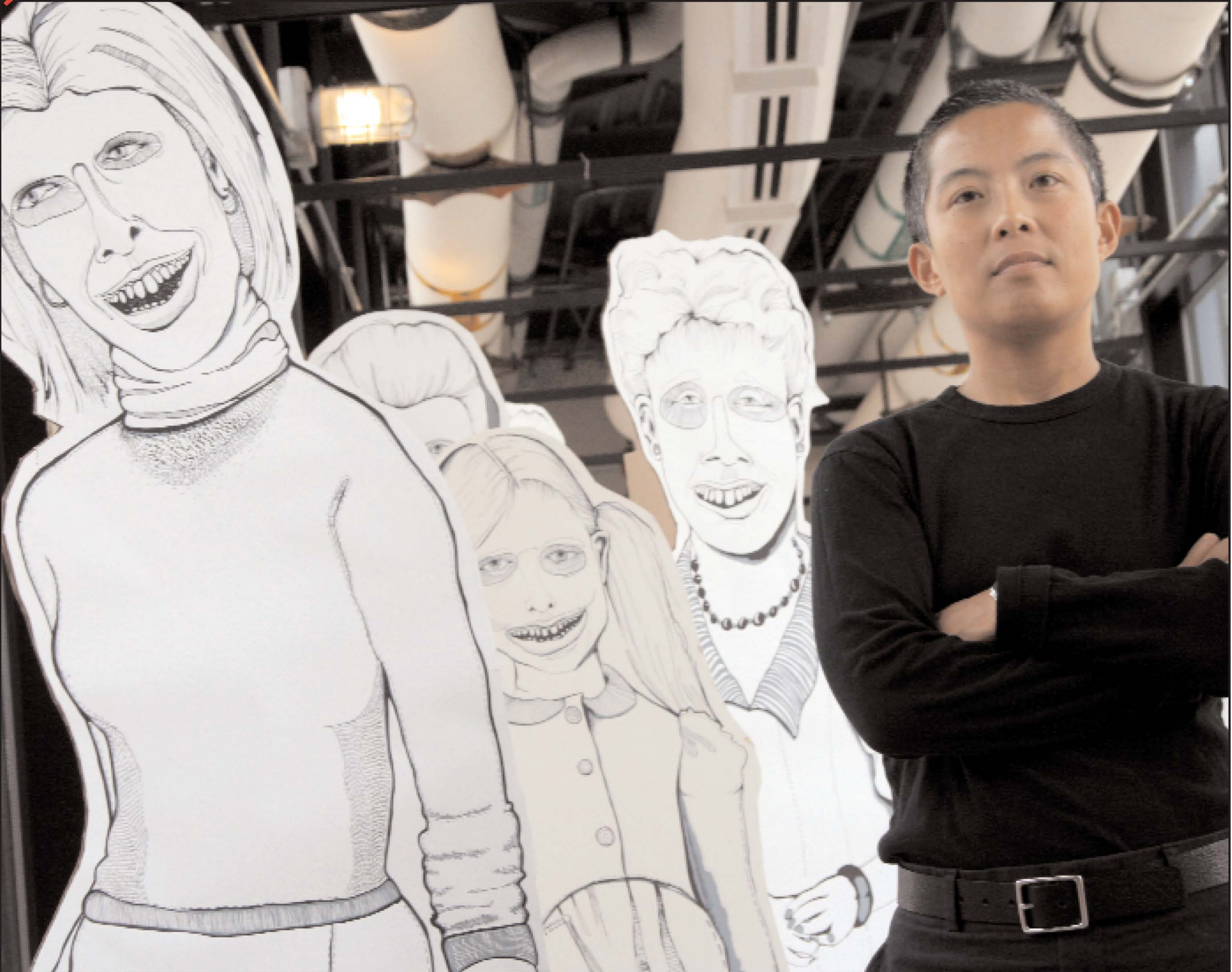


UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

# reach

COLLEGE of LIBERAL ARTS



## FROM THE DEAN

# Travels through space and time

I have just returned from my second visit to China, where I visited with University of Minnesota alumni and met with officials at our partner universities in Beijing and Tianjin to discuss strategies for expanding our programs of student and faculty exchange.

This wasn't just an official visit. It was a high-velocity trip into the future. The magnitude of the changes that I saw—the momentous expansion upward and outward, the tumultuous entrepreneurial ferment of open markets, the social and political transformation—heralds a new age not only for China, the world's most populous nation, but also for all of us.

At last count, there were at least 48 Chinese cities with more than one million people (compared to about five cities that big in the United States). The Chinese higher education system is one of the fastest growing in the world—and so is its economy. China is quickly gaining dominance in global markets, in industries from engineering and technology to pharmaceuticals.

Even as the skies over Beijing and other large cities darken with industrial emissions, China's aspirations and prospects seem boundless. Decades of change are happening in an instant, with no slowdown in sight. I find myself wondering: What's next?

It's been said that most people are in favor of progress; it's the changes they don't like. And one person's confident leap into the future is another's scary ride into the unknown, or worse. The truth is, even visionaries can't see the future with 20-20 vision. And most of us don't even know what's around the next bend, much less over the horizon. Every move forward is a leap of faith.

Where are we going, and how will get there? How do we harness all of this creative energy for the common good? How do we balance economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental interests? How do we work together across geographic and cultural boundaries to answer these questions?

These questions bring me right back to the University of Minnesota and CLA, where they drive everything that we do.

### Transforming academic spaces

A wholesale transformation is under way in the College of Liberal Arts and the University of Minnesota—and it touches every department, every student, every faculty and staff member. It also touches people and communities throughout the state of Minnesota and around the globe, across distances that have shrunk dramatically over the last decade.

Of course those distances haven't literally shrunk. China is still roughly 6,700 miles away. But it seems closer than ever as open markets and new technologies enable global exchange of goods, services, ideas, and resources; and facilitate education, research, and economic collaborations across oceans and continents.

The most critical problems of our time—climate change, poverty, disease, inequality, natural resource and food scarcity, war and terrorism—are global in scale. Complex global problems require complex global solutions. They require fast-forward big-picture thinking and broad collaboration across borders, cultures, and academic disciplines. They require new ways of teaching and new strategies for preparing students for global citizenship.

If the University of Minnesota is going to be a top-tier global player in the 21st century, we must rethink everything from classrooms to academic disciplines and curricula, from admissions to advising, from brain research to writing instruction, from global geopolitics to issues of citizenship and identity.

We must continuously reevaluate how we teach, learn, make decisions, and communicate, and how we pay for public goods, make a living, feed the world's people, preserve our ecosystems, create sustainable communities, and raise and educate our children. We must develop powerful new ways to foster discovery and innovation.

We must change how we conceptualize, configure, and inhabit the institutional and cultural space that we call the University of Minnesota as well as the physical and cultural spaces in which we live and work in the world.

In CLA and across the University, we're doing all of this, and more.



Whether we welcome change, resist it, or just go along and try to stay apace, in the end we all must learn new ways of living and working. And that requires the versatility, resiliency, creativity, and resourcefulness that are CLA hallmarks.

I invite you to come to campus to see for yourself how we're changing the course of history. Fasten your seatbelts and stick around for the ride—it's going to be an exhilarating journey into a new world.

—Steven J. Rosenstone, Dean and McKnight Presidential Leadership Chair

### THE MINNESOTA-CHINA CONNECTION

- The University has a long history of partnerships with peer institutions abroad, including a 90-plus-year history with China.
- The University of Minnesota is currently the No. 1 destination for Chinese students and scholars who come to the U.S.
- More than 8,000 Chinese students have graduated from the U of M (more than from any other U.S. university).
- Today, about 1,200 Chinese citizens study and teach at the University.
- The University's China Center, established in 1979 when U.S.-China relations were normalized, is one of only two such university centers in the country.
- Overall, the state of Minnesota ranks eighth among states in exports to China, up from 18th in 2004.
- China is the top market for Minnesota computer and electronic products.

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## reach

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Spring/Summer 2007

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### CONNECTING THE SILOS

Barbara Frey explores the link between human rights and small firearms. BY MARY SHAFER

As director of the Human Rights Program in CLA's Institute for Global Studies, Barbara Frey has covered a lot of ground. Her research and consulting on human rights issues like torture and penal reform have taken her from Argentina to Nepal, and her name appears on multiple international human rights law projects. Closer to home, she founded Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the largest human rights organization in the Midwest.

But in 2002, when the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights appointed her to study how countries could prevent human rights violations committed with small arms and light weapons, Frey was plowing relatively new ground: Human rights and light weaponry haven't typically been linked. In fact, "they have traditionally been in separate silos at the United Nations," says Frey.

There's no doubt that small arms—handguns and their cousins, including assault rifles, machine guns, and other easily-carried small weapons—take an enormous toll in human death and suffering, killing some 500,000 people every year and maiming ten times that number. Half of these incidents, Frey says, occur in non-combat settings, many with weapons of illegal or unknown provenance or off the record books. "The United States and Russia fed weapons to Afghanistan for 15 years," Frey says. "They're still there, and small weapons can serve you for 40 years. They're mobile; they're lethal."

In her August 2006 report to the U.N. sub-commission, Frey proposed two international legal principles. The first was relatively uncontroversial: the state has a responsibility to protect human rights

and prevent abuses related to small arms. But the second, that small-arms possession is not a fundamental right under international law, aroused fierce opposition from those who view gun ownership as akin to other fundamental rights, like equal protection under the law.

"I took on their Holy Grail," Frey says. "If I had stuck just to what governments can and should do to prevent the criminal use of weapons, I would have been fine."

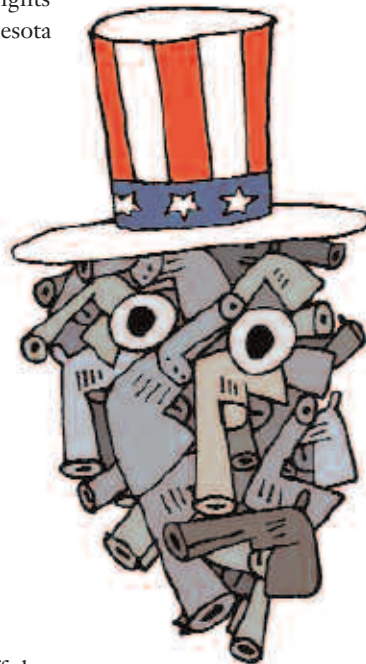
Most of Frey's critics have come from the United States, where a strong gun lobby posits a fundamental right to self-defense. "That right is the basis on which you can buy a gun. On this issue, though, the U.S. is out of sync with rest of world."

Indeed, of the 650 million small arms in the world, 350 million of them are in the U.S. And the National Rifle Association's lobbying at the U.N. meant that the U.S. delegation voted against Frey's request for funding for a questionnaire on states' gun control measures.

The U.N. sub-commission's approval of Frey's report in August represented the highest-level recognition to date of the link between small-arms control and human rights. If the next step is taken—approval by the U.N. Human Rights Council—Frey's study will generate more interest, she believes, and probably more criticism.

"The report's success depends on whether there's momentum to go forward," she says. "If it begins to have a real impact on U.S. gun policy, you'll see an over-the-top assault on me."

But Frey doesn't mind bracing for the impact. In fact, she's hoping for the momentum. "We need to start *seeing* guns," Frey believes. "Law-abiding citizens, including people who lawfully own guns, need to work together to find reasonable common ground."



cyber optic

Frey's report can be viewed at: [cla.umn.edu/reach/frey](http://cla.umn.edu/reach/frey)

## LIFE-SHAPING ART

Local high school students blur art and life on the University's stage.

BY LINDA SHAPIRO

Onstage at the University's Arena Theater in Rarig Center, students from St. Paul's Central High School perform a wrenching scene from *I'll Take You There*. When Karesa Pettis-Berry faces harassment by others about the color of her skin, she laments, "The kids don't like me because I'm not that mediocre ochre." Then she pleads with them, "Take me as I am, or I'm nothing at all."

Inspired by the students' own life experiences, the play dramatizes issues young people face every day, from struggles with identity and self-esteem to violence, racism, and homophobia. "The goal of the Central Touring Theater (CTT) is to convey the original voices of youth to the community through live ensemble theater," explains Jan Mandell, who has been leading the program at Central for 29 years. Each year, CTT students perform and lead post-performance workshops at area high schools, education conferences, and colleges.

Their University performances give faculty and students in the Department of Theatre and Dance the opportunity to deepen their cultural understanding while



KELLY MACWILLIAMS

honing their teaching and performance skills. "We wanted our students to encounter a way of creating theater that develops from issues of concern to urban youth," says Sonja Arsham Kuftinec, the associate professor who first invited Mandell to campus four years ago to conduct workshops on the improvisatory methods she uses with students.

Since then, Mandell and her students have participated in a variety of workshops at the University, while some of Kuftinec's students have worked with Mandell as interns.

In 2003, the department commissioned CTT to create a play about the barriers that kids face getting into college. *Barriers to*

*Entry* was performed at Campus Preview Days (a student recruitment event at the U) and toured to high schools and college conferences.

Central students come away from their U experience with some new perspectives on their futures. "We want to let them know that this is an accessible place where they can thrive," says Kuftinec. "Many didn't consider college as an option, but for the past two years we've awarded full scholarships to some Central students. We feel that their training as artists and world citizens particularly suits our B.A. program."

During the post-show Q&A, audience members—faculty and students in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance—offer

up enthusiastic praise and ask questions about the creative process. Central student Darrail Hughes explains how the group came up with personal material that they wanted to share with other people. "It was a lot of trial and error," says Hughes. "Stuff got dumped, and stuff got put in."

"Every moment in this play has a story," says Mandell, noting that the creative process—which is improvisational, exploratory, revelatory—is as important as the play itself for these kids.

At one point in the discussion, a Central student describes how CTT's vision of embodied learning has transformed her life: "It peels away all the layers and gets to the core—the place where you can really be who you are."

What role does the CLA experience play in shaping students' identities? At the end of last semester, we asked CLA juniors and seniors to reflect on how they've changed since they first entered college.

INTERVIEWS BY ANDREW HOGAN

"I developed a personal theory that nothing is one-sided. Nothing is only this or only that. You can never make an argument without giving some room to the other side, because you know you're not completely right; you know there are always two parts to every issue."

RYAN FLAHERTY (INDIVIDUALIZED STUDIES '07)



ON THE SPOT **growth**



"I became more conscious of my interactions with other people—what people think when I say 'I'm a Muslim,' or when I say 'I'm Mexican-American,' or when I say this or that. It made me want to find out why these things matter."

JARROD MUNEER KARCHER-RAMOS (POLITICAL SCIENCE '08)



"I went to a play recently—a one-man show—that dealt a lot with how fear motivates a lot of our actions, and I got to thinking how it was really applicable in my life—fear of what other people thought, fear of failure, fear of rejection. That was a recent epiphany of seeing the role it could play in my life."

ETHAN STARK (PSYCHOLOGY '07)

PHOTOS BY EVERETT AYUBZADEH

## faculty

**Daphne Berdahl** (anthropology and Institute for Global Studies), **Hisham Bizri** (cultural studies and comparative literature), and **David Treuer** (English and American Indian studies) received the prestigious **Guggenheim Fellowship Award**.

**Patricia Hampf** (English), **Geoffrey Hellman** (philosophy), and **John Sullivan** (political science) were elected to the **American Academy of Arts and Sciences**.

**Richard Leppert** (cultural studies and comparative literature), **Elaine Tyler May** (American studies), and **Matt McGue** (psychology) were named **Regents Professors**, the University's highest faculty designation.

**Kathleen Collins** (political science), **Karen Ho** (anthropology) and **Christophe Wall-Romana** (French and Italian) were named McKnight Land-Grant Professors.

**Eric Weitz** (history) was named a Distinguished McKnight University Professor.

**Joel B. Samaha** (sociology) received the University's Morse-Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Award.

**Maria Damon** (English) received the Morse-Alumni Graduate-Professional Teaching Award.

**Jigna Desai** (gender, women, and sexuality studies) received the University of Minnesota President's Award for Outstanding Community Service.

**Shirley Nelson Garner** (English; associate dean, Graduate School) received the Mullen, Spector, Truax Women's Leadership Award for 2007.

**David Wilkins** (American Indian studies) was named the CLA Dean's Medalist.

**John Archer** (cultural studies and comparative literature), **Michal Kobialka** (theatre arts and dance), **Candace Kruttschnitt** (sociology), and **Jennifer Windsor** (speech-language-hearing sciences) were named CLA Scholars of the College.

**Mark Snyder** (psychology) received the 2007 Lifetime Career Award from the International Society for the Study of Self and Identity.

**Chris Federico** (psychology and political science) received the 2007 Sigel Award and the 2007 Erik Erikson Early Career Award from the International Society of Political Psychology.

**Irving Gottesman** (Ph.D. '60 and senior fellow, psychology) received the American Psychological Foundation's Gold Medal for life achievements in psychology.

**Joyce Bono** (psychology) received the 2007 American Psychological Association Early Career Award.



## SEAQUEST BY LINDA SHAPIRO

Christine Baeumler illustrates science's most pressing concerns—literally.

As an art student, Christine Baeumler didn't think much about the connection between scientific inquiry and artistic expression. "Sitting in a drawing class I could never have predicted that someday I'd be swimming with whales" and documenting their habitats in a variety of media, she says.

But science needs art for its most important messages to have an impact. "We're suffering from a failure of imagination," says Baeumler, an assistant professor of art. "We're in denial about our impact on the environment and how it's going to change because of that. Imagination makes us empathetic. Artists use their imaginations to envision what could be in the world. So perhaps art can create a sense of empathy that will lead to better stewardship."

With that in mind, Baeumler has traveled to World Heritage Sites such as the Australian Rain Forest, the Galapagos Islands, and the Great Barrier Reef, where she swam with 25-foot long dwarf minkie whales, videotaping them at such close range that she was virtually eye to eye with them. Her video installation "Beneath the Coral

Sea" documents her attempt to cross the culturally constructed divides between human and animal species.

She hopes that her drawings, paintings, and video portraits of endangered species in their habitats can help convey a sense of the physical and emotional engagement that she has experienced as an artist in these geographically far-flung settings.

Closer to home, Baeumler has been involved in local restoration projects at the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary in St. Paul. There, Baeumler worked with volunteers, including the East Side Conservation Corps, Dakota Tribal members, and some of her own students, to restore an area that had become degraded. Cleaning up decades of debris and restoring the area's soil and wetlands has facilitated social healing for the Dakotas, to whom the site has long been sacred.

On campus, Baeumler teaches a cross-disciplinary course called Art and Social Engagement. "The students are working through the question of how beauty plays a role in social change and identity," says Baeumler. With St. Olaf College faculty members Jil Evans and Charles Taliaferro,



KELLY MACWILLIAMS

she is also organizing a conference on Charles Darwin to be held in 2009 at St. Olaf. A group of scientists, philosophers, and artists will discuss how Darwin's theory revolutionized the way we look at nature. "The irony of Darwin," Baeumler says, "is that the species he studied are the very ones being endangered by the environment we are creating."

**Donald Browne** (communication studies) received the 2007 Distinguished Scholar Award from the Broadcast Education Association.

**Ronald J. Faber** (journalism and mass communication) was inducted as a Fellow of the Academy by the American Academy of Advertising.

**Paul Sackett** (psychology) received the 2007 Herbert Heneman Jr. Career Achievement Award from the Academy of Management.

**Michael Molasky** (Asian languages and literatures) received the Suntory Prize for Arts and Letters.

**Carl Malmquist** (sociology) received the 2007 American Psychiatric Association's Manfred S. Guttmacher Award for his book *Homicide: A Psychiatric Perspective*.

**John Archer** received the 2007 Society of Architectural Historians' Alice Davis Hitchcock award for his book *Architecture and Suburbia: From English Villa to American Dream House*.

**Charles Baxter** (English) received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award of Merit.

**Lou Bellamy** (theatre arts and dance) received an Obie Award for best direction for his New York staging of August Wilson's "Two Trains Running."

**Rose Brewer** (African American and African studies) received the Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award for her book *The Color of Wealth*.

**Ananya Chatterjea** (theatre arts and dance) was named one of 21 Leaders for the 21st Century in "Women's e-news," and one of "Seven Who Will Not Be Stopped."

**Kit Hansen** (English) and **Elaine Tarone** (linguistics, ESL and Slavic languages and literatures), along with **Bob deMas** and **Martha Bigelow** received the national 2007 Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Award for Distinguished Research.

**Taner Akçam** (history) received the Minnesota Book Award for his book *A Shameful Act: Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*.

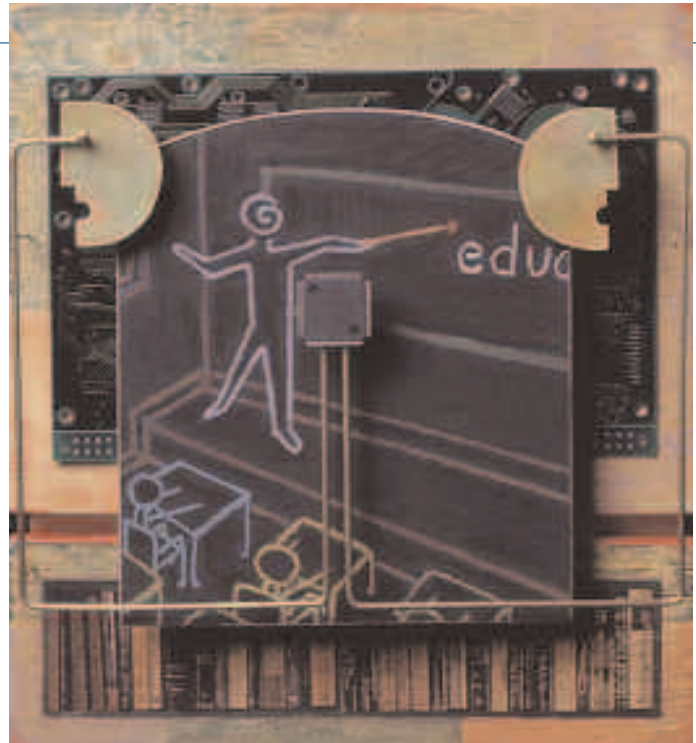
**Julie Schumacher** (English & creative writing) received the Minnesota Book Award in the young adult category for *The Book of One Hundred Truths*.

## PROFESSORS PONDER... THE IMPORTANCE OF CLASSROOM LEARNING

BY ANDREW HOGAN

In this age of experiential learning and cyberlearning, the art of human interaction in the classroom continues to thrive. Even large lecture classes have taken on new life.

Why do classrooms still matter? What can students get from the classroom that they might not be able to find online or in the field? Here's what some CLA faculty members are saying:



### Jason McGrath

Asian Languages and Literatures

A scholar of Chinese film, McGrath is “a big believer in film as a collective experience.” He often moderates in-class debates, enabling students to collectively discover truths within complex subject matter.

“If you need to engage in analysis and interpretation, in-class learning provides something that online learning can’t, because in the give-and-take process of hearing and contemplating others’ ideas and testing your own against them, you will actually come to a much deeper understanding.”

Participating in class discussions, says McGrath, enables students “to approach cultural texts on a more sophisticated and complex level, and to get a richer experience of culture.”

### David Noble

American Studies

David Noble depends on classroom learning to teach his students that they’re studying real people with real problems.

“It’s crucial for students to know that they’re not dealing with abstractions but with living—well, they’re dead but they were living—human beings,” he says. He even has been known to impersonate prominent historical figures to “help students feel the drama of the moment.”

Noble believes that fully understanding the multifaceted situations these historical icons faced gives students invaluable skills in their own lives. “We’re always making choices within contexts. But it’s much easier to come to know the context you find yourself in if you can compare it with other contexts.”

### David Wilkins

American Indian Studies

David Wilkins will never forget Lois Louis and Vine Deloria, two professors who made an enormous difference in his life.

“They required us to speak with them. It was a reciprocal process. They had faith in our ability to come up with a solid critique of what we had read.”

Wilkins demands a lot from his students, because the abilities “to think critically and to be prepared to field questions immediately are critical. They help you throughout life.” The most valuable skill a student can take from education, he adds, is “the ability to exercise individual self-determination.” And that’s the kind of skill that the face-to-face interaction of a classroom community can nurture.



## HEAD OF THE CLASS BY DANNY LACHANCE

In Joel Samaha's classrooms, high tech meets old school.

An 80-person class. A professor who calls on you even though your hand isn't raised. A moment of hesitation. Your ventured opinion, perhaps a bit unorthodox. And then, when you've finished, the professor's explosive response: "That's the most outrageous thing I've ever heard!"

It may seem like a scene out of *The Paper Chase*, the classic 1973 film that depicted law school as an exercise in public humiliation. But in sociology professor Joel Samaha's hands, these moments are the stuff of good-natured debate. His students know that behind the mock outrage is a teacher who revels in their idiosyncratic views of the world.

Samaha, who won the University's Morse-Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Award this year, is legendary for his ability to generate debate even in large classes, says Christopher Uggen, chair of the Department of Sociology. As former student Ryan King puts it, Samaha "challenged and compelled us to logically defend our arguments and, in the process, managed to be outwardly disagreeable yet tremendously likable." It was, he says, "a perfect pedagogical storm."

It's the liveliness and intensity of professors like Samaha that make classrooms, at their best, inimitable. Sure, today you can take a college course—or get a college degree—without ever setting foot in a classroom. Virtual classrooms and hands-on internships have become to the twenty-first century what open schools and cooperative learning were to the twentieth: the next big thing.

But all it takes is a quick glance at Joel Samaha's student evaluations to know that classrooms—those storied spaces with four walls, chairs filled with students, and a teacher standing somewhere in the mix—still matter.

In Samaha's classroom, the lights stay on. PowerPoint is banished. ("It's the quickest way to make the classroom irrelevant," Samaha explains. "The students just spend their time copying what you put up there.") And students participate constantly—often using clickers.

Like studio audience members in the popular game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* Samaha's students are frequently asked to respond with these hand-held devices to a case he presents at the beginning of the class.

"Who thinks the police ought to have the right to remove a passenger from a car they legally pulled over without having to give a reason?" he might ask at the beginning of a class session on discretionary power.

Students push a button on the clicker, a computer tallies the results, and, at Samaha's signal, a histogram displaying the results appears on the projection screen at the front of the room. It's more than just glorified hand raising, Samaha explains. Because each student's selection is invisible to peers, the results reflect a greater diversity of views than might otherwise appear in a public show of hands.

This anonymous process bypasses peer pressure, ensuring airtime for unorthodox and even unpopular perspectives. And that's especially important in a large lecture class, says Samaha. With clickers, students are empowered to speak up. They can dissent and, in the end, see that they're not alone in their views.

Socratic-style on-the-spot interactions follow the surveys. Samaha points to a row of students and has each one explain how she or he voted and why. It's an art, he says, playing these responses off of one another.

"All my life, I've been kind of an oddball," he explains. "I have looked at what other people look at, but I don't see what they see."

Making the classroom an oddball-friendly atmosphere is important to Samaha, who is putting into practice the rhetoric about the role of education in a democracy. Says Uggen, "Students emerge from Joel's courses as more thoughtful, more engaged, and more inspired citizens, ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work practicing good citizenship."

—Laine Bergeson contributed to this story.

## Class Matters

What's happening in CLA's undergrad classrooms? We checked in with one of the smallest—and one of the largest. (Just so you know ... 42 percent of CLA classes have fewer than 20 students.)

### History 1909: Globalization in the American Heartland

CLASS SIZE: 9

"The discussion we can have in class is the antithesis of the online experience," says David Good, professor emeritus of history. Good teaches his freshman seminar using the actual stuff of history—contracts, poems, diary entries, and other documents dating from the period he's teaching, many of them very personal and moving, sometimes searing. In the more diffuse and less intimate setting of cyberspace, he says, it's difficult to get students to engage deeply with those texts, to get them to make connections and look for the patterns that lie within them.

### Psychology 1001: Introduction to Psychology

CLASS SIZE: 680

Nothing is more cutting-edge than flesh and blood, members of the psychology department decided several years ago. "Introduction to Psychology used to be taught by films shown in the large lecture hall exclusively," says Judy Peterson, an education specialist who was hired in 1989 to revamp the monster course.

One of Peterson's goals was to make the class more interactive. "We replaced the film lectures with live lectures by scholars and experts in the field," says Peterson. Exposed each week to experts in psychology's sub-fields—child development, clinical psychology, or abnormal psychology for starters—students hear about the latest findings in the field. And of course they still wonder, as students always have when they learn the basics of psychopathology, *Is this what's wrong with me?*

—LAINE BERGESON

## Just to Know

A CLA GRADUATE WRITES A LETTER HOME

By Ted Meinhover

“Hanya tahu Indonesia saja, Ted.” Just to know Indonesia. My friend Suroto has no interest in taking me to any of the tropical islands that Indonesia has to offer or in taking me shopping at the “traditional” markets where you can buy handcrafted batiks. So instead of lounging on some beach watching the sun go down over the sea, I find myself sitting on the floor in a small house in the village of Klaten, on the slopes of the still-active volcano Mount Merapi, in Central Java.

The large family and I eat rice in a circle on the bamboo mat, children staring in silent wonder, grandma inquiring about my marital status and pointing out the beauty of Indonesia’s female population, the occasional question about world politics coming my way from a watchful father. Suroto is on a mission to help me to “know” Indonesia; he says there is nothing more important for me to do here, and I agree.

The future of democracy is being determined right now, here, in Indonesia. Suroto was a student during the protests that catalyzed the end of the authoritarian Suharto presidency in 1998, and his eyes cloud over when he speaks of his friends who disappeared in the desperate regime’s military crackdown. Today he is part of an energized community working to restore democracy and increase the welfare of the Indonesian people.

Spirited debate has become a large part of that process. Suppressed violently and institutionally for so long, the right to discuss, criticize and mobilize is not taken for granted. Suroto and countless others I have met are by no means shy about the passion they feel about their country, its promise and problems. Fierce national pride blends with fierce self criticism. They discuss the presence of massive economic disparity, the influences that are bombarding the country as a result of globalization.

And, of course, they discuss religion. It is perhaps one of the most pertinent issues in Indonesia, all the more so in light of today’s global scene. And with the fourth largest population in the world, including the world’s largest Muslim population, Indonesia will undoubtedly be playing a large role in that global scene.



Each year, Kathleen E. Sullivan Scholarships allow outstanding University of Minnesota students to enhance their education with a fifth year of undergraduate study overseas. Three CLA students received the scholarship for 2006-07. We asked one of those students, Ted Meinhover (global studies major, mass communication minor), to reflect on the time he has spent studying Chinese and Indonesian languages and cultures. Last fall, he spent a semester at the University of Indonesia in Depok. He recently finished a second semester at Yunnan University in Kunming, China.

Some here worry about American attitudes toward Islam. They’ve heard the pessimistic “clash of civilizations” prophecies. Conflicts between fundamentalism and liberalism are, to be sure, part of the discourse here, as well. And there are indeed factions pushing to implement religious law in the form of legislation. But Indonesians as a whole—Muslims, Christians, and the many others—want political modernization, freedom, the chance to live under a system of democratically created laws. NU (Nahdatul Ulama), an Islamic political party and the largest political party in the world with around 40 million members, rejects the creation of laws that legislate how people practice their religion.

The University has given me this scholarship because it recognizes society’s and its own interest in understanding and building bridges to this part of the world. If my experiences in the global studies classrooms of the University and in the small houses of Klaten have taught me anything, it’s that the self interest of the individual can be achieved by pursuing the self interest of others.

As naïve as I may feel when I make such an idealistic proclamation, I was rewarded the other day when my Indonesian friend Rina responded with a smile, “Ted, I strongly believe good friendship and working together can create peace and a better world.”

*Terima Kasih.*

Thank you. ∞

# Checking Our Blind Spots By Danny LaChance

**World-renowned psychologist Fanny Cheung has worked to eliminate cultural and scientific blind spots at home and abroad.**

When it comes to family, everyone is an armchair psychologist. But what happens when you're living with grandparents, 12 brothers and sisters, three uncles, their spouses, and countless cousins? What happens, indeed, when your family occupies every floor of a six-story building?

Then, it seems, you end up pursuing a Ph.D. in psychology. At least if you're Fanny Cheung, the current chair of Chinese University's Department of Psychology in Hong Kong.

"I had a lot of opportunities to watch complex human interactions," Cheung recalls of her girlhood in Hong Kong. She'd watch, fascinated, as the nannies her family employed to help rear the household's children would compete with one another, bragging about the achievements of their particular charges. Adults in the family, meanwhile, would often conduct serious discussions behind closed doors. When they emerged, Cheung would study their facial expressions and behavior, trying to divine their secrets.

These days, Cheung draws her conclusions about human personality not through furtive glances across rooms, but through the pathbreaking tests she's developed over the course of her 30-year career in psychology. Cheung, who earned her Ph.D. from Minnesota's Department of Psychology in 1975, is a world-renowned expert in personality assessment.

Cheung returned to Hong Kong after finishing her degree. There, she eventually developed an entirely new personality test, the Cross-cultural (Chinese) Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI). It measures those elements of personality ignored by western assessment tools, such as our attitudes and approaches to interpersonal relationships.

While she was inspired by the work that had been done in personality assessment before and during her tenure in Minnesota, Cheung recognized some of its potential blind spots. "Dominant Western personality theories tend to focus on the individual," she explains. "But in collectivistic cultures," like the one in which she had been raised, "the relationships between the individual and other people are an important part of personality."

It's not that Westerners and Easterners have different personality traits, Cheung explains. The difference lies, she says, in what counts as a personality trait in cultures. "Personality factors may be packaged differently in different cultural settings," she explains. The Chinese, for instance, often describe personality in terms of one's preference for harmony—a rarity in Western culture.

Cheung has also been working to eliminate another kind of blind spot since her return home. In 1975, she says, it wasn't uncommon for newspapers' help wanted ads to include gender and physical ability amongst a list of required qualifications applicants needed for



a job. One-third of newspaper ads were still doing so in 1996, when Cheung became the first chair of Hong Kong's Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC).

To help implement anti-discrimination laws that had been passed in the territory, the EOC launched ad campaigns exposing the damage caused by gender stereotypes. One commercial produced for the campaign showed a man in downtown Hong Kong slowly turning into an ape as he made sexist remarks. "I wasn't sure about that one initially," says Cheung, laughing. "But the message got through." Just two years after the public awareness campaign launched, nearly 90 percent of the public knew about the EOC, up from 35 percent in 1996.

The next phase of the campaign for gender equality needs to emphasize the benefits for men, Cheung says. "Men sometimes think of equality of the sexes as requiring them to give something up," she explains. "We want to show them that they gain, too." Most men want more time with their children, she notes, something that gender parity would enable.

It's at this intersection of psychology and public policy, Cheung says, that she hopes to establish her legacy: a future, she hopes, in which help wanted ads excluding women will seem as bizarre as apes in downtown Hong Kong. ∞



# up & coming

## CLA'S NEW K-12 OUTREACH OFFICE IS ENCOURAGING MINNESOTA'S YOUNGEST CITIZENS TO THINK BIG BY EMILY SOHN

As an African-American kid growing up in a working class household in Houston, Tracy Blackmon never got the sense that college was in her future. She lived with her grandmother, who taught her to cook and clean so that she could snag a husband. Even at school, guidance counselors inadvertently discouraged attempts to break out of a powerful socioeconomic rut—college was never on the tips of their tongues.

“There was a subtle knowing that if you lived in the neighborhood where I’m from, you were maybe not going to college,” says Blackmon, now a 23-year old senior at CLA.

That same discouraging message is regularly delivered to low-income kids of color throughout the country. But through student-driven documentaries, summer research programs, campus visits, and more, it’s a message that CLA is working hard to change.

Creating change (left to right):  
Tracy Blackmon '07, Keith  
Mayes, and Naima Bashir '08



EVERETT AYUBZADEH

“If you reach students while they’re young, there is evidence that they’re more likely to go to college, have better grades, less absenteeism, and fewer behavioral issues,” says Anise McDowell, who became CLA’s first K-12 outreach coordinator last August.

With that in mind, members of the CLA community are increasingly reaching out to communities in Minnesota that are traditionally underrepresented in college classrooms. Directing their messages to students as young as five, they are replacing discouraging messages with a far more positive one: black or white, rich or poor, everyone deserves an education.

Outreach efforts aren’t new to CLA. For years, professors and departments have been visiting primary and secondary school classrooms and bringing kids to campus. But until now, there was no central clearinghouse to organize those efforts. And ambitious projects may have been shelved in favor of smaller scale efforts. Not anymore, says McDowell. “Now that people know I’m here, they say, ‘OK, we’ve been wanting to do bigger projects. Now we can.’”

### Smoothing the way

A major goal of outreach efforts is to demystify the process of preparing for and attending college. Despite the lack of outreach in her community, Blackmon made it to the University after earning an associate degree from a community college in Houston. The journalism major, who tutors kids in Minneapolis schools, wants the next generation to know what she wished she knew at their age.

With that goal in mind, Blackmon is working on a documentary with classmate Naima Bashir that will film students of color talking about how high school prepared them for college, why they came to the U, and what campus life is like. The film will serve as a recruiting tool for minority high school students. Clips from its final version will appear on the African American Registry website, an extensive portal for African American history.

Keith Mayes, assistant professor in the Department of African American and African Studies, is overseeing the project. Mayes grew up in Harlem and didn’t know anything about college until his senior year in high school. “We have a tendency to forget students on the margins,” Mayes says. “Only through luck do they come upon someone they can be inspired by. Our job as an ethnic studies department is to create inspiration for students about coming to college.”

Among other issues, the documentary project, called *Thinking 'Bout? Being About It*, will consider the complexities of family relationships for first-generation college kids, Blackmon says. In her own case, she notes, her family started noticing with some dismay that she doesn’t sound like she’s from Texas anymore. “It’s something a lot of us first-generation college students deal with,” she says. “After a certain point, your friends and family don’t understand you.”

The film, Blackmon hopes, will show kids that there are students on campus with similar backgrounds who will be willing to help them. And it will end with a challenge: “Now you’ve heard about our success stories,” the film asks, “What are your success stories going to be?”

### Engaging students in research

Alongside such informal, student-driven projects, other outreach programs are taking a more traditional route—designed by professors for students and administered by the K-12 outreach office. Psychology professor Angus MacDonald III was walking across the knoll after a department meeting last November when he came up with an idea for a summer program that would increase diversity among applicants, boost funding for graduate student research projects, and reach out to students in the community.

With input and encouragement from McDowell and CLA Dean Steven Rosenstone, the idea evolved into a program called VIRTEx (Vertically-Integrated Research Experience), which is debuting in pilot form this summer. Three teams of students, consisting of a graduate student, an undergraduate student, and a motivated high school student, are collaborating on an original research project over the course of the summer. The high schoolers earn \$1,250 for eight weeks of part-time work, giving them a way to gain research experience without having to get summer jobs.

“This is the kind of thing I would have eaten up in high school,” says MacDonald, who graduated from Minneapolis South High in 1986. “I knew this is what I wanted to do back then, and I was looking all over for research opportunities, but there wasn’t that kind of relationship with the University at that time.”

Confident that the pilot program will be a success, CLA hopes to fund dozens of similar opportunities in summers to come.

### Paying it forward

Other CLA programs, meanwhile, are already paying dividends. Last April, the “CLA Experience” gave tenth graders from Patrick Henry High School in North Minneapolis a taste of college life. Students enrolled online and spent a day attending lectures on campus. After a similar program earlier this year, students from North Minneapolis’s Edison High School raved about the day. “They said they felt like they could go to college now,” McDowell says.

The McGuire Academic Program helps to turn such students into University graduates, offering a next step for high school students involved in community programs like LearningWorks and Admission Possible. Nonprofit organizations like Achieve! Minneapolis and AVID in St. Paul are also part of the mix of CLA-community partnerships for access and success.

When CLA junior Douachee Lee was in high school at Patrick Henry, Admissions Possible paired her with a U student who helped her study for the ACT and apply for admission and financial aid. Through the program, which is geared toward kids from low-income families, Lee also visited campus a few times. A visit with the Hmong Minnesota Student Association made her feel even more at home.

“During my first year, I felt really comfortable going to classes and walking around campus,” Lee says. “I don’t think I ever got lost.” These days, Lee coaches students and visits high schools, helping the next generation of U students find their way, too. ∞

# SPACE CRAFTS

CLA researchers are examining how we've been shaping space in recent years—and how it, in turn, is shaping us.

BY DANNY LACHANCE

**T**hrough the window of the French Meadow Bakery and Café on Lyndale Avenue John Archer sees a landscape of contrasts.

This dense neighborhood southwest of downtown Minneapolis seems, at first glance, quintessentially urban with its bead and vintage clothing shops, alleys and sidewalks, pedestrians and parallel parking.

But first glances can be deceiving. “This used to be suburbia,” Archer says, pointing out the single-family houses that still dot the busy thoroughfare. And while the thought that Uptown and Woodbury could have anything in common may seem initially jolting, the truth of Archer’s observation soon becomes self-evident. For Lyndale Avenue is not simply a street of art galleries and specialty shops. It’s also a world of porches and front yards.

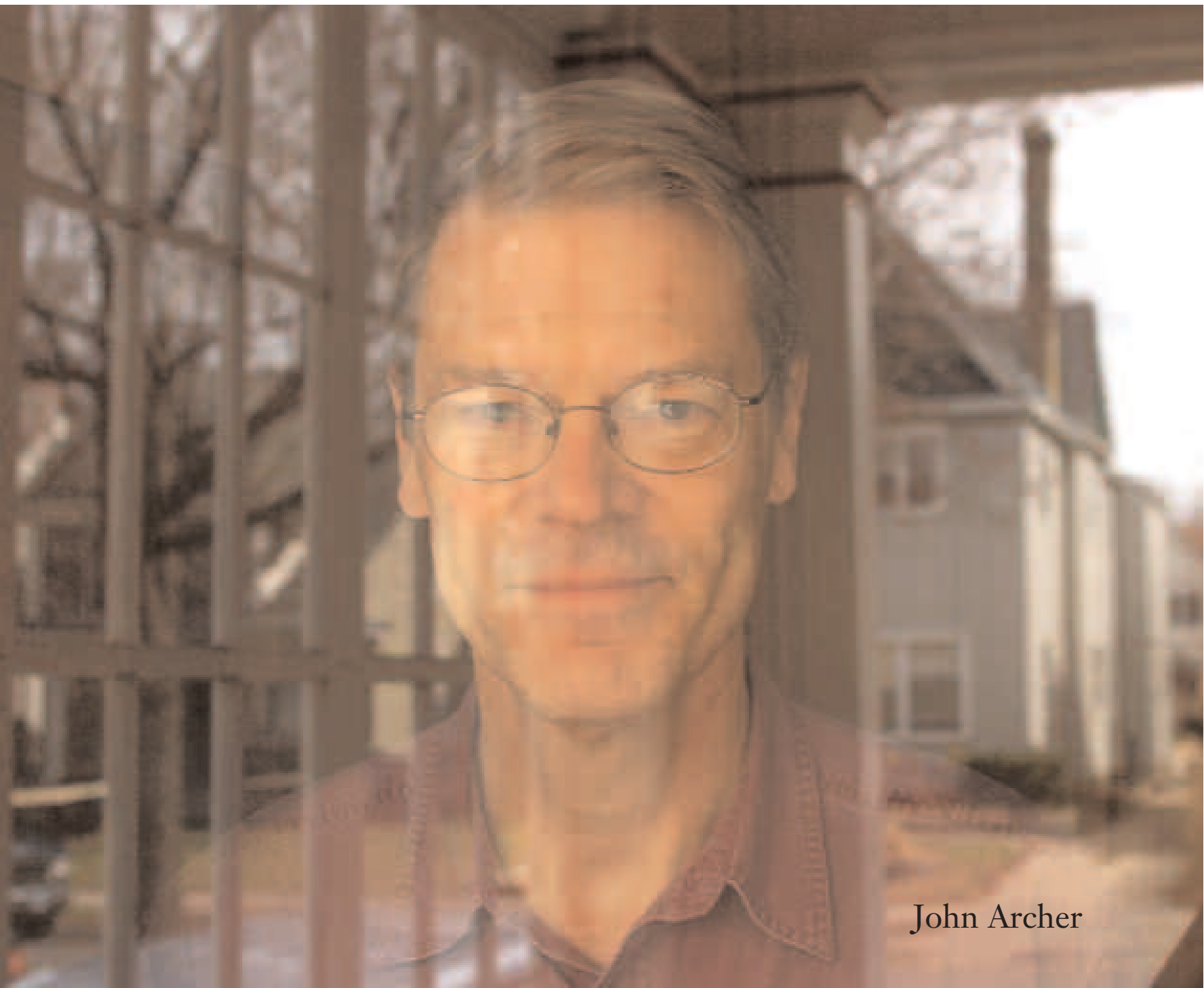
And those are spaces that Archer knows well. In his award-winning book *Architecture and Suburbia*, Archer examines the history and form of suburban space, from the English villa to the American dream house. His book upends many of the clichés about suburbia that songs like “Pleasant Valley Sunday” and “Little Boxes” have turned into conventional wisdom, like the notion that the suburbs breed conformity.

In reality, Archer says, the suburbs have been places where the middle classes have gone to assert their individuality, not to lose it. “Space is like a language,” Archer says between sips of coffee. “We use it to define who we are.” Suburbs emerged alongside capitalism as a rising ideology of individualism fueled the desire for private spaces that could distinguish individuals and their families from the rest of the world.

If space is a language, Archer and other CLA scholars are linguists. They’re studying everything from the crematoria of World War II concentration camps to the cramped berths of trans-Pacific cargo ships, from the bulletin boards of cyberspace to the porch swings of the nineteenth century, trying to understand how we relate to space.

And while their findings are as unique as the spaces and places they study, one truth seems to find its way into each scholar’s work: the structures that we inhabit both shape and reflect the way we read the world. They make certain kinds of thoughts and actions and perspectives possible—and others impossible. And they reveal desires and values, forged over time, that we may not know we hold.





John Archer

KELLY MACWILLIAMS

## SCENES FROM THE MALL

On a recent stroll down the Mall in Washington, D.C., Elaine Tyler May flashed on a conversation she'd had almost two decades ago inside the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum. Her son Daniel, ten at the time, had been gazing, mouth agape, at the planes suspended from the ceiling.

"Who do you think owns this place?" she asked.

"I sure wish I knew!" he said, wide-eyed.

"You do," she told him. "You and every other American citizen own this place."

It may have been a bit corny, admits May, a historian in the University's Department of American Studies. But she wanted her son to stake a claim in public spaces and, in so doing, be part of a generation that sees public space in ways that her own hadn't.

## DEEP IMPACT

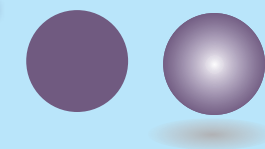
Space may be, as scholars like John Archer suggest, a language with a grammar that takes centuries to evolve. But like language, space is something that we're always negotiating on a second-to-second basis—driving a car through traffic, maneuvering a pen over paper, dribbling a basketball toward a net.

Dan Kersten studies that immediate relationship we have with space. He's a CLA neuroscientist who has spent years trying to understand how the space that lies in front of us gets processed visually by the brain, allowing us to know what material objects occupy that space and where those objects are located.

For decades, neuroscientists have known that light from the world is initially projected two-dimensionally on the retina, a screen-like piece of tissue in the back of our eyes.

"The eyes are built to extract information about the world from projection. So there's a difference right at the start. You start with a three-dimensional scene and you've got two dimensional data," says Kersten.

Those two-dimensional signals soon travel to area V1, a part of the brain's cortex located at the back of the head, where they light up clusters of cells in patterns that approximate the space of



the visual field. So an apple in front of you activates cells in your V1 area corresponding to its location in your visual field. Moving the apple to the left will change the location of activated cells in your V1 area.

But if, like the retina, area V1 represents space only in two dimensions, how do we perceive depth? How do we know, when we look into our dining room, that the candle on the table ahead of us isn't touching the curtain hanging three feet behind it?

For years, Kersten says, depth processing was mostly thought to happen elsewhere in the brain, after those initial signals passed through V1. So it was a surprise, he says, when evidence collected by his laboratory last year suggested that V1 does take distance, or depth, into account.

That's good information to know, especially for those seeking to replicate the human eye through technology. In the future, scientists may be able to help people with eye damage see by stimulating their V1

areas directly, through cortical implants. In order to translate the two-dimensional data from a camera lens into signals meaningful to V1, they'll need to know just how V1 processes depth. That's where Kersten's finding and the research it's spawning come in.

The robotics industry also stands to benefit. "In the long term, artificial intelligence may need to draw on what we learn about the way the human brain works in order to achieve or even go beyond human visual and cognitive competence," he says.

After years of thinking about V1 in a certain way, Kersten says it's hard to adjust to his new findings. It wasn't exactly like seeing water boil in a freezer, but the findings do run against years of research and speculation about the way we see, Kersten says.

"This is actually one case where hindsight is not helping a lot," he remarks.

Figuratively speaking, of course.

—Danny LaChance

### cyber optic

To learn more about Dan Kersten's findings and take part in an interactive demonstration of the experiment he and his collaborators designed, go to [cla.umn.edu/reach/kersten](http://cla.umn.edu/reach/kersten)

A portrait of Elaine Tyler May, a woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a pink cable-knit sweater and a colorful patterned scarf. She is standing in front of a chalkboard. The photo is credited to EVERETT AYOUBZADEH.

## Elaine Tyler May

In the years following World War II, when May was growing up in Southern California, spaces in the United States were being transformed in response to a shifting cultural climate that emphasized nuclear families and individualism. After the war, many who had lived densely in cities, stacked on top of one another in walk-up apartments, migrated to the suburbs and lived spaciouly in subdivisions and cul-de-sacs. They shopped in privately owned shopping centers rather than downtowns. They took Pontiacs rather than public transportation to work. And they lived in houses whose design reflected a kind of detachment from public life.

“A lot of the suburban homes that are built after the war have a sheltered look,” May says. “There’ll be hedges. There’ll be low-hanging roofs. They’ll be set back with fences. It’s really an architecture that speaks of separation rather than engagement with the world.” Even front porches and stoops, gathering places that had traditionally connected private homes to the outside world, were nearly nonexistent in these suburbs, she notes.

May’s current work examines the legacy of this Cold War turn away from public life. It’s a trend that’s been amplified, in some ways, by recent events. After September 11, public spaces have become further marked as sites of danger by the elaborate security protocols put in place to prevent terrorist attacks.

May points to her recent trip to D.C. as an example. “One of the most shocking and troubling symbolic changes is restricted access to public sites of national power,” she says. “You can’t get near the White House; there are those big barricades, and there’s not even street access anymore. Everywhere there are security gates. You can’t even go into a museum without being screened.”

That lockdown atmosphere, she fears, will make it even more difficult to convince



our youngest citizens that they have both the privilege and the duty of shaping their nation's public spaces—and public life.

“When the first thing you encounter when you go to the Smithsonian is security rather than welcoming, that changes your relationship to that space,” she says. It fosters a sense of alienation and distance from those we have elected to represent us.

May hopes her work ultimately helps to reverse the long-term trend she's spent much of her career exploring. “I want to help open up and reclaim that public space that is ours, that, in a sense, we have all participated in closing ourselves off from.”

### HAUNTED PLACES

Space may be a language, but in some cases, *place* is what we turn to when language fails, when we can't adequately express the contradictory, inchoate feelings we have about the past. To illustrate that point,

associate professor of geography Karen Till recounts a story told by Hanno Loewy, director of the Frankfurt Center for Holocaust Studies. Over a decade ago, an elderly woman visiting from the United States gasped with grief as she approached the ovens at Auschwitz. The woman, who had lost most of her family at Auschwitz, then moved even closer and touched the ovens delicately, almost reverently.

“She was no longer touching this oven as an instrument for murder, but touching it like a shroud, like a thing that touched the dead in their last minutes of dying,” Loewy explained to Till.

It's stories like this one, collected over years of research, that have shaped Till's understanding of place and memory and spaces of trauma. Till studies wounded cities, cities whose occupants have endured trauma in their collective past: Berlin, complicit in the atrocities of the Holocaust; Cape Town, violently reshaped by apartheid; Buenos Aires, wounded by the war levied by the military against leftists.

KELLY MACWILLIAMS

## Karen Till



## OurSpace

A year ago, Alaska Senator Tad Stevens became the dunce of the day when he referred to the Internet as a “series of tubes” on the floor of the U.S. Senate. Stevens’s wording might have been crude, but it raised an honest question. What, exactly, is the Internet? In its physical form, it’s computer servers, wireless signals, and, yes, fiber optic cables snaking through oceans and dirt.

But we’ve also come to conceive of the Internet as a revolutionary kind of space, a new platform of communication that is fundamentally changing human life for the better.

Gil Rodman, a communications studies scholar, smiles when he hears this kind of talk. It’s a new variation on an old theme, he says. In earlier eras, innovations like the printing press or the television also stoked utopian fantasies.

“We’ve long had this utopian notion that the problems of the world are all caused by the difficulty of communication,” Rodman says. “And we feel that the Internet is finally going to bring us together in a way that will solve all of those problems.”

But that seemingly self-evident truth isn’t so self-evident. “There’s nothing about the circulation of information that guarantees that it’s a good thing,” Rodman observes.

### RACE IN CYBERSPACE

“We have this idea that by going online you lose the physical markers of racial identity, that they go away. You’re entering a realm of pure ideas,” says Rodman. But that kind of thinking is often more fantasy than reality. In many online contexts, Rodman notes, “there’s a default assumption that cyberspace is white space.” He cites numerous postings on listservs and mainstream Websites in the United States where the term “we” is used in ways that assume those accessing the site are white.

What Rodman has found, in short, is that those categories of difference that inform our offline lives will bleed into our online discourse no matter how we much we manipulate them—or try to forget them.

### CYBER CIVICS

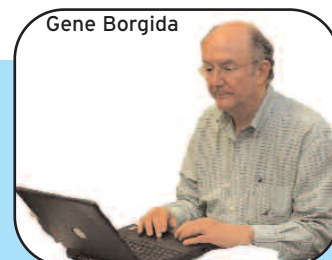
The notion that cyberspace is ultimately a reflection of the human dynamics of three-dimensional space is also endorsed by psychologist Eugene Borgida and political scientist John Sullivan. Ten years ago, they set out to study how the citizens



John Sullivan



Gil Rodman



Gene Borgida

PHOTOS BY EVERETT AYOUBZADEH

of two rural Minnesota communities, Detroit Lakes and Grand Rapids, were responding to the rise of the Internet.

They wondered, Borgida says, about whether the Internet could work to counter two of the trends that other academics had been studying: increased detachment and disengagement with civic life, and a lost sense of community. And they were particularly interested in how people’s socioeconomic status factored into their ability to use the Internet to increase their involvement in public life.

What they found is that context matters; the Internet exists in economic and political landscapes that shape who gets access to it and how it’s used by communities to enhance collective well being.

Take Grand Rapids, for example. “Grand Rapids people tend to be very civic oriented,” says Borgida. So it was no surprise that when the local community unveiled Grand Net, a community electronic network that allowed citizens access to the Internet, they ensured that their least well off would have access to it. “They had computers in the chamber of commerce. They had them in the county health center. The public library was a big spot,” Borgida says.

Detroit Lakes, on the other hand, is more individualistic and entrepreneurial in its approach to public services. “It’s a different sensibility,” Borgida explains. “Their civic spirit has been much more oriented around tourism and entrepreneurship and market dynamics.” That made it all the more tempting to leave Internet access to private, for-profit Internet service providers. As a result, access to Lakes Net, the electronic community network that Detroit Lakes founded, was limited to those with financial means.

The differences in these communities’ approaches to the Internet was significant. Responding to a civic culture that made access to all a priority, citizens in Grand Rapids showed higher levels of participation in cyberspace than those in Detroit Lakes. And

that, in turn, affected their sense of engagement with the community and benefited them personally. “Community electronic networks,” like the one in Grand Rapids, “may be particularly promising because they allow citizens to tap into civic resources to gain technological experience and know-how,” Sullivan, Borgida, and their research associates concluded in a recent article.

Borgida is quick to emphasize that leaders in both communities were equally committed to increasing civic engagement. “These leaders all have a vested interest in making things happen,” he explains. “But they inherit a certain way of being from their predecessors. And in Grand Rapids you find that people are on average more collaborative. That made them much more able to pull together to try to figure out how to use technology to increase their collective well being.”

### FROM THE REAL TO THE IDEAL

The persistence in our online worlds of our disparate offline cultures and values may seem to put the brakes on the revolutionary aspirations some have for the Internet. But the goal of research isn’t to dash aspirations. Indeed, Rodman is excited about the potential the Internet has for publishing voices that wouldn’t otherwise be heard.

But he knows that the Internet will always be only as utopian or dystopian as those who use it. “The same technology that enables the free-flowing global community also enables a whole range of surveillance and privacy intrusions that wouldn’t otherwise exist,” he notes.

By getting us to think about the Internet as a tool used by humans embedded in cultural, political, and social worlds, these CLA researchers aren’t letting us rest easily on our platitudes about the global village. They’re pushing us to think about just what it will take in our offline lives for our online ideals to become reality.

—Danny LaChance



The places of memory—museums, monuments, and memorials—that these cities have constructed to remember the trauma of the past are more than simply markers of something that happened long ago, Till explains. They are expressions of an elemental urge that geographers and philosophers have been studying for years: the need to take our pasts and embody them in the environments that we build and the places to which we return.

We do this sometimes to cling to nostalgic memories. Photographs of children at various ages line parents' fireplace mantels. Ticket stubs from concerts decorate bulletin boards.

But we also do it to grapple with horrific past experiences, to let go—without necessarily achieving closure—of our traumatic memories. The wounded and bereaved can experience healing by returning to the site of trauma.

Gunter Morsch, director of the memorial museum at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, told Till that while it may seem perverse, some of the people who have been in concentration camps see them as a kind of home, “even though we usually think of home in warm, touchy-feely ways.”

Creators of museums built on sites of historical trauma are increasingly becoming conscious of their therapeutic role in survivors' lives, says Till. The District Six Museum in Cape Town, located in one of the few buildings that wasn't bulldozed when the apartheid government removed residents from the area, sees a fair number of tourists on any given day. But what those tourists probably don't see, Till notes, are the spaces that cater to those whose lives were directly influenced by apartheid.

“They converted the main hall into an exhibition space. But behind that there's a little kitchen area where local people hang out. And behind that still is what's called the homecoming center, where they'll have mourning workshops where people might bring in objects related to whatever memories they want to work through,” says Till. The objects, she says, can become a starting point for discussions that help participants come to terms with the past while imagining a better future.

In these museums, these sites of historical trauma, time isn't frozen. “The directors of these places see them as dynamic,” Till explains. “They don't want to exactly capture some tragic past. They know that can't happen. But they do understand the need, the basic human need, for feeling understood, for feeling complete.”

## TRADING SPACES

Space will likely always be an extension of our beliefs and values, a record of pasts that we yearn for—or regret. But in an age of globalization, some have suggested that physical space is losing its influence over our economies and our national identities.

We live, or so we're told, in a global village, where physical location, distance, and borders have been rendered irrelevant by supersonic jets and fiber optic cables.

But even before September 11th recharged our awareness of fault lines, anthropologist Kale Fajardo wasn't convinced that globalization always turned the borders between countries into leaking membranes.

The reason? Not all things global are fast, digital, or homogenizing, Fajardo says. More than 90 percent of the world's trade happens via ships that take two to three weeks to cross oceans. Forgotten by pundits, global shipping has important and often overlooked effects on the identities of those who work on ships and in ports.

Fajardo should know. This assistant professor in the Department of American Studies has spent ten years researching Filipino involvement in global shipping. Last summer, Fajardo spent two weeks doing followup research aboard a container ship traveling from the port of Oakland to the port of Hong Kong, via the Northern Pacific Rim, with stops in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kiaoshung.

Those ships and the sea they traverse are “in between” spaces, Fajardo says, where crew members are quite isolated for weeks at a time from the worlds they help to connect. And they are staffed by crews who hail from around the globe: Fajardo's ship last summer included crew members from Kiribati, Germany, and the Philippines.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom that globalization blurs identities, Fajardo found the opposite effect on board the cargo ship: the contained space strengthened, rather than diluted, the national identities of the ship's crew members.

Take, for instance, the ship's Filipino members. Within Asia and globally, Filipinos have been feminized as a people, notes Fajardo. Working in over 200 countries, they have been subjected to a global reputation that is often racist and misogynistic: “Many Filipinos, particularly, women, work as overseas contract workers,” Fajardo says. “Because of power imbalances, images and narratives of the Filipino subject have emerged, saying that she's a victimized woman, particularly because she might work as a maid, nanny, or prostitute, or because she immigrated as a ‘mail order bride.’”

Seafaring has become a way for Filipino men to resist global stereotypes. “Seafaring provides a kind of alibi or opportunity for saying, ‘We're not the victim. We can be seen in this more manly, heroic way,’” Fajardo explains.

The same spaces and technology that facilitate connections can also reinforce just how culturally different and distinctive we remain. And that's a side of globalization that we don't see when we're reading about the latest McDonalds to open in Moscow.





Kale Fajardo

KELLY MACWILLIAMS



**If space is a language,** as John Archer suggests, by some accounts it's a dying one. Each day seems to bring new stories that call into question the significance of the three dimensions our bodies occupy.

If you have the Internet, you no longer need to go to the end of your driveway to get your Sunday paper, bookstores to find books, city hall to find deeds, classrooms to learn physics. It's all online.

And when you do venture into the world, you can find familiar stores, logos, and signs almost everywhere.

Given all the utopian—and dystopian—rhetoric about paperless offices, telecommuting, and global homogeny, it's tempting to think that physical space is becoming irrelevant.

But as the findings of CLA researchers demonstrate, that's a glib response to complex processes. The attacks of September 11th have made us more conscious of our surroundings, the physical spaces of our daily lives, than ever before. Cities grappling with the atrocities of their pasts create monuments and museums on the exact sites of trauma—not on the Internet. The global network that enables American fourth-graders to throw Chinese-manufactured baseballs relies on cargo ships that reinforce, rather than blur, national differences.

Space isn't losing its relevance. It isn't being superceded by pixels or energy particles or pan-Pacific jets. It's doing what it always has done: it's changing. And so are we. ∞

# New Release

By Danny LaChance


**For just a moment,** David Doppler looks and acts like the prisoner he is. A white t-shirt two sizes too large hangs off his torso. Slouching in a chair with his arms and legs splayed about, he seems consciously to be occupying as much space as his body and clothes will allow. “I’m the ass kicker,” Doppler says to the camera, smirking. “I kick ass.”

But the menacing image doesn’t last. The ass kicking he’s referring to? He pesters guys who haven’t submitted poems to the weekly poetry workshop he coordinates at the maximum security prison in Stillwater, Minn.

Two years ago, filmmaker and Ph.D. student Rachel Raimist (gender, women, and sexuality studies) spent eight months filming Doppler and other incarcerated men who meet weekly to read, write, and respond to poetry, often with the collaboration of well-known spoken word artists from the Twin Cities—Reggie Harris, Desdamona, Ed Bok Lee, Emmanuel Ortiz. Now, she’s sifting through hours and hours of footage, editing the piece.

From the first day she lugged her camera equipment into the prison, Raimist says, she wrestled with the question of how best to represent her subjects on film. It wasn’t that she lacked experience as a documentary filmmaker. She’d completed an M.F.A. in filmmaking from UCLA in 1999, and her master’s project, a documentary on female hip hop artists titled *Nobody Knows My Name*, had gained critical acclaim and was still being shown at conferences and film festivals. But from the beginning, she says, this project felt different.

“This wasn’t a space like hip hop, where I live it, I’m part of it, I can theorize it from the inside,” she explains. “I was an outsider.” And so, she notes, are those who are often responsible for our conceptions of prison life. Prison documentaries, she explains, are typically produced by people who “come into the space, and it feels like they’re doing a drive-through, a



**Ph.D. candidate  
Rachel Raimist  
unsettles settled  
ideas about prisoners**

KELLY MACWILLIAMS



tour, an exposé—interviewing through bars, filming down on people. They seem to have this entitlement, this claiming.” And so she set out to capture the more complex reality of prisoners who were trying to stake their own claim in the world through their poetry.

Just as her previous film captured the side of hip hop that never gets airtime—its progressive politics, its feminist roots—Raimist wanted her depiction of the poetry workshop to unsettle our received ideas about prisons and prisoners. In her documentary, prison isn’t a place where time stops or people devolve into animals. It is, rather, a site of growth and change, a place where men find—or fail to find—dignity amid trying conditions.

To document that complex reality, Raimist tried to bridge the physical and psychological distance between filmmaker and subject as much as possible. Along with the other visiting artists, she participated in the workshops, reading her own poems, talking with the men about the joys of being the mother of a fourth-grader, recounting memories of her adolescence in Middletown, New York, her half-shaved head bobbing incessantly to hip hop. To gain the trust necessary for something as intimate as poetry writing to happen meaningfully, she explains, “All of us outsiders had to become part of the circle.”

When Raimist did turn on the camera, she was careful about how she was framing the men. She intentionally never shot film in the parts of the prison that looked the most prison-like. There are no bars, no coils of barbed wire in this film. To capture the uniqueness of

each participant, she zoomed in on individual faces rather than the cellblocks so frequently seen in film.

The focus, she says, was always on the community within the walls of the prison—not the walls themselves. “I got a lot of close-up shots of hands writing because I thought it was more about that,” she says. She sometimes ceded the camera to the inmates, who became, in those moments, the producers as well as the subjects of their own stories.

Those methods make this documentary exceptional, says Louis Mendoza, chair of the Department of Chicano Studies, who has studied the depiction of prisons in literature. “She’s capturing questions,” he says of Raimist’s work. “It’s not just simply ‘let’s put them on display.’ It’s about the process, the struggle, the need for clarity, even as there is a willingness to embrace ambiguity or uncertainty about what the outcome is going to be.”

That’s precisely the effect Raimist hopes to generate. “Many people in that circle didn’t get any real education. A lot of them barely had junior high educations,” she notes. “Giving them some tools to look critically at their environment, their space, their lives, their background—it’s a really powerful, transformative thing.”

And while her documentary will inevitably reflect her own biases, Raimist is hoping that it will throw a wrench into the media machinery that keeps cranking out images of prisoners as lost causes. “Prison gets a very skewed, bad rap,” she says.

To be sure, she’s experienced its darker side. She’s been cat-called in the hallways, and in one of her first weeks in the prison, a prisoner reached underneath the table and pinched her. But she’s also seen in the Stillwater Poets, as she calls them, glimpses of her brother, her cousins, the guys she used to date in high school.

She’s seen and documented guys with their arms defiantly crossed in March sitting shoulder-to-shoulder in August, talking about the children they never see or will never have. She’s seen guys carrying each other’s poems around in their pockets, talking about masculinity and the American dream.

People came to the workshop with very limited perspectives, she says. “And what they gained was an infinite amount: pockets of hope and spaces of possibility.” ∞



cyber optic

To see a working version of Raimist's documentary, go to [cla.umn.edu/reach/raimist](http://cla.umn.edu/reach/raimist)



Jeff Ochs '04 and Adrienne Baker '06  
are changing the faces of higher education BY KAREN OLSON

# in the ZONE

For many 20-somethings, the first year out of college is a tough one. A lucky few may take some time off to travel to faraway lands. But most find themselves on the bottom rung of new ladders—corporate, educational, nonprofit—where they try to find their footing, hoping to begin the long climb upward.

Jeff Ochs didn't find a ladder to his liking. So he built his own.

In the first year after he graduated from CLA's Honors Program, Ochs founded Breakthrough Saint Paul, a nonprofit organization that prepares traditionally underserved students for college. The program is based on the educational model of the Breakthrough Collaborative, a national organization that now has 28 affiliates across the country. Students in Breakthrough programs commit to at least two years of tuition-free summer sessions and after-school programs, focusing on core academic subjects. They're taught by smart, energetic college and high-school students, 72 percent of whom go on to professional careers in education.

#### The Comfort Zone Paradox

For Ochs, the road to this kind of meaningful, mission-driven work started with the click of a mouse. During his first year in CLA, Ochs received an e-mail from the CLA Honors Program about a teaching internship at LearningWorks, a tuition-free summer program for highly motivated students from traditionally underserved groups. "Prior teaching experience is not required," the e-mail said. "All majors and interests are welcome to apply."

Ochs applied, was accepted, and spent the summer teaching in a program that changed the way he thought about life—and education.

"I was completely out of my comfort zone every second of the day," says Ochs, who graduated *summa cum laude* in 2004 with a B.A. in history. The crash course in teaching demanded that he answer a lot of



questions in a short amount of time. How do I get middle schoolers excited about studying Vichy France? How do people learn best? What do at-risk students need from me in order to succeed?

"That summer I started understanding what I call the comfort-zone paradox—coming to a point in your life where being outside your comfort zone is within your comfort zone," he says.

Comfortable with discomfort, Ochs, who is now 25, began his sophomore year eager to learn and to take on new challenges. He was so inspired by the program's positive effect on students and aspiring young teachers, he says, that he began to envision ways to make this opportunity available to other Minnesota communities—starting next door, in St. Paul.



LEO KIM

diagram. “You make a lot of mistakes. It’s messy.”

But the payoff is significant. Take Tho Bui, for example. An eighth-grader who hopes to become a math professor, Tho came to the United States from Vietnam with his family when he was in second grade. Staff members at Breakthrough St. Paul helped him apply for the Young Scholars award from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

In 2006 he became the first Minnesotan to receive the prestigious scholarship, which provides guidance and financial support for his entire academic career, even through graduate school, if he keeps his grades up.



### Breaking Through

Those visions became a reality two years later when, as a senior, Ochs worked with University faculty to create a proposal for what would become Breakthrough St. Paul.

Not only did Ochs get university credit for the proposal through the U’s Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, he also convinced Mounds Park Academy to host it and the national Breakthrough Collaborative program to back it.

“Creating my own job was really a dream come true,” says Ochs. But that’s not to say it’s been challenge free. He is, after all, working to reverse long-standing educational trends in underserved populations.

“The transition into middle school is a really hard one for kids who are smart,” says Ochs. “We found that a lot of kids who had been identified as gifted and talented, especially minority kids, were not enrolling in honors courses in seventh grade.” In fact, in St. Paul schools, only seven percent of students take honors classes and pass them. So it’s a testament to the success of the program that within its first year, every student in Breakthrough St. Paul had enrolled in and passed an honors class at his or her own school. This year, 65 percent are taking more than one college prep course.

Ochs may have progressed to a new comfort zone, but there are still moments of disorientation. He compares the process of learning to lead a non-profit at the age of 22 to learning origami from a

### Taking the Torch

Now that he’s coordinator, Ochs is the one sending, rather than receiving, recruitment e-mails. One of them reached recent CLA graduate Adrienne Baker.

Since March 2006, Baker has been the organization’s student and family liaison. She visits schools, talks with students and their families, and makes sure students are able to take advantage of resources available to them.

“I knew coming into college that I wanted to serve diverse urban populations,” says Baker, who declared both of her majors—journalism and cultural studies and comparative literature—in her freshman year. “I wanted to give people information to make informed decisions, to enrich their lives and experience, and to have power within their own communities.”

“We set a goal and the next day we start to go for it,” says Baker about the small staff that accomplishes so much. “We don’t think about limits very often. We consider our obstacles, but if there’s something important that needs to happen for these kids and for their success, we make it happen.”

Baker sees a future career in writing—in fact, she’s teaching journalism at Mounds Park Academy—but right now, she says, she’s committed to community service. So is Ochs, who hopes for a future of social entrepreneurship, building innovative organizations with social justice missions.

They aren’t resting on their laurels. But already, these recent CLA graduates are doing nothing less than changing the faces of higher education. ∞



# little boxes

From the monumental, history-making act of genocide to the mundane misery of middle school, the classification of humans always seems to precede acts of cruelty and domination. CLA scholars offer fresh perspectives on the role institutions play in stigmatizing difference—and how those institutions can undo the damage.

BY JACK EL-HAI AND DANNY LACHANCE  
PHOTOS BY RICHARD ANDERSON

In 2003, Californians who opened up their voter information guides were asked a loaded question. “When you’re asked to check a government form with row after row of these rigid and silly little ‘race’ boxes, have you ever just wanted to say, ‘None of your business; now leave me alone?’” asked proponents of Proposition 54, a ballot initiative aimed at amending the state’s constitution to prohibit state and local governments from collecting data pertaining to race in many contexts.

The initiative called attention to something that has become as inevitable in life as death and taxes: classification. For better or worse, we simply cannot get by in this world without checking boxes—or having boxes checked about us. From our race, sex, marital status, age, and citizenship to the religions we practice and the degrees we hold (or don’t hold), we are all regularly described and tracked in terms of categories by institutions like the government.

Routine or not, proponents of Proposition 54 said the act of classification is often unnatural and never benign. Classification simply

enables discrimination, which is harmful whether the target of discrimination is black or white, Latino or Asian, male or female, they argued. Opponents disagreed. Pretending that the world was colorblind, they said, would not make it so. It would only prevent institutions from collecting the information they need to monitor the gap between the ideal of equality and the reality of inequality—and to create remedies when the data show disparities.

Proposition 54 failed, but public policy makers throughout the country continue to wrestle with the practical and philosophical questions raised when institutions engage in racial and ethnic categorization. In historical and sociological studies, CLA researchers are providing crucial context for these questions. They’re examining how the institutions that order our world—government agencies, universities, organized religions, courts—have classified people, often in ways that have harmed them. And, like those on both sides of the debate about colorblindness, they’re thinking about how best to remedy past and continuing wrongs based on racial categorization.





Susan Craddock

ASIAN [ ] AFRICAN AMERICAN [ ] HISPANIC [ ] WHITE

# “Disease became a way of pathologizing the Chinese, a political tool used to differentiate the immigrant community.”

## hazardous to your health

Last April, the *New York Times* reported a sharp up-tick in infant mortality rates in the South, a rise that was especially pronounced within the state’s disproportionately poor African American population.

As state officials and experts struggled to make sense of the data that had been collected by state agencies, they came to disparate conclusions. Some charged that the differences resulted from cutbacks to state-funded prenatal medical care. Others, however, explained the increase in deaths not as a function of healthcare access but as a function of character—of willpower.

“The mothers in general, black and white, are not as healthy,” a Mississippi doctor told the *Times*, pointing to increases in obesity, diabetes, and hypertension across racial categories. But he rejected the notion that the state’s infrastructure was responsible. “Some women just don’t have the get up and go,” he said.

Despite the doctor’s inclusion of whites, the “some women” he referenced tended to be poor and black, the article notes—implying a link between race and gumption. And that’s a cause for concern.

“Both the promise and the pitfall of statistics is that they can show where resources need to be directed or problems addressed, or they can be used to perpetuate negative stereotypes” says Susan Craddock, associate professor of gender, women and sexuality studies and affiliate in the Institute for Global Studies.

Craddock has found that policy makers, using categories of race and nationality, have justified unfair practices under the guise of protecting the public health. It’s not a new phenomenon, she says. During a 19th-century epidemic of bubonic plague, health officials in San Francisco singled out Chinese immigrants and their neighborhoods—where the disease was rampant—as the *source* of the contagion. “Disease became a way of pathologizing the Chinese, a political tool used to differentiate the immigrant community,” says Craddock. “This was clearly part of a larger anti-immigrant discourse.”

Similar attempts in the 19th century to link other immigrant groups, especially Jews and Eastern Europeans, to disease and pestilence fill the pages of medical history books, Craddock says. “If they are diseased, they are to be feared,” she says. And, it seems, if they are feared, they are diseased.

The link between disease and discrimination is a phenomenon Craddock is monitoring in Minnesota. Right now, Twin Cities public health officials are trying to intervene in the high incidence of tuberculosis among members of the Somali immigrant community. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that TB infections run highest among immigrants to the U.S.—a fact that has led some policy makers to advocate restrictions on the immigration of people from certain regions of the world, or greater surveillance before and after they enter the United States.

But other research suggests that many immigrants acquired tuberculosis after their arrival in this country, raising the possibility that living conditions in their adopted land are responsible for the outbreak. Craddock and her colleague John Song recently launched a study to ask members of the Somali community about their experiences with tuberculosis. They hope to provide a more accurate picture of transmission and appropriate response. Among other things, their work will raise questions about whether Somalis’ living conditions and limited access to good health care bear some blame for the current TB epidemic.

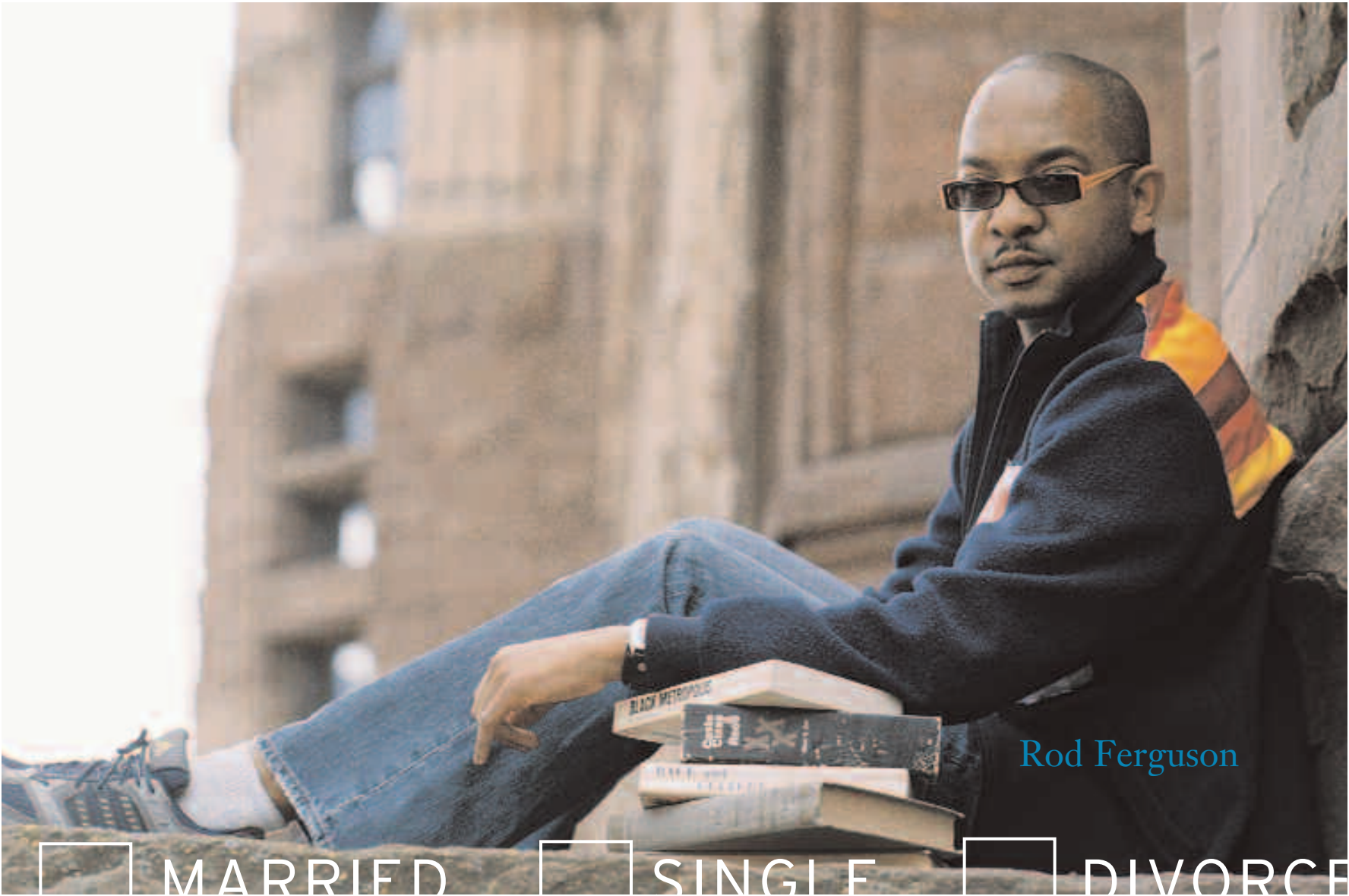
Craddock is concerned that in the absence of such research public health agencies might adopt policies that “essentially stigmatize and police immigrant groups rather than focusing on the economic and social factors that create vulnerability.” What too often happens, she notes, is that “those institutions that should be ameliorating problems are too often propagating them.” She hopes that her research will help to counter that trend, sparking awareness in public health officials about which concerns are reasonable—and which are not.

## dysfunction’s function

Policy makers and political pundits, even celebrities like Bill Cosby, often speak about disease in social and cultural as well as biological terms. In the 1950s, university professors were more often the source of public thinking about social disease.

In the aftermath of World War II, U.S. officials increasingly turned to professors of sociology to help solve social problems like poverty that plagued minority communities, including African





Rod Ferguson

MARRIED

SINGLE

DIVORCE

Americans. But, as Rod Ferguson notes, their academic research often reinforced the inequality it sought to reduce.

Ferguson, an associate professor of American studies at the University, has studied the way that academic institutions have been complicit in stigmatizing populations that are different. In earlier decades, social scientists studying inequality often inadvertently blamed the victims. The problem, they said, wasn't the economic system or the historical denial of resources and opportunities to African Americans. It was, rather, the attitudes and habits of black people.

“Academics pointed to many examples of so-called black dysfunction,” Ferguson explains. “The Chicago school of sociology looked at black homosexuals on the South Side of Chicago as evidence of corruption—corruption that could contaminate the nearby white neighborhoods. Some sociologists also pointed to single-head households, the unwed mothers and the families with no fathers in the households, as examples of dysfunction. To some of these academics the norm, a healthy household, was one that was patriarchal.”

### DIFFERENCE 101: A SHORT SYLLABUS

Susan Craddock, *City of Plagues: Disease, Poverty, and Deviance in San Francisco* (University of Minnesota Press, 2004)

Penny Edgell, *Religion and Family in a Changing Society* (Princeton University Press, 2005)

Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (University of Minnesota Press, 2004)



## Penny Edgell & Doug Hartmann



Other academics decried the close quartering of extended families and lodgers—often migrants moving from the South to stay with families in small apartments in cities like Chicago and New York. To many African Americans, opening their homes to newcomers showed hospitality and generosity; in the minds of some sociologists, though, that openness signaled harmful breakdowns of the nuclear family—a structure that, they argued, provided economic and moral security.

Had these academics' conclusions remained confined to textbooks and scholarly journals, they might not have made much of a difference in the lives of African Americans. But they found a new and robust life in government policies and laws. “They became general common sense, and you see them all over the place,” Ferguson observes.

In his 1976 presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan told the story of a Chicago woman who allegedly was making \$150,000 a year from fraudulent welfare claims. When the woman he described, Linda

Taylor (who happened to be black), was later convicted of defrauding the government of \$8,000, a prosecutor quoted in the *New York Times* called her a “parasitic growth” on the system. Before long, the politically charged image of the welfare queen—described in the *Times* as “a heavy woman driving a big white Cadillac and paying for steaks with wads of food stamps”—became the prevailing image of a woman receiving assistance. Given the infamous Taylor and the general public’s perception of the racial composition of welfare rolls, it seemed to go without saying that the “welfare queen” was black.

The rhetoric of welfare reform in the last few decades of the 20th century, then, was essentially a spinoff of what sociologists had been saying in the 1950s. “In welfare reform, from Reagan to Clinton, these sociologists’ findings became a bedrock of social change,” Ferguson says. “Public discourse about what went wrong in black communities began with the female head of household.”

cyber optic

How have communities stigmatized by institutions responded?  
To read more, go to [cla.umn.edu/reach/littleboxes](http://cla.umn.edu/reach/littleboxes)

## a homogenous mosaic

Why does classification by institutions like public health departments or universities often seem to lead to stigmatization? It's tempting to write off this tendency as malice or ignorance. But CLA sociologists Penny Edgell and Doug Hartmann suggest that it often stems from a complex mixture of good intentions and rigid expectations.

Americans usually say they value the ideal of diversity, but they also expect others to behave in particular ways, speaking English, for instance, or celebrating Thanksgiving, or worshipping a certain way. That way of thinking may unconsciously inform the way our institutions, like health departments and universities, are structured and the ideals of the people who work in them. When faced with populations whose habits, lifestyles, or incidence of illness deviate from the norm, the institution's response is "to decide that something is wrong with [these people]," Edgell explains. "They are perceived as problems."

Meanwhile, even outside the institution, people who don't belong to minority groups often don't see the inequalities resulting from the institutional response. That's one of the key findings, so far, of the American Mosaic Project, a multi-year study led by Edgell and Hartmann that examines how Americans view racial, religious, and cultural difference.

Americans embrace the concept of equality, Hartmann and Edgell say, but while whites tend to believe that our institutions create a level playing field, minorities don't. The ideals of fair play and justice that pervade our cherished national documents may account in part for this phenomenon, the two hypothesize. Because our commitment to equality on paper is so strong, people in the majority may have difficulty recognizing the unfair treatment that some groups receive from institutions in practice.

## colorblind or colorblind?

At first glance, the work of these CLA researchers may seem to dovetail with the spirit of Proposition 54 and its assumption that classification can never serve good purposes. Coupled with certain cultural assumptions, or with a simplistic or distorted view of diversity, classification enables us to create unwarranted hierarchies, to attach values and judgments to large swaths of people. But it would be a mistake, Craddock and Ferguson argue, simply to dismiss classification as inherently evil and embrace colorblindness instead.

"Those of us who see the importance of maintaining some spotlight on difference do so because racial identification still has adverse effects on marginalized communities and ethnic minorities," Craddock says. In other words, people are *not* color blind—they do recognize differences, and make judgments about them. And to counter the negative consequences of that reality, institutions need to be sensitive to those differences.

“Categories of race and ethnicity should be maintained only to the extent they help us address the multiple effects of oppressions and racisms.”

But she offers a caveat: "Categories of race and ethnicity should be maintained only to the extent they help us address the multiple effects of oppressions and racisms," Craddock says. "For example, if they can point out how to deliver better and more appropriate resources to communities."

Ferguson notes that the ideal driving proponents of Proposition 54—the desire for a society of race-less individuals—is the same ideal that led sociologists to declare that African American culture was pathological. "They're two sides of the same coin," he says.

What's needed, Ferguson says, is not the abandonment of institutional sensitivity to difference, but a more cautious and skeptical approach to interpreting the data collected. Social scientists should avoid presuming that their results "capture all aspects of the groups that they're looking at," he says. "They would then understand that their interpretations are part of a range of interpretations," an approach that might forestall broad declarations of cultural incompetence or dysfunction.

Ultimately, an institution's use of classification is only as good or bad as the principles and people that guide the institution, Craddock says. "We need to be training professionals in public health and medicine who aren't going to be assuming that high infant mortality rates result from mothers' lack of a 'get up and go' mentality," she explains, referencing recent news. "That kind of comment is biased and ill informed. People with institutional authority need to find ways to intervene in stereotypes of race and gender, not mobilize these stereotypes in ways that further marginalize vulnerable communities." ∞

giving



# NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

TERRY FAUST



## Catherine Guisan and Stephen Dickinson are on a quest for healing—on a personal and global scale.

By Eugenia Smith

From her high-backed chair in the living room of her St. Paul Victorian home, Catherine Guisan leans into the conversation, her spring-loaded gestures punctuating the thoughts that surge from her teeming brain. Settling into his chair, her spouse, Stephen Dickinson, speaks in a smooth, leisurely Midwestern cadence that is a mellow counterpoint to Catherine's high-voltage intensity.

Stephen's and Catherine's roots are as different as their temperaments. She grew up in Switzerland, in a cosmopolitan family of educators and political leaders, with a Greek mother born in Istanbul; and he, in a Nebraska family deeply rooted in the U.S. heartland. But they are soul mates, with formidable, searching intellects and a shared passion for public service rooted in an international worldview.

### Roots of activism

Catherine and Stephen met at Oxford, where Stephen was a Rhodes Scholar and both were involved with Moral Re-Armament (today, Initiatives of Change), an organization that aims to create opportunities for reconciliation at the international level. In 1978 they relocated to Minnesota, where they began working with struggling communities, especially with Southeast Asian refugees.

As Midwest director of MRA from 1979 to 2000, Stephen helped to organize cultural education and exchange initiatives in countries from Asia to the Americas. He also worked with tribal communities on Native American issues, and once joined an effort to connect Twin Cities lawyers and judges with their counterparts in El Salvador. Today, he teaches Spanish and ethics at the Community of Peace Academy, a St. Paul charter school.

Among her other accomplishments, Catherine completed her Minnesota Ph.D. in political science (in 2000) and established herself as an expert on the European Union. She's continued to teach at the University, specializing in courses on issues of transnational governance (see box p. 32) and its prospects and perils in an unstable world. In 2003, the prestigious French academic press Odile Jacob published her book *Un Sens à l'Europe, Gagner la Paix (1950-2003)*—roughly translated, *Winning the Peace*.

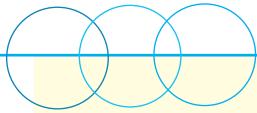
Peaceful resolution, Catherine says, requires a collective commitment among states to come to terms with traumatic events of the recent and not-so-recent past. In a recently submitted journal article, "Of September 11, Mourning and Cosmopolitan Politics," Catherine asks, "Can we tap into collective suffering ... as a resource for action?" And she invokes Judith Butler's "life-affirming" answer: "Mourning could be an opportunity (albeit tragic) for transformation and reconnection with the other."

### Death and commemoration

To Catherine and Stephen, that insight is not just academic. It's a lived reality. The couple's eldest son, Andrew, a promising Ph.D. student and N. Marbury Efimenco Fellow in the Department of Political Science, died in April 2006 when he was struck by a car while jogging.

In a way, the couple's quest for personal healing runs parallel to their global reconciliation work—but it is even more daunting. How does one reconcile oneself to the death of a child? "You don't, really," says Catherine. "You just learn to live with it somehow."

If there's any good to be found in grieving, Catherine, Stephen, and Andrew's brother, Nicolas, may have found it. In the outpouring of support and sympathy that



## Teaching Reconciliation By Catherine Guisan

**POL 4210, Spring 2007**

### **Surprised by the Politics of Reconciliation**

I was surprised that many of my 35 students from nine countries (Ethiopia, Kuwait, Liberia, Palestine, Russia, Serbia, Togo, Trinidad, and the United States) had never heard of the term *political reconciliation*. Hegel and Marx challenged us to think of history as a dialectical process, of social forces overcoming their contradictions in the rational, or classless, society, eventually reconciled with itself. John Stuart Mill urged us to eschew all final resolution to pursue ongoing debates on controversial questions, from religion to private property's legitimacy, and to adopt the "harm principle" as a response to offensive actions. Because of totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt and Isaiah Berlin thought anew the recovery from murderous clashes of interest and belief. What did Arendt mean by "forgiveness and promise?" Why did the Socratic dialogue of conscience matter so to political action?

We stayed with these questions as we read Jewish, Christian, and Islamic scriptures with their sometimes contradictory tenor (casting evil men out and turning the other cheek). We explored the link between personal self-transformation and political

change in texts by Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Desmond Tutu, and commentaries on their actions. We also studied two instances of international reconciliation: the rapprochement between France and Germany in the 1950s and, after 1989, attempts at reconciliation in other parts of Europe. We were struck by the immense sufferings that call for reconciliatory politics, and by the importance of social and economic fairness but also of a rhetoric that taps into the cultural traditions of the peoples concerned (Hegel's *Sittlichkeit*). We mourned the Virginia Tech shootings.

Queries came up: What is the difference between liberation and reconciliation? Can we trust courts to play a positive role in processes of reconciliation? One student who participated in the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's investigation in the Twin Cities explained the hopes and doubts it inspires. Another student shared her excitement at realizing that the Bible and Koran tell the story of Joseph forgiving his brothers in very similar terms. Discussing prospects for the politics of reconciliation after 9/11, several stressed that it had to start within the U.S. between classes and ethnic groups before it could travel abroad. One wrote, "I know that people are changed by this class or at least thinking about it." Another said it brought his "dead dream alive," to help reconcile two warring ethnic groups. "Even if I don't see this in my lifetime," he said, "I hope I will share the same knowledge that you have shared with us with the next generations."



EVERETT AYOUBZADEH

followed Andrew's death they discovered the makings of a memorial fellowship in Andrew's name.

Besides honoring Andrew, the fellowship is an expression of the generous and widely reciprocated involvement with others that is the couple's trademark and their legacy to their sons. It allows Andrew's unfinished work, and his own unrealized vision of a better world, to become the life's work of future generations of students. It is the sought-after life-affirming response to his death.

The fellowship was launched at a May 11 reception hosted by CLA and the political science department. Nicolas, who is working as a consultant with UNESCO in Delft, Netherlands, flew to Minneapolis to join friends and colleagues of his brother and to emcee the occasion. Now about one-third funded, the fellowship has been combined with the Efimenco fund. Menaka Philips, from Sri Lanka and Canada, will be the first recipient.

### **Reconciling the personal and political**

Catherine and Stephen's joint project of global peacemaking and healing is far from finished—but they aren't about to give up.

"I think what it comes down to, always, for me is 'How do I live at the individual level?'" says Catherine. "You know, we may have those great ideas out there but frankly at the daily level, we want to survive, as well as possible and as comfortably as possible. And so I find that for me, the challenge in my life, and also in my teaching, is to ask, 'How do I want to treat my students? How do I treat my neighbors? How do I live?' It's a work in progress. It's never over—you know?"

"Reconciliation is not for the faint of heart. It requires steel-like resolve, a willingness to really go through a lot of pain for the sake of certain values or institutions or laws."

As for their grieving, Catherine and Stephen know it's a work in progress. They're working through the pain. They've got the resolve. They've got the fellowship. Now the healing really begins. ∞



EVERETT AYUBZANDEH

## Taking (and Giving) Stock

In this season of commencements, many of us baby boomers are asking new graduates, “So, what do you plan to do with your life?” Few of us could have answered that question when we were their age—but today, the pressure’s on. These kids have been pushed since they were knee high to plan for the next 50 years.

The trouble is, they really don’t have a clue about where they’ll be in 50 years, any more than we did. Even a few years

from now, some of them could end up in jobs that don’t even exist yet. And those jobs might just disappear to downsizing, outsourcing, new technologies, the vagaries of a global economy, even a new knowledge revolution. Our grads will have to retool, rethink their futures, and adapt—perhaps many times over.

How can they stride confidently into a future that is so uncertain? With a liberal arts education of course!

I’m always tempted to tell new students, “Take your time. Explore. Find your passion.” Then I hear my father’s voice: “So, missy, just how do you plan to pay for that education?” And I recognize that especially in today’s world, students don’t have the luxury of poking around and changing their minds. They need to get on with it. No dawdling allowed. Education is just too expensive.

That’s one reason why we encourage students to graduate in four years. But we haven’t taken the fun out of learning. The beauty of CLA is that students can experiment and explore and still graduate on time. And they’ll enter the world of work with the necessary broad perspectives and versatility to succeed in an uncertain world.

With educational costs so high, graduation in four years is hardly a slam-dunk—especially for students who must work to make ends meet. The University is committed to keeping tuition increases in check, with next year’s increase at just over 2 percent on average. And with all credits over 13 free, students can take a full course load without busting their budgets. Even so, for many students and their families the cost of higher education—that ticket to a better life—is prohibitive. So what can we do to help?

### WAYS TO GIVE

There are two giving options you might want to consider.

**Appreciated stock or securities:** Through a gift of stock or other securities, you can help a student and treat yourself to a healthy tax deduction at the same time. When making a stock gift to CLA, you can claim a charitable income tax deduction for its full fair market value. If it’s long-term appreciated stock (held for more than one year), you bypass any unrealized capital gain that would be taxed if you sold it to make a cash gift.

**Distributions from IRA accounts:** If you have reached the magic age of 70½ and are required to make distributions from your IRA account, you may want to take a look at the Pension Protection Act passed by Congress on August 17, 2006, which allows for an exclusion from gross income of up to \$100,000 per year for otherwise taxable distributions. (There is no income tax deduction involved, just the exclusion.) There are some conditions:

- To qualify, you *must be at least 70 years of age* at the time of the distribution.
- Only owners of traditional IRAs and Roth IRAs are eligible. However, owners of other types of qualified plans may roll assets into an IRA to allow them to make gifts if such a rollover is otherwise permitted.
- The new rules apply only to outright lifetime charitable transfers from IRA owners made directly by the IRA administrator to the benefiting non-profit organization (bequest rules and benefits remain unchanged).
- The law applies only to gifts made during tax years 2006 and 2007 (the law expires Dec. 31, 2007).

We’ve worked with a number of donors who have found these giving vehicles to be a perfect fit for carrying out their philanthropic interests. If you’d like to explore these options more fully, please give me a call at your convenience. Meanwhile, give the graduates in your life your—and our—very best wishes.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



### Biking to Discover

From July through December 2007, Louis Mendoza, chair of the University of Minnesota's Department of Chicano Studies, will bicycle around the perimeter of the United States. Covering 8,500 miles, he'll visit 34 states. Along the way, he plans to talk with people about their views on the emergence of Latinos as the nation's largest ethnic minority and the impact this demographic shift is having on U.S. national identity and culture.

"My goal is to listen to the person on the street, to meet people in churches, cafes, and bars, to find out what they understand are the issues around the 'Latino-ization' of the U.S.," Mendoza says.

"My hope is that this journey will not be just my story, but the story of the people I encounter who are both part of the problem and part of the solution. My goal is to offer much needed insight from voices that aren't often heard in formal media venues."—KELLY O'BRIEN