

NYU

# SQ THE U A R E



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foreign affairs

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY?

AS ISRAEL TURNS 60, NYU EXAMINES THE THRIVING YET DIVISIVE NATION'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

It's safe to bet that NYU did not make an occasion of the 60th anniversary of Greece's statehood in 1892 and Yugoslavia's in 1978. The mile-

stones were significant for those two countries, but they failed to grab the world's attention. Not so with "Israel at 60," noted journalist Ray Suarez during a dialogue

by the same name last December. Since 1948, when a United Nations General Assembly resolution wrote it into existence, the Jewish state of seven million people, occupying a slice of desert the size of New Jersey, has continued to invite debate, desire, and derision—but never disinterest.

"The birth of Israel is one of those epoch-making events in history, something that has an effect on the rest of the world disproportionate to the size of the land, the size of the people, and the consequences of which we've been living with ever since," said Suarez (WSUC '85), a senior correspondent at *The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer* and author of *The Holy Vote: The Politics of Faith in America* (Rayo).

To elucidate some of those con-

sequences and the tangled history that preceded them, *NYU Alumni Magazine*, along with the university's Taub Center for Israel Studies and Edgar M. Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life, invited two experts to take up the discussion: historian Ronald Zweig, director of the Taub Center and author of several works, including *Britain and Palestine During the Second World War* (Royal Historical Society); and Jeffrey Goldberg, national correspondent for *The Atlantic*, whose recent book *Prisoners: A Muslim & a Jew Across the Middle East Divide* (Knopf) was hailed as one of the year's best by both *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*. During the two-hour conversation, which was moderated by Suarez, Zweig and Goldberg offered clarity, but no easy solutions, for Israel's enduring quest to secure a peaceful future. The following is an excerpt of the discussion:

**RAY SUAREZ:** If you look back over the past couple of millennia, there are countless people who have fought over pieces of land. What makes Israel's story different?

**JEFFREY GOLDBERG:** If Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem had been located in Burkina Faso, and if Jesus had been born [there], we'd be talking about Burkina Faso. It's a sliver of land, but incredible events have taken place, or are believed to have taken place there. Just as pure story, it's compelling in a way that very few other stories are.

The Israeli narrative, or the Zionist narrative, is: "Why is [the conflict] going on today? It's because the Arabs chose cynically not to resettle their fellow brothers from Palestine into their own lands." Most of the time when people lose a war, the refugees melt away into whatever population they happen to be living in. And the Israelis argue that this holds because 800,000 or 900,000 Jews were expelled or departed from

Arab countries at that same period, and have been absorbed, more or less, into Israel.

The Palestinian narrative is that an injustice so cosmic was committed against us that we can't help but fight for what is ours, and furthermore we're Palestinian. It's an act of hubris or callousness on the part of Israelis, Palestinians believe, to say, "Well, just go live in Egypt, or Syria, or Saudi Arabia."

So what we're living in now is the '48 War. I mean it hasn't ended. It just never ended.

**SUAREZ:** What are some of the ways it could have been otherwise?

**RONALD ZWEIG:** Israel did not prevent the creation of a Palestinian state, as the United Nations partition resolution originally called for. Had, in 1948, the Arab

**GOLDBERG:** Remember that much of the Zionist movement did not want statehood necessarily until pretty late in the game. They just wanted a Jewish homeland, a place for Jewish refugees. And if the Palestinian Arab community had

I think what we have to be focused on is the Palestinians and how they decide what they are. Are they represented by a secular, nationalist movement or by a pan-Islamist, Muslim Brotherhood-influenced movement? And

“What we're living in now is the '48 War. It just never ended.”

—JEFFREY GOLDBERG

been led by more moderate types, maybe you wouldn't have had the problems that you have today.

**SUAREZ:** Does the Road Map or the Quartet [the process of mediation started by the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the UN in 2002] hold any hope?

until that's settled, it's pretty hard to figure out a permanent status agreement.

**SUAREZ:** But it looked like it was on its way to being settled when Hamas thumped Fatah in the elections in 2006. It looked like this is who you're going to have to deal



FROM LEFT: JOURNALIST RAY SUAREZ QUESTIONED HISTORIAN RONALD ZWEIG AND AUTHOR JEFFREY GOLDBERG ON THE STATE OF ISRAEL AT 60 AND THE QUEST FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE.

world decided to create a Palestinian state next to Israel, we would have had a two-state solution 60 years ago. And had the Palestinians accepted the partition as the UN proposed it in November 1947, they would have had more territory at their disposal [than they do now]. So their state would have been even more viable.

**GOLDBERG:** No. You have a situation where the Israeli Prime Minister is at 5 or 6 percent popularity. And then you have a president of Palestine who doesn't control Gaza, doesn't control [the West Bank city of] Nablus. So you have an incredibly unpopular leader negotiating with a powerless leader.

with, and yet nobody wanted to talk to [Hamas].

**GOLDBERG:** Well, how can you talk to somebody who doesn't see you? I mean, there's a metaphysical problem: How do you negotiate with somebody who doesn't acknowledge that you exist?

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

PHOTOS © DAN CREIGHTON

**ZWEIG:** [ Hamas was ] not prepared to enter into final-status negotiations, which is what we're talking about. That's what the Quartet, the Road Map, is supposed to lead us to. So it's not just that Israel refused to talk to Hamas; Hamas refused to talk about the thing they're supposed to talk about.

**GOLDBERG:** There's a deeper problem, which is that if you read Hamas's covenant, much of it is based on the [forged book] *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and I think you're asking a bit much of the Jewish people to negotiate with someone who believes...that the Jews are a cosmologically malevolent force.

**SUAREZ:** Is there a growing sense that holding on to the territories also has a cost that becomes over time so corrosive, so large, that you may lose more than you gain?

**ZWEIG:** Being an occupying force now for 40 years, confronting the Palestinian masses in a violent confrontation for 20 years, this has a cumulative corrosive effect. [Israelis] should by now be much farther down the road on friendly relations with the Arab states; they'll never get there as long as they are fighting the Palestinians.

**GOLDBERG:** Most Israelis want to get out but don't know how to get out. That's the essential dilemma. Most Israelis know in their hearts what we're talking about here. But if you were looking at the situation as a Palestinian, you're saying, "Okay, they want to negotiate, they want to get out of the West Bank, but the settlement movement gets more and more ingrained each and every day."

**ZWEIG:** We have to look at when the settlement movement really became large and significant, and that was parallel to the time that Palestinian terror became large and significant inside of Israel. As long as

there were Palestinian suicide bombers inside Israel proper, nobody really cared about Palestinian rights on the West Bank, which allowed the settlement movement to reach a certain critical threshold. And the leaders of the settlement movement that grew out of the moderate religious Zionist movement are now becoming irrelevant and are being taken over by a younger generation that is far more confrontational.

**SUAREZ:** Can a prime minister with a 5 percent approval rating tell them to cut it out?

**GOLDBERG:** It's very, very hard to do. There's no denying that the spine of the West Bank going up Road 60 is the heartland of Jewish history. We're talking about settlements from Hebron to Nablus;

.....  
"Israel can work with any country that sees Iran as a threat." —RONALD ZWEIG  
.....

that's where it all happened. So I don't see how Ehud Olmert is going to reverse the growth.

**SUAREZ:** Both of you gave less than glowing reviews to [the November 2007 Middle East summit in] Annapolis, but it did gather a lot of the people who are going to have something to say about whatever happens, which hadn't been done in a long time. Who on the Arab side can be worked with?

**ZWEIG:** Israel can work with any country that sees Iran as a threat. Traveling recently in the Gulf area, and reading the Arab press in Jordan, in the Emirates, I read the same sort of Op-Eds openly calling for an alliance between Turkey, the Gulf States, and Israel against the Iranian threat.

**GOLDBERG:** There's nothing like a Persian to make an Arab like a Jew. [Laughter]

**GOLDBERG:** But it's true. As long as the Iranian threat is there, you'll see a Sunni-Jewish alliance, which is essentially what you had at Annapolis. But this is going to have to flow through the Palestinians. Much is depending on what the Palestinians signal to the rest of the Arab world.

**SUAREZ:** Something apparently happened between the early 1990s and now. [Palestinian Authority leaders] had been ready to scratch out those parts of their charter that were forever opposed to the existence of Israel. But now you're talking about rejectionists, eliminationists, ready to hang in for the long haul. What happened?

**GOLDBERG:** The pathological rejection of Jewish civil equality by an ascendant Islamist movement, combined with a series of mis-

.....  
takes by the Israeli government, led to the empowerment of Hamas. And the more that al-Qaeda can create a civilizational struggle that really didn't exist before 9/11, the better off the rejectionists are.

A key moment for me was late 2000. I was in Ramallah at a Fatah funeral. There were 10,000 people and they started chanting, "Oh, Jews of Haibar, the army of Muhammad is returning." This was a secular, nationalist Fatah crowd and they were referring to the defeat by the prophet Muhammad and his armies of the Jews of the oasis of Haibar 1,400 years ago. I thought to myself, "Wow, we're really not talking about the '67 borders; we're talking about the whole idea."

**SUAREZ:** Let's talk about Israel in the next 10 to 20 years.

**ZWEIG:** Even if the problems with

the Palestinians were to go away tomorrow, Israel will definitely have to facilitate the integration of the Israeli Arab minority, who prefer now to see themselves as an Israeli Palestinian minority. Fifteen years from now, 50 percent of Israeli society will belong to sectors that see themselves consciously as non-Zionist: the Arab and the Ultra-Orthodox [Jew]. They see themselves as separate. This is a challenge to Israeli society that will have to be addressed.

If we held this discussion, and this gloomy prognosis of the attitudes of the Arab world, say 10 years after Israel was created, I would be worried. But Israel has gone from strength to strength, and continues to do so. And for all of the domestic problems, we must remember that Israel is an extremely dynamic society; it's constantly changing, and does address issues.

**GOLDBERG:** Yes, there are contradictions inside contradictions here. You have a state that's under pressure, that has these social problems. But it also attracts more high-tech venture capital than any other country in the world, except for China. You have an economy that's growing like gangbusters; you have a vibrant place where Judaism is flourishing in a way that it's never flourished before.

I can be pessimistic and optimistic in the same minute. Because of Israel, the Jews as a people worldwide are in better shape than they've been since the Roman destruction of the Temple 2,000 years ago. But you're left at the end of the day with imperfection. Israel is a place that's safe for Judaism, but it's not safe for Jews—yet. America is safe for Jews, but it's not really safe for Judaism. And so you have two, right now, imperfect promised lands. ■

For more information on the Taub Center conference on Israel's 60th, visit [www.taub.as.nyu.edu](http://www.taub.as.nyu.edu).

## A Gift to Help Others Give

Growing up in rural Maine, Constance McCatherin-Silver (SSSW '78, '79) observed a good deal of poverty and got her first tastes of public service as a brownie and Girl Scout. But it wasn't until McCatherin-Silver was in her mid-thirties that she realized—urged on by a neighbor—that her true passion was in social work. Now, she and her husband, Martin Silver (STERN '58), have given the ultimate gift to students who also strive to help others: The couple recently donated \$50 million to the School of Social Work—the largest private donation ever given to a school of social work in the United States. In honor of this landmark in philanthropy, the school has been renamed the Silver School of Social Work.

The funds will largely be dedicated to fighting poverty through an endowed professorship for a junior faculty member and a foundation for the planned McSilver (a combination of McCatherin and Silver) Institute for Poverty Policy and Practice. The money will also provide financial aid for master's degree students dedicated to aiding minority populations, especially those “very poor students who happen to be very, very smart,” McCatherin-Silver says. But she ultimately hopes the gift will inspire new solutions for ongoing challenges in the field. “We have to have new ways to teach our social workers,” she explains. “You can't just throw money at a problem. You have to figure out why [other] policies didn't work.”

—Andrew Flynn



PHOTO © DON POLLARD

### AN ABU DHABI ARCH?

The streets of Paris will always have their lure, but in the spirit of going global, NYU is exploring new terrain—literally. Soon to be under construction in the sands of Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, is one of the first full-scale, residential foreign liberal arts campus established by a major U.S. research university in the region. NYU Abu Dhabi, which will enroll its first class in 2010, will

operate with the same standards as those prevailing at Washington Square, including adherence to academic freedom. The campus anticipates a student body of at least 2,000, particularly drawing applicants from the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Europe.

### SCIENCE-IN STYLE

It's been nearly 40 years since NYU opened a new science building, but the Center for Ge-



PHOTO © GENE SCHIANKONE

nomics and Systems Biology will soon occupy fresh digs on Waverly Place. “Modern science demands modern laboratory space,” says Provost David McLaughlin on the decision to convert the former campus administrative offices into a 70,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility designed by EYP Architecture & Engineering P.C. and Polshek Partnership Architects. It will feature new labs, a greenhouse, and full glass storefronts to create ground-floor transparency. Scheduled to be completed in 2010, the redevelopment is being supported in part by NYU's Partners Plan, which is working to expand the university's arts and science faculty.

### A PRINCIPAL MAN OF PRINCIPLES

Ronald Dworkin has long been a champion of acknowledging human dignity and individual worth within the legal system. Recently, the Frank Henry Sommer Professor of Law was recognized for his theories on valuing principles, as much as rules, in jurisprudence with Norway's 2007 Ludvig Holberg International Memorial Prize, an honor accompanied by \$750,000. From among the world's best scholars in the arts and humanities, social sciences, law and theology, the Holberg committee singled out Dworkin for his “unique ability to tie together abstract philosophical ideas and arguments with concrete everyday concerns in law, morals, and politics.”

### BALLET MASTERS

New York has always been the place for high-powered artistic teams—from Stephen Sondheim's epic collaboration with Leonard Bernstein and Jerome Robbins on *West Side Story* to George Balanchine and Robbins's classic restaging of Stravinsky's *Firebird*. American Ballet Theatre and the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development continue this tradition with their new venture: the first-ever master of arts in dance education with a concentration in ballet pedagogy. This innovative program, which starts in fall 2008, aims to give students a complete understanding of ballet technique and prepare them for positions as highly skilled instructors or in further doctoral work.

### MARRYING MINDS: NYU & POLY

For several decades, New York City has sought to establish itself as an East Coast answer to Silicon Valley. The city will move a step closer to that goal with the recently announced merger of Polytechnic University in Brooklyn and NYU, which is expected to open streams of new investment and research. The proposed plan would gradually fold Poly, the second-oldest private engineering school in the nation, into NYU as a school of engineering and technology—something the university has lacked since it sold its University Heights campus and disbanded the College of Engineering in 1973. Stay tuned....■

letters

# HOUSE OF WORDS

A NEW HOME FOR CREATIVE WRITERS REVIVES THE VILLAGE'S SALON TRADITION

by James Jung

**"THIS FEELS LIKE I'M READING IN MY OWN LIVING ROOM...EXCEPT I'M NOT TALKING TO MYSELF AND**

other people are actually listening," remarked poet Brenda Shaughnessy last November, igniting a roar of laughter in the packed front parlor of NYU's Lillian Vernon Creative Writers House. Framed by a large, multi-paned front window, Shaughnessy cut a figure of a lively houseguest, regaling a living room full of book-drunk students and literary enthusiasts with anecdotes and verse. By evening's end, late arrivals shot questions from their perches along the staircase banister and impromptu conversations bubbled up amongst rows of audience members, all before the crowd spilled through the French doors and into

the house's back room for wine, hors d'oeuvres, and, of course, more spirited book talk.

While this bohemian scene might seem befitting of downtown New York's literary culture, it's more unusual than some may think. For small fees, places such as Poets House and the New School have long offered reading series, but there wasn't a downtown establishment showcasing both fiction and poetry readings, all free of charge to the public. The newly opened Lillian Vernon Creative Writers House, however, has quickly filled that void.

Located at 58 West 10th Street, the house, formerly NYU's

Alexander S. Onassis Center for Hellenic Studies, first opened its doors in January 2007, following a gift by trustee Lillian Vernon and a \$2 million renovation that left the aging brick building's interior sufficiently modern without sacrificing any of its colonial charm. Today, it provides offices for such renowned faculty members as E.L. Doctorow, Sharon Olds, and Darin Strauss. But more

important, by relocating the university's more than 90 full-time MFA students from a small wing of the English department, the house has given the creative-writing program a home base and, with that, a sense of identity. "The house has utterly juiced up the program," Strauss says. "What had been a fairly loose confederation of writers has turned into a tightly united community with the

"The idea is that we have this elegant house with all these writers living in the neighborhood, so why not invite them over?"

—DEBORAH LANDAU, POET AND DIRECTOR OF THE CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

PHOTOS © PETER GREGOIRE



THIS RENOVATED VILLAGE TOWN HOUSE WELCOMES ANYONE JONESING FOR SERIOUS BOOK TALK IN A CASUAL SETTING.

house at the center of that social universe.” On any given day, students lounge with their laptops or chat across the sofas about their reading. “Our graduate students are here all the time,” agrees poet and program director Deborah Landau. “I wish we had laundry machines and showers!”

But the house looks outward as much as it does inward, offering the greater New York literary community a homey forum, thanks to the popular weekly “Reading & Conversation” series curated by Landau. The public can drop by to hear the likes of novelist A.M. Homes, author and scholar André Aciman, and former *New Yorker* poetry editor Alice Quinn read, field questions, and stir up lively debates.

“The result is both charming and nourishing,” Quinn says, and the inviting atmosphere has drawn fans such as musician Lou Reed and performance artist Laurie Anderson.

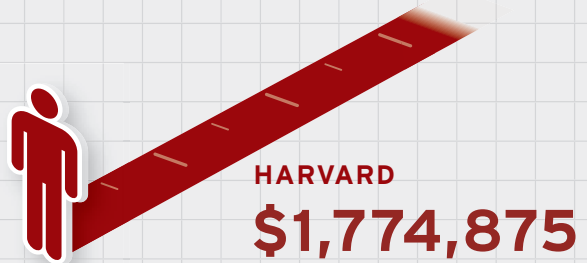
Landau and staff are currently cooking up more events to ensure that lines between the house and the city continue to blur. Matinee readings have started, while “Writers in New York,” a craft-intensive program modeled after Middlebury College’s prestigious Bread Loaf School of English, and a *Paris Review*-curated salon series are both planned for the summer. Landau explains, “The idea is that we have this elegant house with all these writers living in the neighborhood, so why not invite them over?” ■

## Scorecard

# CLIMBING THE ENDOWMENT STAIRCASE

Endowment size is one source of modern-day bragging rights for universities because the investment earnings from them are vital to budgeting for incidental, extracurricular expenses not covered by tuition. The current Campaign for NYU has helped to raise the university’s endowment to more than \$2 billion—the largest total in campus history—nearly double that of five years ago. And while NYU manages to do a lot with a little, we’re still a long way from measuring up to our peers.

### ENDOWMENT PER FTE\* STUDENT



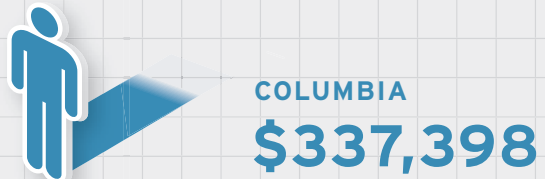
(\$34,634,906,000 ENDOWMENT ÷ 19,514 STUDENTS)



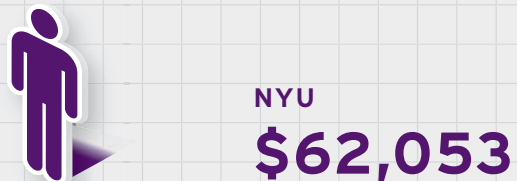
(\$17,164,836,000 ENDOWMENT ÷ 14,890 STUDENTS)



(\$5,567,843,000 ENDOWMENT ÷ 11,753 STUDENTS)



(\$7,149,803,000 ENDOWMENT ÷ 21,191 STUDENTS)



(\$2,161,800,000 ENDOWMENT ÷ 34,838 STUDENTS)

\*FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT, INCORPORATING BOTH FULL- AND PART-TIME STUDENTS  
 SOURCE: 2007 NACUBO ENDOWMENT STUDY

academic trend

# HELP WANTED

## UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER AGENCIES SCRAMBLE TO FILL THE EVER-WIDENING NURSING GAP

by Renée Alfuso / CAS '06 / and Samme Chittum

### EVERYONE HAS A HOSPITAL HORROR STORY. “[YOU] HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHROOM, YOU BUZZ

for the nurse, and [they] don’t come,” recites nursing professor Christine Kovner. “That’s the standard.” Unfortunately, that standard isn’t likely to improve anytime soon. The demand for nurses—who make up the largest workforce in the U.S. health-care system—now far outpaces their supply. The American Hospital Association reported 118,000 nursing job vacancies nationwide in 2006, and a recent report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* says the number could nearly triple by 2020 as the baby boomers gray and require increasing care.

The issue is more complicated than most imagine. While rising salaries and job opportunities are actually attracting an unprecedented number of would-be nurses, admission bottlenecks and faculty shortages at universities, along with a staggeringly high attrition rate among nurses on the floor, are emptying hospitals of their most indispensable resource. The crisis at nursing schools has gotten so dire that more than 42,000 qualified applicants were turned away last year, according to the American

Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). “We don’t have the faculty or the clinical sites to quickly increase the number of nurses we’re graduating,” explains Cheryl A. Peterson, a veteran nurse and senior policy analyst for the American Nurses Association (ANA). In fact, the AACN found almost three-fourths of programs suffer from a dearth of

teachers, and this shortage is likely to grow because about half of all nursing faculty in the United States are baby boomers themselves and plan to retire within 10 years.

In response, schools are exploring a range of creative measures to recruit both students and

educators. The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing offers nurse administrators and advanced practice nurses discounts on tuition, while the University of Chicago Medical Center offers 100 percent tu-

nursing or a related field. NYU, which has one of the oldest nursing PhD programs, has stepped up its efforts by elevating what was once the nursing division to its own school in 2005. Since then the new College of Nurs-

“If we put the same dollars that go into physician education into nursing, we’d be in a much better place.”

—CHERYL A. PETERSON, AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

tion reimbursement for nurse employees who want to earn a bachelor’s or master’s degree and 75 percent reimbursement for those who pursue a doctorate in

ing, under its first dean, Terry Fulmer, has doubled faculty and nearly tripled student enrollment from 400 to 1,150. In addition, staff nurses at NYU Medical Center can now qualify for tuition reimbursement if they pursue a graduate or doctoral nursing degree.

But luring more students and faculty only fixes part of the problem; there will never be enough nurses until hospitals figure out how to retain those already on staff. Some 41.5 percent of registered nurses in their first

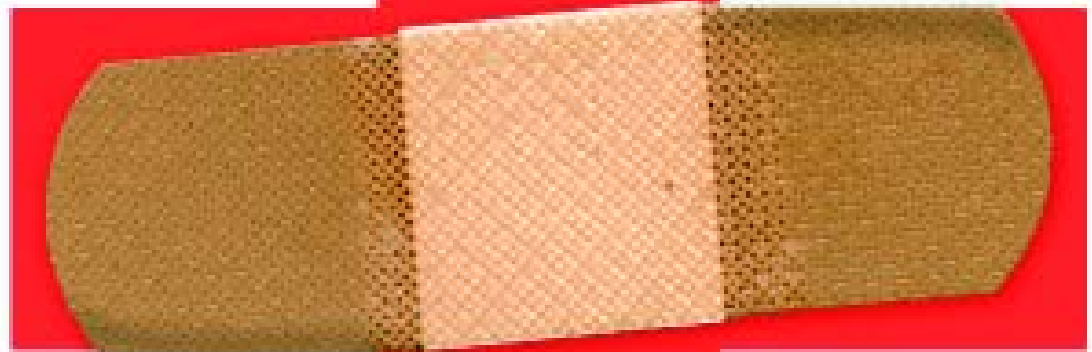


ILLUSTRATION © OPTO DESIGN

year and half on the job seriously consider changing careers, according to a national study—the first of its kind—of 3,226 registered nurses in 35 states and the District of Columbia. “We simply didn’t know a lot about these nurses and why they leave,” says

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)



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Kovner, who co-authored the article published last fall in the *American Journal of Nursing* with Carol Brewer of the School of Nursing at the University at Buffalo. Much of the nurses' frustration, they discovered, is the result of poor management and stressful working conditions: 25 percent found it "difficult or impossible" to do their job at least once a week because of inadequate supplies, 62 percent experienced verbal abuse by either patients or doctors, and 25 percent were accidentally stuck by at least one needle in their first 18 months.

To reduce this turnover, Kovner's husband, Anthony R. Kovner, professor of health policy and management, spearheaded a new master of science for nurse leaders at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. Working with 28 nurse managers from the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System and NYU Medical Center, the program offers evening classes for those who want to become better managers and improve working conditions for their peers, and expects to double enrollment in fall 2008.

In the meantime, many national nursing organizations, such as the AACN and the ANA, are pressing the government and various foundations for help. Last December, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation joined the American Association of Retired Persons to create the Center to Champion Nursing in America, which will lobby for state and federal dollars to expand nursing education. ANA's Peterson says that such efforts should help curb the crisis for now but warns that a long-term solution will only come with a shift in priorities: "If we put the same dollars that go into physician education into nursing, we'd be in a much better place." ■

## What they're learning

# The Class: Following in Michelangelo's Footsteps

by Renée Alfuso / CAS '06

**O**n the first day of his apprenticeship, the young artist strolls along the narrow cobblestone streets of Florence, Italy, on his way to buy tools for his craft. He chooses crushed bird bone and gum arabic to make silverpoint paper and, as his eyes scan the rows of feather pens, his cell phone rings—bringing him back to 2008.

The arts may have changed since the 15th century, but study-abroad students can revisit that world via The Renaissance Apprentice, a class offered each semester at NYU's La Pietra campus in Florence. The course follows step-by-step a treatise written by Italian painter Cennino Cennini in the late 14th century that guided apprentices such as Leonardo and Michelangelo in the 15th and 16th centuries. "It's still a modern class, so we're not all dancing around Florence in tights," explains art historian Alan Pascuzzi, who has taught the course for five years. "But everything's based on a regular Renaissance apprenticeship, so each week it's like we're stepping back into time."

Mixing fine arts with art history, students spend half the course working in the studio and the rest in Florence's hallowed museums and churches, where they sketch everything from sculptures in the Duomo to frescoes a young Michelangelo once worked on as he honed his skills

under his own teacher. By copying the classics, students learn to mimic the old masters' individual styles—just as apprentices did in order to help out on big projects. They use only period tools—many of which can be found solely in Florence where the ancient methods have survived—as they attempt difficult Renaissance techniques, such as fresco, egg tempera, and silverpoint, where the artists draw precise, permanent lines with silver on specially prepared paper. "We can literally use Florence as a classroom—not just study it like a museum, but interact with it—because all these artists are dead, but they can still teach us something," says Pascuzzi, who followed Cennini's treatise, called *Il libro dell'arte*, while finishing his dissertation in Florence and later used his experience to create the course.

Training that took the Renaissance greats five or six years to complete, Pascuzzi must now teach in only four months. But despite this, the course, which requires no prerequisites, immediately fills up each semester with a potpourri of art majors, amateur enthusiasts, and those who have never before held a paintbrush. And each student walks away with a portfolio of their Renaissance works, including one original painting. "The class goes against any art instruction students would get in America," Pascuzzi says, "but the whole concept of coming overseas is to get something totally new and different." ■

## The Syllabus: The Renaissance Apprentice

**WEEK 1:** Introductions / Trip to Zecchi rare Renaissance art supply store to buy materials: natural charcoal, black chalk, natural white chalk, red chalk (or *sanguigna*), silver, feather pens, ink, pigments, boars-hair brushes, paper, drawing board, small portfolio, fake gold leaf, red bole, and crushed bird bone and gum arabic

**WEEK 2:** In-class lecture on how to use materials and techniques / Make a silverpoint stylus by attaching a piece of silver to a balsam stick with metal wire / Create pen and ink / Explanation of silverpoint mirror technique used to check drawings in reverse / Assignment: Copy two Ghirlandaio drawings of draped figures in silverpoint

**WEEK 3:** Prepare and tint paper for silverpoint sketching using crushed bird bone and gum arabic / In-class lecture on drawing faces and figures / Assignment: Copy Granacci drawing of male figure in silverpoint

**WEEK 4:** Meet in the Tornabuoni Chapel in the Santa Maria Novella church to draw from Ghirlandaio frescoes, scenes from the life of Mary or the life of John the Baptist, which Michelangelo worked on as an apprentice (preliminary drawing done in charcoal then brushed away with feather and fixed in black chalk) / Assignment: Copy Ghirlandaio drawing of male figure in silverpoint

**WEEK 5:** Meet at the Opera del Duomo to draw from relief sculptures to learn volume,



light, and shadow / Students draw from either Luca della Robbia's choir loft or from Donatello's sculptures of Mary Magdalene using the charcoal and black chalk technique / Assignment: Copy Filippo Lippi drawing in silverpoint and pen and ink

**WEEK 6:** Meet at the Bargello National Museum to draw from Michelangelo's *Bacchus* and his *Apollo-David* using the charcoal and black chalk technique / Also draw from Giambologna's bronze *Bacchus* and his *Mercury*, as well as Tribolo's terracotta copies of Michelangelo's sculptures *Day*, *Dawn*, *Dusk*, and *Night* / Assignment: Copy Leonardo anatomy study in pen and ink

**WEEK 7:** In-class lecture on anatomy, including muscle and skeletal systems / Students analyze their drawings from the previous week and do an exorchè drawing over it by dissecting the figure's muscles in red chalk on tracing paper / Assignment: Copy Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man* in pen and ink

**WEEK 8:** Meet at the natural science museum La Specola to draw from wax sculptures of humans in various states of dissection once used by 18th-century doctors to study anatomy / Also draw from large stuffed animals, such as rhinos, gazelles, birds, and tortoises, comparing their anatomy to humans / Assignment: Copy Michelangelo figure study in black chalk

**TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT:** A STUDENT APPLIES EGG TEMPERA TO HER COPY OF VERMEER'S *GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING*; FAKE GOLD LEAF IS PREPARED FOR A PANEL DRAWING OF THE MADONNA. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** ALAN PASCUZZI DEMONSTRATES THE SPOLVERO, A METHOD OF DUSTING POWDERED PIGMENT WITH A POUNCE BAG TO TRANSFER A PATTERN ONTO A FRESCO.

**WEEK 9:** In-class lecture on fresco painting / Paint small copies of a Giotto fresco from Santa Croce church, copying the head of St. Francis on small masonite panels / Assignment: Copy Michelangelo figure study in red chalk

**WEEK 10:** In class, copy from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes, choosing either the head of the Delphic Sibyl or one of the ceiling nudes / Assignment: Self-portrait done in the Renaissance technique of their choice

**WEEK 11:** In-class lecture on egg tempera with demonstration of how to separate the yolk from the white / Create a small copy of Masaccio egg tempera painting and use to test how to apply gold leaf, mix pigments, and apply paint / Choose a Florentine painting to visit and analyze for final project

**WEEK 12:** Begin work on final projects / Assignment: One-page research essay on a particular Renaissance medium or technique, using Cennino Cennini's *Craftsman's Handbook* and Giorgio Vasari's *On Technique* as sources / In-class preparation for final student exhibition

**WEEK 13:** Continue work on final projects, 30-x-40-cm egg tempera paintings with gold leaf / Set up final show in La Pietra's Villa Ulivi conference room

**WEEK 14:** In-class final presentations and critique of students' five favorite works and final essay / Students receive a copy of the revised Renaissance Apprentice manual produced from class essays and paintings



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## neuroscience

## POLITICAL WIRING

by Sabine Heinlein / GSAS '07

**F**OR YEARS, "STAY THE COURSE" HAS SERVED AS A REPUBLICAN MANTRA FOR THE IRAQ WAR,

even amid the conflict's increasing unpopularity. Meanwhile, some high-profile Democrats have been accused of "flip-flopping" on their support for it, among other things. Now, a new study by department of psychology assistant professor David Amodio suggests these reactions could reflect a deeper cognitive difference between partisans—not merely politics as usual.

While psychologists and political scientists have long found conservatives more constant in decision-making and liberals more open to ambiguity and change, Amodio's research is the first to link brain activity to political attitude. The study, published in *Nature Neuroscience*, concludes that conservatives are more likely to stick to their guns—and possibly make a wrong

choice—when confronted with a sudden decision that goes against habit. Liberals, on the other hand, are more likely to adapt—and respond accurately—because their anterior cingulate cortex, a region in the frontal brain, appears to host more brain activity.

Amodio asked 43 college students to rate their degrees of liberalism and conservatism, among other personality traits. He then hooked them up to an electroencephalograph, which records electric activity from the brain, and instructed them to look at a computer screen and tap a keyboard when the letter M appeared but refrain when confronted with a W. The M showed four times as often as the W, conditioning students to habitually press the button. Each letter occurred for a tenth of a second and participants had half a sec-

ond to respond. The result? Liberals more often resisted pressing the keyboard when faced with an unexpected W. (In case anyone thinks the loaded W—our conservative president's middle initial—had something to do with it, researchers repeated the experiment with the letters reversed.)

"I didn't design the study to pander to politics," says Amodio, who describes it as a side project to his larger research on how personality and brain function relate to self-regulation. Nevertheless, some took offense at the notion that conservatives are less equipped to respond to conflicts, while others delighted in the possibility. An article in the *Concord Monitor* titled "DNA May Determine One's Political Destiny" theorized that Dick Cheney shot his longtime hunting buddy because "[his] genes apparently let him down."

Amodio dismisses much of the press coverage as "junk journalism," because the study made no conclusions about genetic predisposition.

Other critics considered the study itself junk. The online magazine *Slate* condemned its "sweeping terms." "Tapping a keyboard is a way of thinking?" William Saletan mockingly asked. "One letter, one-tenth of a second. This is 'information'?"

But Amodio explains that his approach, the so-called Go/No-Go task, has long been used by scientists as a simplified model of everyday behavior. And he believes future studies might reveal cognitive advantages that conservatives have over political rivals, such as an improved ability to tune out distractions. "Some balance between neurocognitive styles is probably optimal," he laughs, "which could make your case for being a political moderate." ■

# RESEARCH

■ management psychology

## Putting the E in Empathy

by Suzanne Krause / GSAS '08

**P**ower may not corrupt, but there is new evidence that it can blind people in top positions. According to a study published in the journal *Psychological Science*, one's ability to consider another perspective decreases proportionately to the level of power—defined as control of information or resources—one wields in a given relationship. The

results offer insight into everything from corporate decision-making to spousal harmony. "Power is sort of like the gas pedal in a car, and 'perspective taking' is essentially the steering wheel that guides you through the world," says Joe Magee, study co-author and assistant professor of management at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. "If you don't have the awareness to con-



PHOTO © JENNIFER WHITSON

sider other people's perspective, you are going to drive the car into a brick wall, basically."

Study participants completed several tasks that indicated high-powered people are less accurate at detecting others' emotions, make egocentric presumptions, and are less inclined to consider another's visual perspective. In one test, sub-

jects were asked to write an E on their own foreheads. Those individuals primed with high power were nearly three times more likely to write an E that appeared backward to onlookers. But, Magee cautions, power holders are as capable as anyone to judge other's needs and ideas fairly—they just often have much less incentive to do so. ■

■ green-thumb technology

## YOUR FICUS ON LINE ONE

by Renée Alfuso / CAS '06

In the 1986 film *Little Shop of Horrors* (pictured below), when Seymour's plant orders him to, "Feed me!", it's a classic sci-fi horror moment.

But a group of postgraduate students at the Tisch School of the Arts are working to make such demands a less terrifying reality with Botanicalls, a system that allows

your house plants to alert you via telephone when they're parched or wanting a bit of sunshine.

The brainchild of Rebecca Bray, Rob Faludi, Kate Hartman, and Kati London (all TSOA '07), Botanicalls equips each plant with a

small sensor to monitor soil moisture and light exposure. When the plant needs something, a micro-controller sends a wireless signal that connects via the Internet to an open-source phone system called Asterisk, which launches a call based on the particular plant's information.

The group created the system when they decided to add green life to soften up the sterile, tech-heavy student lounge at NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program but feared the new flora might be neglected. Rather than create an automatic watering system and risk that the plants become background shrubbery, the team aimed to cultivate a daily relationship between the plants and people. "We really wanted the ITP students to make a connection with the plants rather than just being stuck at their laptops and soldering irons," Faludi says.

To strike the right tone for

interspecies communication, the Botanicalls team recorded human voices that reflect each variety's characteristics and imagined personality: The Spider Plant calls with a bubbly voice that suggests its prolific nature, while the Scotch Moss greets with a burly brogue. "I feel much more guilty when I fail them now because they've developed these personalities," Hartman says.

Beyond the student lounge, Botanicalls has exhibited as an interactive art installation, and the group hopes to launch the system in community gardens and office buildings where it can gather even more people around their plants. While the system isn't available for retail just yet, the team is designing a simpler, less expensive do-it-yourself model for homes, which turns potted plants into rather pleasant housemates: They don't just call when they need something, but also to say thanks. ■



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