much of the local Somali population. Because many Somalis are Muslim, Islamic religious items, as well as food, clothing, books, and housewares, are also found at these malls.

Although most people at Macalester have a basic understanding of Islam, the Muslim students say they wish their fellow students knew more. Haji regrets the fact that many Americans are isolated from Islam, which means all their impressions of the faith come from the media, which often presents the Middle East as a violent area. He faults not only Western, but also Middle Eastern media, pointing out that Al Jazeera broadcast Osama bin Laden’s messages.

Most students are familiar with Muslim belief in one God and the practices of fasting, the Hajj, and charity for the poor, says Laouali. The thing that makes her heart drop is when she hears talk of jihad. “The fear the West has of Islam after 9-11 is understandable, but Islam is a religion of peace,” she says. “Some people who call themselves Muslims have done things that are not Islamic at all. It’s worth learning and reading about what the Islamic faith really is.”

One group that really does get the special needs of Muslims is Bon Appétit, the college food service. The Muslim students are grateful for the effort the food service staff has made to accommodate them. During the fasting days of Ramadan, Bon Appétit makes box lunches available, which students can pick up and eat after sundown when eating is permissible. They also appreciate that Café Mac always has non-meat options, says Abdulle Omar. “You don’t have to ask for it; it’s preconsidered, so you don’t feel like you’re being a burden.”

After a year of eating vegetarian food at Café Mac, Laouali took a different tact. She spent a year living in Hebrew House, where the Kosher dietary requirements were enough like the Islamic ones that they could all eat the same food. Still, for simplicity’s sake, those meals, too, gravitated toward vegetarian. As a bonus of living there, she learned about potato pancakes and the Jewish holidays. She now lives off campus in an apartment with two roommates—one a Muslim roommate and the other a devout Christian. In picking roommates, it was lifestyle compatibility rather than religion that mattered most.

Another potentially problematic aspect of campus living is the drinking scene. However, the consensus among the Muslim students seems to be that there is plenty to do at Macalester that doesn’t involve alcohol, and that they can easily avoid the party scene. “When I first left home, so many things were shocking,” says Laouali, “but I’ve gotten used to it. I just don’t go places where there is a lot of drinking and music with offensive lyrics.”

When asked what Macalester could do better to make Muslim students feel welcome and comfortable, Haji said, “Macalester is already doing so much that Muslims appreciate to accommodate us. It’s not about changing everything to make it feel like home. If too much was changed to accommodate us, it would not have been as enriching an experience.”

“Anyone can fit in at Macalester,” says Laouali. Then, wistfully recalling meals at home, she expressed one small wish on behalf of Muslim students: “If once in a while Café Mac could have halal meat, that would be wonderful.”

Jan Shaw-Flamm ’76, a writer in the communications office, is a regular contributor to Macalester Today.
Salman Haji ’14 (right) and friend Vincent Siegerink ’14 fill up at Café Mac’s salad bar. Bon Appétit, which runs student dining, has made a great effort to provide vegetarian options for Muslim students.
A look at what the rankings get right—and wrong—about Macalester.

BY ERIN PETERSON  ILLUSTRATIONS BY SHANNON BRADY

U.S. News & World Report may not have been the first publication to try to condense an entire college experience into a number and a few eye-popping phrases, but it was definitely the catalyst that sparked a flood of imitators. These days there are dozens of books, magazines, and websites that promise to share the essence of a school in a number, a letter grade, or a paragraph or two. They bestow endless designations—“Easiest Campus to Get Around!” “Best College Radio Station!”—which are occasionally illuminating, but more often simply perplexing.

Macalester has piled up its share of top rankings, “best of” titles, and the occasional dubious distinction. To find out which rankings rang true and which didn’t quite hit the mark, we talked to the people who know the college best: the students, faculty, and staff who study and work here. Call us subjective, but their opinions are number one in our book.
What they say:

- One of 100 "Best Value" Colleges, Princeton Review, 2011

What we add:

- One of the top 10 “Most Intellectual” Colleges, UNIGO.com, 2010
- 25 New Ivies, Newsweek.com, 2006
- #22 Brainiac Colleges, Newsweek, 2011

What they say:

- "Although I hope that our exposure through the rankings causes prospective students who have never heard of Mac to check us out, the rankings don't really get at the ethos of this place. The work-hard, play-hard mentality, the sense of responsibility to the community, and the respect for diversity and relationships with difference are not relayed through percentages.” —Laurie Hamre, Vice President for Student Affairs

- "I think the rankings business is not especially helpful or substantive. It’s fine as a form of light entertainment, but not as a way of actually judging or selecting colleges." —Brian Rosenberg, President

- "The rankings provided me with a general framework of what Macalester values: academics, a diverse student body, and an emphasis on extracurriculars. It was an outline of the general Mac experience, but like any outline, details are left out. And the details—learning of a delicious, vegan, gluten-free curry recipe from your roommate from India or discussing the heteronormative constructs of Harry Potter—shouldn’t be just glanced over.” —Kathy Kim ’12, Student Body President

What we add:

- "Macalester students are academic high achievers. We draw some outstanding students to the sciences, where they have the opportunity to undertake research with faculty. Many of these projects lead to scientific publications, so that our students learn science not just through lectures and problem sets but by actually doing science." —Tom Varberg, Professor of Chemistry

- "How do you define the ‘smartness’ of Macalester students? No ranking can capture the extent of students’ intellectual curiosity and the countless ways they put their intelligence into action, from social justice to academic research that explores complex, challenging global issues. Rankings simply can’t capture the energy and enthusiasm with which Mac students approach different academic disciplines and extracurricular activities.” —Jeff Allen, Director of Admissions

- "I don’t mean to stereotype the college, but a great number of students are intelligent people who know they’re intelligent, and sometimes may take that status a little too far. But if you want somewhere that gives you the opportunity to challenge and nurture your mind, then Macalester is the perfect place.” —Collin Calvert ’13

By far the smartest football team I’ve been a part of!” —Donovan Kavish ’13
Civically Engaged

What They Say:
- College for Visionaries, HuffingtonPost.com, 2011
- “Macalester students have an honest and profound desire to try to make the world a better place.” Students’ Guide to Colleges, 2007
- “People who come here have a purpose. They know how to commit to a community and engage themselves in meaningful work.” Princeton Review’s Colleges with a Conscience, 2005
- #4 Most Service-Oriented, Newsweek, 2011

What We Add:
About 90 percent of the student body engages in the local community in some capacity before graduation, and more than 100 students each year are involved in one of the college’s civic leadership programs, which require working 3 to 8 hours weekly in a local nonprofit or school. Twenty-one different academic departments offer classes with a civic engagement component.

“Our students want to make the world a more sustainable, just, and life-giving place. They work hard to understand the problems and work in partnership with the community to come up with solutions. Students today are mindful and concerned about the way in which they work in communities rather than just what they do. They understand that asking the hard questions of meaning and purpose, as well as exploring what fuels their commitments, will help them sustain their work in the long haul.” —KARIN TRAIL-JOHNSON, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

“Macalester is one of the most creative, prepared, and active colleges in the United States for civic engagement. For example, I was one of 12 fellows who received a Chuck Green Fellowship, during which we spent a spring seminar exploring democratic theory and social change case studies, then found a partner organization with which to implement a program. I spent the summer working full time with the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota. But even students who never utilize the opportunities for civic engagement are central in building and guiding what civic engagement means.” —Ezequiel Jimenez-Martinez ’13
Dubious Distinctions

What They Say:
• 10th least number of religious students, Princeton Review, 2011

What We Add:
“As a Christian who puts a great importance on my faith and lifestyle motivated by Jesus Christ, I would say I am in the noticeable minority of Macalester students. Because religious conversations rarely come up and tend not to be spoken about in depth, I feel that students who identify with a religion are clumped into one group and connected with stereotypes. I wish I’d have more questions about my faith asked of me, but as a whole, I feel there is a general respect for different religions.”
—David Melms ’13, Student Leader, Mac Fellowship of Christian Athletes

“Many of our students are searching for authentic religious or spiritual practice here. Our Multifaith Council, for example, is made up of students who represent a wide range of religious and spiritual traditions. Their goal is to provide opportunities to engage in dialogue on many issues at the core of a host of religious traditions, and to respectfully disagree—and at times respect fully agree. These are skills that could be well learned by others on this planet. I’m also proud that religious and spiritual life has no boundaries on this campus. The Chaplains and the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life are here to support and host all kinds of conversations, projects, events, and outreach. But other student groups and offices—such as the Department of Multicultural Life and the Civic Engagement Center—also provide venues for discussing questions of religious importance.”
—Chaplain Lucy Forster-Smith, Associate Dean for Religious and Spiritual Life

What They Say:
• One of the 10 Worst Football Teams of All Time, ESPN.com

What We Add:
“We’re proud that we’ve won 10 football games in the past two years.”

International Outlook

What They Say:
• Outstanding Study Abroad, U.S. News & World Report, 2010
• “Macalester has an internationalist view of the world...pairing academic rigor with global perspective.” Fiske Guide to Colleges, 2012
• “Each day in Café Mac is an adventure in global cuisine.” Fiske Guide to Colleges, 2010

What We Add:
Between 55 and 60 percent of each class studies abroad at least once during their Mac experience; that doesn’t take into account the 12 percent of Macalester students who are international students themselves.

“One of the best illustrations of Macalester’s international focus is the International Organization Show, which brings together all the pieces of the cultural puzzle. Each year, hundreds of people attend these colorful performances. Also, I don’t think the rankings gurus can do justice to the international host family program. So many people, including me, consider their hosts their second families. It’s a rare gift, and it enriches our experience and helps us enjoy the country to the fullest.”
—Hanna Zimnikaya ’12 [Minsk, Belarus]

“The majority of U.S. students who study abroad do so on short-term programs, but our commitment is to a full semester. We’re holding the line against the trend of short programs. In addition, almost all our students study abroad independently because we want them out of the Macalester bubble. We also try to pair students with their interests—for example, we found a physics major a placement with the Institut Astrophysique in Paris, where she was a part of the dark matter research team. She did 10 weeks of full-time physics research, all in French.”
—Paul Nelson, Director of the International Center
“Most Macalester students don’t spend too much time worrying about their looks.” —College Prowler

“Macalester students are not exactly fashion-conscious, but that doesn’t mean that they have no sense of style. A lot of people here have amazing style because they aren’t following only what is trendy. Students here play with fierce, retro, and fashion-forward styles to create outfits with unique elements and personalities. With the thrift shops just down Grand, Macalester’s student style is eclectic, slightly hipster, and seriously street ready, although even with an appreciation for budget-minded purchases I’ve had my breath taken away by a pair of neon orange Jeffrey Campbell booties. Another bonus is that our school isn’t plagued by hoodies. Overall, there’s not huge pressure to be swagged out at Mac, but thanks to that, I think we have a relaxed environment where a variety of fashion choices are welcome, whether that means your grandpa’s old sweater, a lumberjack flannel from Everyday People, or those really cool Nikes you got back in 10th grade. Macalester is holdin’ it down for the Midwest college fashion scene.” —Kiah Zellner-Smith ’14
A quadriplegic friend plus a Macalester class led to a thriving nonprofit creating housing for people with disabilities.
mprobable, one corner of Stephen Vander Schaaf's office is anchored by a piano. The others are lined with shelves groaning under the weight of binders containing proposals for homes for people with disabilities. Photos of groundbreaking cover the walls, the subjects' attire changing with the era. In the earliest, the blazers hanging from Vander Schaaf's lanky frame are paid. In more recent ones, his thick wavy hair has begun to grey.

For three decades, Stephen "Shep" Vander Schaaf '78 has gotten to work at 4 a.m., taken a break near 7 for a half-hour swim, and returned to the job he's held since 1982: President and CEO of Accessible Space, Inc. In that time, the St. Paul-based nonprofit has grown from five small, affordable homes to a $500 million network of 110 buildings in 31 states housing 3,100 people.

The idea of combining barrier-free housing with on-site support services might not sound revolutionary now, but in 1978, assisted living didn't exist. There was no Americans with Disabilities Act to make public buildings accessible to all. There weren't even curb cuts for people in wheelchairs. And there was virtually nowhere for a young paralyzed man to live with any degree of independence.

In 1975, Mike "Hondo" Pesch—a boyhood friend of Vander Schaaf and Stephen "Wigs" Wiggins '78—broke his neck diving into a lake in northern Minnesota. When Pesch finished rehab, his options were to move back in with his parents or into a nursing home. Neither alternative promised even a taste of the adult life he had just begun to savor.

When Pesch went into rehab at the Courage Center in Golden Valley, Minn., Wiggins got a job there as an orderly. It was much better than a nursing home, but it was still an institution. "You still ate when the bell went off," recalls Vander Schaaf.

With no concept of the bureaucratic machine they were about to play on the freeway, kids, "says Vander Schaaf. "But they finally found a new buildings, three in Minneapolis and two in St. Paul. Site selection was the main focus of the Mac honors project at the heart of it all. Wiggins and Berg worked with Lanegran to imagine the best settings for future residents, such as proximity to bus lines and medical services.

To comply with the era's red tape, the homes were duplexes, with two doors and two addresses, but cominglydom indoor space. Like the ASI residences that came later, residents managed the properties and chose whether to use the on-site services.

Wiggins, ASI's first executive director, left in 1982 to pursue an MBA at Harvard University. Berg had left the project in 1978 to earn a law degree at Georgetown University. Berg went on to found HealthPartners and is now a Macalester trustee. Wiggins founded the managed care company Oxford Health Plans and later the Internet concern HealthMark. He, too, served as a Macalester trustee; he now heads the New York office of Essex Woodlands Health Ventures, the country's largest health care venture capital firm. Pesch died of pneumonia in 1992.

In 1982, Vander Schaaf took over as head of ASI. Inspired by the residents' dedication to the model—program participants serve on the board and evangelize widely—he has concentrated on expanding the organization's reach. ASI now has more than 3,100 units on an annual budget of more than $35 million. The details vary from state to state, but most combine individual apartments with space for shared services. "It's really about having the will," he says. "Some of these projects take seven years from first inking to opening up. And then we're committed to HUD for another 40 years."

Over the decades, funding streams have shifted and so has the need. As the quality of care has risen, people with mobility impairments are living longer, propelling ASI into the senior affordable housing market. With 39 buildings, Minnesota is ASI's largest market, followed by Montana and Nevada.

"Shep has turned ASI into what it is today," says Wiggins. "There's a lot of transparency. The staff says what's on their mind. They don't think the boss is a big threat because there's virtually no turnover."

Ever the geographer, Lanegran suggests that the environment in Austin, Minnesota, where Vander Schaaf and his friends grew up, played into their confidence. New ventures and their founders are much more visible in small towns, he explains. "It's a real testament to Macalester's ability to add value that it took that main street entrepreneurial spirit and those raw talents and allowed Steve Wiggins to develop that," he says.

Wiggins and Vander Schaaf say they were encouraged to think real world even though they were still students. "Macalester encourages a sense of 'I can do it, why not me?'" says Wiggins. "It's one of the great things about the school."

And it's an attribute that endures, Vander Schaaf adds. His niece, Holly Vander Schaaf '11 helped start a social entrepreneurship fund called the "Live It Fund" while at Mac. The idealism and vision evident among her classmates, including Wiggins's daughter Rosie Wiggins '13, remind Vander Schaaf of his own cohort. "They're doing good work," he says, "and they're doing it on a global scale."

As for Vander Schaaf, he plans to stay at ASI, nurturing that original vision conceived at Macalester 30-plus years ago. "Everyone," he's fond of saying, "needs somewhere to live, something to do, and someone who cares."
In Charleston, **Helen Rice ’03** and **Josh Nissenboim ’03** are running a thriving marketing business and transforming a historic home.

**BY FAITH ADAMS**

Helen Rice ’03 and Josh Nissenboim ’03 were in search of a lifestyle as much as a livelihood when they moved to Charleston, South Carolina, six years ago. With an energy and cleverness that’s become their trademark, they founded a full-service digital agency named Fuzzco and remodeled a historic house and office building to live and work in, while collaborating with the designers, restaurateurs, musicians, and artists that constitute Charleston’s creative class. Along the way Fuzzco has racked up awards for its diverse design projects and garnered some great national press.

The two met in French class, where they were randomly paired for a project. Like many group projects, it ended as a solo effort—Rice finished the assignment—but Nissenboim later showed his appreciation by treating her to an enormous slice of chocolate cake at Coffee News. Ten years later they were married.

After a brief stint in Madison, Wisconsin, where Nissenboim worked for a software company and Rice waited tables and painted, they were eager to move to a warmer climate. Without much soul-searching, the couple chose Charleston.

“Moving back to Charleston had a lot to do with the fact that nowhere else has ever felt like home, and a little to do with all the friends I had here,” explains Rice. “I’ve always felt Charleston was an under-rated place. Our decision to move here didn’t have anything to do with opening a business—and at the time, Charleston was still emerging as a design community.”

They started Fuzzco in 2005 “because our interests overlapped in such a way that we saw the potential to be a creative team,” says Nissenboim. Their first project was a business card for a local trucker. They took turns working on Nissenboim’s college computer until they finally decided to spring for a second workstation. “We felt like the underdogs in an overlooked, underrated city,” he adds. “We were also really hard workers and obsessed with growing our business.”

Six years later, with a client list that now includes Google, eHarmony, and Sharp, they and their seven employees work in a spare, beautifully renovated office building that was recently featured in *Dwell* magazine along with their restored and reinvented 1852 house. “We work with clients of all shapes and sizes, from international to hyperlocal,” says Nissenboim. “We love the mix.” Today the client roster includes multinational corporations, software start-ups, and even a small chocolatier. Fuzzco’s take on projects is often a blend of irreverent and hip, classicism and timelessness.

The same aesthetic can be seen in the couple’s restored home, located just a few blocks from Fuzzco’s headquarters. “The spaces where we live and work are extremely important. They influence how we think and feel,” says Nissenboim. “We love the juxtaposition of old and new, and we try to keep things organized and minimal.”

The home renovation, characterized by a light touch and respect for the distressed bones of the 150-year-old building, was made possible through a combination of bartering for services and much physical labor. When the couple purchased the vacant property, it was a shambles of peeling paint and plaster, broken appliances and fixtures, its windows insulated with newspapers and duct tape. The renovated space is a blend of functional new and stripped-down old, as in the case of tongue-and-groove walls left exposed after outdated wood paneling was removed. It’s also an urban oasis. In a city with few lawns, their yard is big enough for a vegetable garden and a croquet course.

Rice plans to someday build an art studio in the backyard. The former studio art major showed paintings at Charleston galleries until the demands of a growing business made that impossible. She oversees the art direction and strategic creative development at Fuzzco.

Although long working hours are a necessary part of starting a business, Rice and Nissenboim make time for socializing, frequently with clients who’ve become friends. Their synergistic approach to life and work means there are few demarcations between business and pleasure, clients and friends, interior design and graphic design.

How did college prepare them for the life they’re leading now? “At Mac we made some great friends, worked hard, and learned how to live in a small, close-knit society,” says Nissenboim. In Charleston they’ve made use of those college lessons, in a community that appreciates their talents and allows them to mix work and living in an interesting and artful way.

**FAITH ADAMS** is a Minneapolis writer and regular contributor to Macalester Today.
Rice (left) and Nissenboim trying out a new perspective in their office.

Chris Herlinger ’81 and Paul Jeffrey, Rubble Nation: Haiti’s Pain, Haiti’s Promise (Seabury, 2011)


Jonathan Kauffman ’93, Best Food Writing 2011, “Shark’s Fin: Understanding the Political Soup” (edited by Holly Hughes, Perseus, 2011)

Kathryn Hilliard Lykken Klos ’68, The Smile of the Cat and Picnics at Walden Pond (both 2011, Amazon).

Kathleen Meyer ’67, Lanzelet (Boydell & Brewer, English translation, 2011)

John Schonwald ’93, The Taste of Tomorrow: Dispatches from the Future of Food (HarperCollins, April 2012)

Andrea Sevetson ’84, Fundamentals of Government Information (Neal–Schuman, 2011)

Donald J. Sevetson ’54, Atkinson: Pioneer Oregon Educator (available from Amazon, 2011)

Lynne A. Vanne ’79 and Mr. Natural, Music Theory Decoded—Strictly by the Numbers (lulu.com, 2011)
EXPAND YOUR MIND AT MAC

BY GABRIELLE LAWRENCE ’73, DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

My Macalester experience was a mind-expanding journey that challenged my assumptions, introduced me to new ideas, and forever changed my worldview. Macalester was a portal to the world for us, a gateway into other philosophies and cultures and into new ideas we hoped would shock our parents.

My classmates and I discussed ideas in dorm hallways, the Link, and the Grille, developing what Brian Rosenberg calls habits of mind. This means a lifelong curiosity about the world, a commitment to exploring new ideas, an appreciation of art, an empathy for the other, and a creative knack for problem-solving—abilities that transcend specific occupations and disciplines. This is the enduring gift of a Macalester education.

And of course this spoiled us forever because it isn’t the same out in the world. It’s harder to find a community where important topics are debated and discussions are valued. Exploring new ideas renews us, but this experience is richer when we’re in conversation with each other.

The Macalester Alumni College makes it easy for you to continue to practice these good habits. Here are some of our upcoming events:

Travel with us. We travel with Macalester professors in small groups to interesting places. We’ve touched down in exotic locales such as Mongolia, Peru, Vietnam, and South Dakota. In June we’ll travel to Israel and Palestine with Professor Andy Overman, visit ancient sites and modern cities, and consider the prospects for peace with local experts. Future trips to Turkey, the Galapagos Islands, and Bhutan are also in the works.

Consider the big questions with us. Every summer we explore a contemporary issue, from immigration to Islam. This summer we’ll take on the question, “Will Democracy Survive?” Political Science Professor Emeritus Chuck Green will convene our fifth annual summer session, a two-and-a-half day campus program with Macalester professors. We’ll discuss how democracy emerged in ancient Greece, what the American experience has been, how the media, big money, and social networking have impacted our democratic process, and how all this might affect the 2012 elections.

Join us on campus. There are many regular mind-expanding opportunities on campus for the third of you who live in the Twin Cities area. For example:

• Professor Emeritus Henry West will teach Introduction to Ancient Philosophy for everyone who missed it the first time. This four-week course for Mac alumni will be offered in late winter.
• A spring film series hosted by Minneapolis Star Tribune film critic Colin Covert ’74 will include viewing and discussing the best films you’ve never heard of.
• Interesting lectures, concerts, and recitals of all kinds are open to our alumni. Find them at macalester.edu/alumni

Being a Macalester alumnus is a lifelong experience. I hope you’ll join us on one of these adventures. No, it’s not the same as when we were young, idealistic Macalester students. It’s better.

GLOBAL ROAD TRIP, PART 2

Thanks to a Macalester Today article (“Global Road Trip,” Winter 2010) and the wonders of the Internet, the women’s group from the Summer ’62 Ambassadors for Friendship program reconnected after many years. Last fall they held a weeklong reunion in Slovenia (where one member has family), and are already discussing another. In both photos (above) they are shown (from left): Inge Marie Nielsen Rasmussen, Faaborg, Denmark; Zarina Manawar Hock, Lucknow, India/Champaign, Illinois, USA; Carolyn Dirks Dunning ’63, Eau Claire, Wis., USA; Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher ’62, Knoxville, Tenn., USA; Daphna Rabinowitz Cohen-Mintz, Tel Aviv, Israel; Maud Bjorkman Lindblom, Ekerö, Sweden.
2006
Julia Gallagher was named casting associate at the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis. She has worked as a stage manager and was previously an assistant in the Guthrie Theater’s casting office.

Thuhien Nguyen’s research at the University of California–San Francisco on postnatal human neurogenesis has been published in Nature.

2007
The Class of 2007 will have its 5th Reunion June 1–3, 2012. Chair is Zachary S. Teicher (zteicher@gmail.com). See macalester.edu/alumni/reunion.

2008
Amanda Coen ran into Mary Hark at last year’s A Better World by Design Conference and wrote an article for Inhabitat.com about the former Macalester fibers professor’s work as founder of HARK! Handmade Paper Studio.

2009
Victoria Harris received a master’s degree in city and regional planning with a focus in transportation from the University of Pennsylvania last May.

2011
Michael Coleman is a software test engineer with Thomson Reuters in Eagan, Minn.

Peytie McCandless was a member of the ensemble of The Dvorak Project, a new stage and radio work inspired by the composer’s travels in the Midwest. The piece was written and directed by Rachel Perlmeter, a recent guest artist at Mac. J. Anthony Allen, part of the creative team of Mac’s production of Marat/Sade, was composer and sound designer, and current student Kimberly Acker was stage manager.

2011
Michael Coleman is a software test engineer with Thomson Reuters in Eagan, Minn.

Peytie McCandless was a member of the ensemble of The Dvorak Project, a new stage and radio work inspired by the composer’s travels in the Midwest. The piece was written and directed by Rachel Perlmeter, a recent guest artist at Mac. J. Anthony Allen, part of the creative team of Mac’s production of Marat/Sade, was composer and sound designer, and current student Kimberly Acker was stage manager.

2011
Michael Coleman is a software test engineer with Thomson Reuters in Eagan, Minn.

Peytie McCandless was a member of the ensemble of The Dvorak Project, a new stage and radio work inspired by the composer’s travels in the Midwest. The piece was written and directed by Rachel Perlmeter, a recent guest artist at Mac. J. Anthony Allen, part of the creative team of Mac’s production of Marat/Sade, was composer and sound designer, and current student Kimberly Acker was stage manager.

A recent mini-Mac reunion in Washington, D.C., drew together (from left) Joe Parilla ’08, Cody Ching ’08, Kari Tanaka ’08, Marisa Raether ’08, Adam Kent ’08, Marie Godwin ’10, Briana Redman ’08, Megan Thompson ’08, and Kate Fahje ’08.
1931
Penzl Officer Swee, 101, died Oct. 12, 2011, in St. Paul. She taught high school English and was a member of "The Nifty Nine," a group of Macalester alumnae who continued to correspond throughout their lives. Mrs. Swee is survived by her husband, Jerome Wagner '50.

1938
Eleanor Siegler Berg, 95, of River Falls, Wis., died Sept. 16, 2011, in Fort Benton, Mont. She was a member of "The Nifty Nine," a group of Macalester alumnae who continued to correspond throughout their lives. Mrs. Berg is survived by her husband, Robert S. Rekedal '47.

1941
Nancy Nicol Davis, 92, died Oct. 19, 2011, in Fort Benton, Mont. She was a homemaker. Mrs. Davis is survived by her husband, Jack, a daughter, three sons, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1942
Genevieve Gust Kershaw, 91, died Oct. 2, 2011, in Braddock Heights, Md. After serving as a flight nurse in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, Mrs. Kershaw worked as an occupational nurse for Boeing and Lockheed-Martin, established the public health department in Washington County, Colo., and worked in nursing in Utah and Virginia and for the IRS. She is survived by three daughters, two sons, a granddaughter, three great-granddaughters, and two sisters.

1943
Betty Westman Carr, 89, of Winter Park, Fla., died Aug. 29, 2011. She was the first woman hired for an artificial rubber development project at the U of Minnesota during World War II. She was active in community affairs and wrote a weekly column for the Richfield, Minn. Sun. Mrs. Carr is survived by two sons and two grandchildren.

1944
Arabelle Robertson Stubbe, 88, of Rolling Hills Estates, Calif., died Aug. 25, 2011. She taught English and history at high schools in Minnesota and California and served as vice principal at Aviation High School, retiring in 1982. She is survived by a sister.

1948
Tennie Oman Elstad, 85, died Aug. 21, 2011. She was a high school teacher, debate coach, and substitute teacher. Mrs. Elstad is survived by her husband, John, two daughters, a son, two grandchildren, a great-granddaughter, and brother Richard Oman '50.

1949
Floyd S. Kotval, 84, of Marshall, Minn., died Sept. 11, 2011. He served in the Navy during World War II. Mr. Kotval is survived by his wife, Jeanette, a daughter, two sons, four grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, a sister, and brother Leslie Kotval '52.

1950
Marjorie Schutz Glick Reid, 82, of Mount Lake, Minn., died Jan. 3, 2010. She is survived by her husband, Milton, four daughters, and six grandchildren.

1951
Clyde E. Eklund, 82, of Anoka, Minn., died Sept. 6, 2011. She sang in the Anoka Civic Opera and was an advocate for people with Asperger’s syndrome. Mrs. Wagner is survived by five daughters, six sons, 29 grandchildren (including Amelia Nielsen '08), five great-grandchildren, and former husband Jerome Wagner '50.

1952
Paul J. Fialkowski, 82, died Sept. 14, 2011. He taught in the Sioux Falls, S.D., public schools for more than 30 years. He served several terms as chairman of the All State Orchestra, played viola in the South Dakota Symphony for nearly 40 years, and gave private music lessons. Mr. Fialkowski is survived by his wife, Marilyn Fialkowski '51, and a daughter.

1953
Candace Dornblaser Steele, 80, of Boise, Idaho, died Sept. 29, 2011.

1954
Joan Hoye Beardsley '78, of Bloomington, Minn., died Oct. 31, 2011. She is survived by her husband, William Beardsley '56, a daughter, two sons, and four grandchildren.

1955
Harrison G. Carr, 83, of Roseville, Minn., died Sept. 29, 2010. He served as a signalman in the U.S. Navy during World War II and the Korean War. He worked for Ecolab for 28 years and for Robert Carr & Associates for 22 years. Mr. Carr is survived by his wife, Marjorie, two daughters, two sons, 10 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

1956
Norton B. Grundy, 80, of Coon Rapids, Minn., died July 26, 2011. He is survived by his wife, Joan Hubers Grundy '56, a daughter, three sons, eight grandchildren, and a brother.

1957
Thomas J. Brown, 76, of Eden Prairie, Minn., died Sept. 27, 2011. He founded a consulting company, Tom Brown Financial Group, Inc., in 1968. Mr. Brown is survived by his wife, Mary Jo, three daughters, two sons, 17 grandchildren, two...
Other Losses

Cargill MacMillan, a former Macalester trustee, died Nov. 14, 2011, at his home in Indian Wells, Calif. He was 84. Mr. MacMillan served in the U.S. Air Force and had a 38-year career with Cargill, Inc., starting as a trainee and eventually serving on the board of directors from 1963 to 1996. Mr. MacMillan also served on the boards of Abbott-Northwestern Hospital, Twin Cities Public Television, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, among other organizations. He is survived by his wife, Donna, six children, 24 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, a sister, and a brother.

Eleanor J. Mondale Poling, daughter of Walter Mondale ’50 and Joan Adams Mondale ’52, died Sept. 17, 2011, at the age of 51. She campaigned for her father during his 1984 bid for President and worked in broadcasting for WLOL-FM, E! Entertainment, ESPN, and the CBS program This Morning. She cohosted a weekday morning show on WCCO-AM from 2006 to 2009. Mrs. Poling is survived by her husband, Chan Poling, her parents, and two brothers.

Jacqueline M. Peacock, an executive secretary at Macalester in the 1960s and ’70s, died Oct. 7, 2011, at the age of 89. She worked in Macalester’s Provost’s Office, International Center, and Development Office. Mrs. Peacock is survived by four children, seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.
Behind Africa’s famine

BY WILLIAM G. MOSELEY

MORE THAN 12 MILLION PEOPLE are at risk of death and starvation in the Horn of Africa. Even if they do not perish, young children are likely to suffer the lifelong effects of malnutrition, including poor brain development. While reactions of grave concern over this unfolding tragedy are natural, its causes are not. Most commentators cite the worst droughts since the 1950s and security concerns in southern Somalia as the main reasons for the crisis. Taken alone, however, these explanations are deeply flawed.

Drought and insecurity certainly contribute to the current crisis, but more fundamental causes are at play. Drought is not a new environmental condition for much of Africa but a recurring one. The semi-arid Horn of Africa and the entire Sahelian region — running just south of the Sahara Desert across the continent — have long experienced erratic rainfall. While climate change may be exacerbating rainfall variability, traditional livelihoods in the region are adaptable to deal with situations when rainfall is not dependable.

The dominant livelihood in the Horn of Africa has long been herding. Traditionally, herders ranged widely across the landscape in search of better pasture, focusing on areas as meteorological conditions dictated. The approach worked because, unlike fenced-in pastures in North America, it was incredibly flexible and adapted to variable rainfall. As farming has expanded, including in some instances to large-scale commercial farms, the routes of herders have become more concentrated and more vulnerable to drought. The change from traditional practices has also become detrimental to the landscape. In Ethiopia, large land leases (or “land grabs”) to foreign governments and companies for export crops (such as palm oil, rice, and sugar) have further exacerbated this problem.

Agricultural livelihoods have also evolved in problematic ways. In anticipation of years of poor rainfall, farming households and communities historically stored surplus crop production. Sadly, this traditional strategy for mitigating the risk of drought was undermined from the colonial period, beginning in the late 19th century, as households were encouraged (if not coerced by taxation) to grow cash crops for the market and store less and less excess grain for potential bad years. This increasing market orientation also has been encouraged by development banks. Growing crops for market worked fine as long as cheap and plentiful grain was available for purchase, a trend that began to erode in 2000 as global food prices gradually rose.

Just as death from exposure is not an inherent result of a cold winter, famine is not a natural consequence of drought. Simply put, the structure of human society often determines who is affected and to what degree.

While the nations of the world must act immediately to address the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, working to ensure prompt delivery and distribution of food aid, these same countries must also consider the underlying causes of the crisis as they seek longer-term solutions. Many, including the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Rajiv Shah, have spoken about the need for a strategy to rebuild food security in the region.

The problem is that the USAID plan for agricultural development in Africa has stressed a “New Green Revolution” involving improved seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. While this energy-intensive approach may make sense in some contexts, it is financially out of reach of the poorest farmers, who are the most likely to face food shortfalls. A more realistic approach would play down imported seeds and commercial agriculture in favor of enhanced traditional approaches to producing food for families and local markets.

Ethiopia, a key recipient of U.S. aid in the Horn of Africa region, should also be strongly discouraged from granting long-term leases of its farmland to foreign entities when it struggles to feed its own people in years of poor rainfall.

Finally, the crisis in the Horn of Africa has been aggravated by high food prices worldwide. Global food prices reached a historic high in February, surpassing the spikes of 2007-08, which had been the highest recorded in 20 years. While current prices are related, in part, to bad weather, other significant factors include high energy prices, the increasing diversion of grain for the production of biofuels, and export restrictions.

With energy and food prices likely to remain high for months to come, Africa can no longer count on cheap imported food or afford to shift to energy-intensive crop production strategies. The path to improved food security lies in improving time-tested local approaches, which are attuned to local environmental conditions.

BILL MOSELEY is a professor of geography and African studies at Macalester. He previously worked for Save the Children (UK) on food security issues in Africa. He has been interviewed by Al Jazeera, Minnesota Public Radio, and Voice of America, among other media outlets, and has testified before the United Nations. This piece first appeared in the Washington Post (July 28, 2011).
“On behalf of the student body, I’d like to thank the 20,252 donors to the Step Forward campaign who help make the Macalester experience possible. As a student on financial aid, I am so grateful for the opportunity to earn a world-class education.”

Kathy Kim ’12
Bellevue, Washington
Economics major
Macalester College Student Government President
The Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center renovation under construction, December 2011