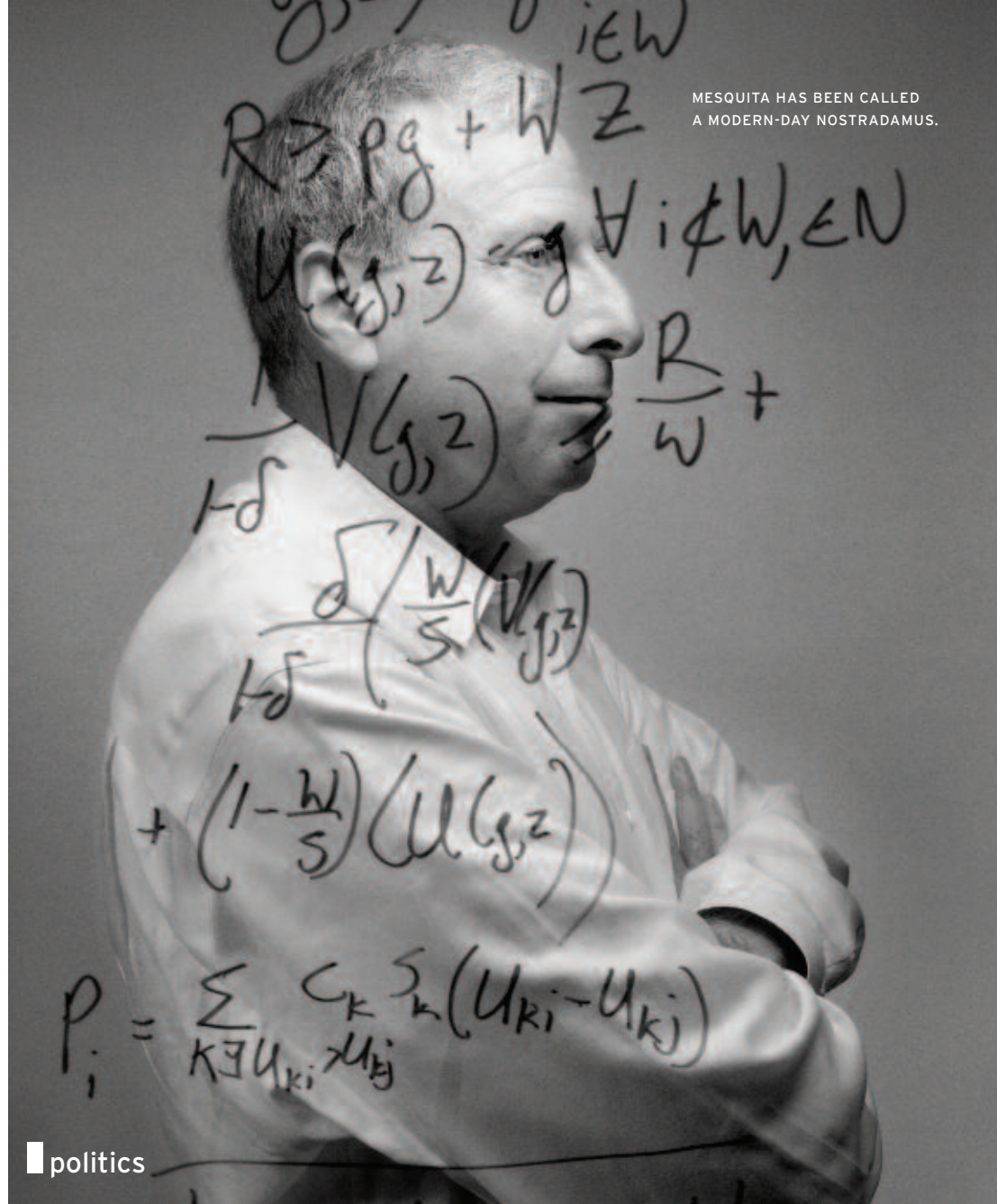


NYU

SQ THE JOURNAL



MESQUITA HAS BEEN CALLED A MODERN-DAY NOSTRADAMUS.

PHOTO © ETHAN HILL/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

politics

TRUTH IN NUMBERS

POLITICAL SCIENTIST BRUCE BUENO DE MESQUITA HAS BUILT A CAREER ON PREDICTING WHAT OTHERS WANT

by Wesley Yang

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita has the slightly embattled air that a lifetime of academic controversy can instill. It may come from his decades as a leading exponent of the “rational choice” school of political

science, which applies an obscure branch of mathematics, known as game theory, to predict the strategic behavior of political actors. Performed with computer modeling, the method has gone from a marginal, and sometimes maligned, offshoot of political science to one

of its dominant approaches.

Mesquita didn’t set out to be a modern-day Nostradamus. While studying South Asian politics as a grad student at the University of Michigan in 1967, he detected an erroneous equation in a book on political mathematics. The experi-

ence was momentous for the young scholar. He says: “It was the first time I realized that one could say, in regard to politics, not that ‘I disagree’ or ‘This is my opinion,’ but ‘No, this is simply wrong, and I can show you why.’ ”

By the late 1970s, Mesquita was predicting the outcome of events with unnerving accuracy: a declassified CIA audit of his work for the agency found he had a success rate of 90 percent. He formed Mesquita and Roundell, LLC and consulted with governments and private businesses (including British Aerospace Systems, J.P. Morgan, and Arthur Andersen) to analyze the likely outcome of various negotiating scenarios—from foreign policy crises to mergers and acquisitions—and to advise them on how to use this insight in their favor.

Mesquita’s new book, *The Predictioneer’s Game: Using the Logic of Brazen Self-Interest to See & Shape the Future* (Random House), surveys his career as a forecaster, offers some tips on improving your own fortune, and includes predictions and proposals for the major foreign policy crises of the day, including the North Korean nuclear standoff and the eventual outcome of the war in Iraq. *The New York Times Magazine* recently featured him in a story asking if Iran will ever develop the bomb. (His answer: No, they’ll eventually back down.)

NYU *Alumni Magazine* recently spoke to Mesquita, a Silver Professor in the Wilf Family Department of Politics, about the model that started it all.

HOW DOES RATIONAL CHOICE PREDICT THE FUTURE?

It takes into account something fundamental about the way people tackle problems: People do what they believe is in their best interest. I construct a model of a game that looks at the relative clout of players seeking a settlement and the willingness of these players to use their clout to arrive at a certain outcome. Then I run the numbers.

ARE YOU EVER SURPRISED BY THE OUTCOMES?

I can never anticipate what the numbers are going to tell me. The very first time I attempted a forecast for the State Department, in the late 1970s, I was asked to forecast the contest of prime minister in India. I knew something about Indian politics and had my own opinion about what would happen. But the model disagreed with me and all of the other experts. It turned out to be correct. It was a humbling moment, but also an informative one.

WHY IS THE MODEL SOMETIMES WRONG?

In my book, I discuss a prediction I made in the 1990s, about health-care reform, which was wrong. This was because of what I called an “exogenous random shock.” A person identified as key to shepherding the legislation through Congress, Congressman Dan Rostenkowski, was indicted on 17 felony counts. Since then, I’ve revised the model to take such shocks into account.

IS IT REALLY THE CASE THAT EVERYONE ALWAYS ACTS IN THEIR BEST INTEREST? AREN'T THERE INSTANCES OF IRRATIONALITY OR PEOPLE ACTING ON EMOTION THAT MESS WITH THE CALCULATIONS?

Sure, that accounts for some portion of the forecasts that turn out to be incorrect, but I don’t think it accounts for enough of them to be a really big deal. [People] want to think that because the model isn’t right 100 percent of the time, they can conclude that people are emotional and the model has no value. But nothing is correct 100 percent of the time. People want to believe in something like “wisdom,” though they have a hard time defining it or recognizing it. This [model] is a somewhat objective analysis. Are there methods that work even better? Not to my knowledge. ■

scorecard

PROLIFIC POLY



Brooklyn is renowned for such icons as Coney Island, Walt Whitman, and Ebbets Field. But did you know that New York’s most populated borough is also home to the geniuses behind penicillin, the microwave oven, and light beer, among other inventions?

Polytechnic Institute, with a modest enrollment of about 3,000 students, has played its part as an incubator for cutting-edge engineering and technology research for all of its 150-year history. And Poly now shares that history with NYU. In July 2008, the two universities became affiliated, with the hope that more inventors will make their mark on both sides of the Brooklyn Bridge. Here are some facts about Polytechnic Institute of New York University:



» In 2002, the National Security Agency named Poly a Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education for its research on cyberspace security. Today, the school is a leader in the study of steganography, the practice of hiding one piece of information within another.

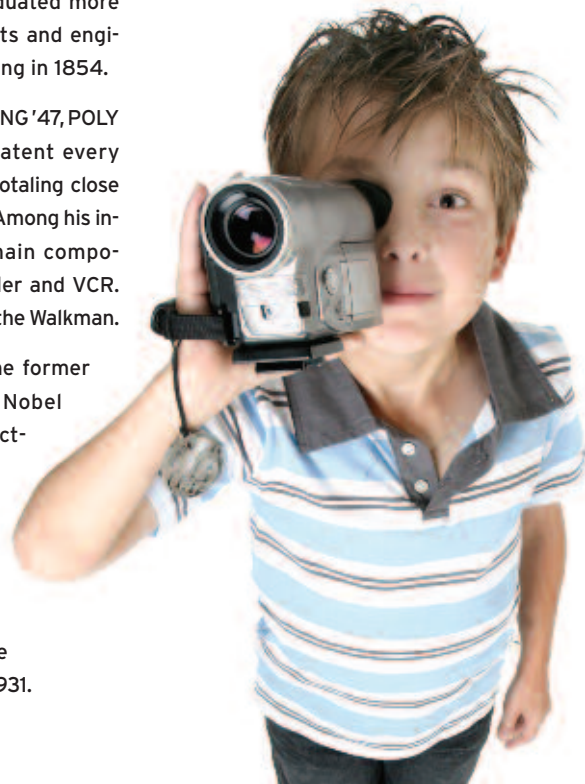
—Emily Nonko

» The second-oldest private engineering school in the United States, Poly has graduated more than 35,000 scientists and engineers since its founding in 1854.

» Jerome Lemelson (ENG '47, POLY '49) averaged one patent every month for 40 years, totaling close to 550 in his lifetime. Among his inventions were the main components of the camcorder and VCR. He also helped create the Walkman.

» Two alumni and one former professor have won Nobel Prizes for work conducted at Poly.

» Pulitzer Prize-winning historian James Truslow Adams (POLY 1898) coined the term “The American Dream” in 1931.



A WALKING HELL

MICHAEL AND ELIZABETH NORMAN REVISIT THE HORRORS OF THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH

by Kevin Fallon / CAS '09

On an April day in 1942, the tropical sun burned a sweat-soaked, starved American soldier named Ben Steele. He had blisters the size of half dollars on his feet. They were bleeding, but he could not lag behind the columns of prisoners of war shuffling along Bataan's Old National Road. The Japanese guards executed those who fell. When his comrade's legs

gave out, Steele hung on to him until a bayonet pierced his buttocks—a Samaritan's punishment. As flies swarmed the gushing wound, the pain forced Steele to let his buddy fall.

Steele's ordeal is just one horrendous episode in the series of perditions recounted in *Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and its Aftermath* (FSG). Written by married professors Michael Norman (Arthur L. Carter

Journalism Institute) and Elizabeth M. Norman (NUR '77, '86 and now faculty in the department of humanities and social sciences in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development), the book is an expansive, journalistic account of the single greatest defeat in American military history—the 1942 surrender of the Philippines. As the war in Europe escalated, the men defending the Allies' Pacific stronghold were es-

entially abandoned, then captured and detained by the Japanese. They were marched across the Bataan Peninsula to prison camps, corralled into "hell ships," and sent to Japan, where they endured 41 months of slave labor. Of the 76,000 American and Filipino soldiers captured, some 18,000 died. The Normans wanted to understand how such atrocities could take place. "Why would [the Japanese] conduct this kind of enterprise and treat the prisoners of war the way they did?" Michael wondered.

Nearly 55 years later, as the ranks of survivors grew thin, the Normans set out to answer that question. During 10 years of research, the couple visited Asia four times and interviewed 400 people, including American veterans, the Filipinos who fought alongside them, and their Japanese captors. The Normans also retraced the infamous 66-mile trek across Bataan, during which the prisoners withstood starvation diets, 120-degree heat, and crippling disease. "You would look down into a ravine and know that there were bodies down there," Elizabeth said of their journey. "Every time you opened your water bottle, you'd think about these men."

Just as the eerily empty landscape affected the Normans, the book is filled with anecdotes that will haunt the reader. Stories of POWs with ant-infested wounds left to die on "medical unit" floors flooded with excrement, for example, grant the soldiers a dignity beyond just being a statistic. "If you don't feel it, you'll never understand it intellectually," reasons Michael, a Vietnam War vet.

Michael proposed to collaborate with Elizabeth on a more comprehensive story of Bataan, after she completed a manuscript about the WWII nurses stationed in the Philippines. Their research



PHOTO © AP PHOTO

ON THE MARCH, SOLDIERS SUFFERED FROM MALARIA, DYSENTERY, AND BERI-BERI, WHICH SWELLS THE FEET TO THE SIZE OF BASKETBALLS.

soon took them around the United States to veterans meetings and eventually to Montana, where they met Steele, then an 81-year-old retired art professor. “Running into Ben, for a reporter, was like walking into King Tut’s tomb,” Michael says, noting that Steele’s accounts are rivaled only by his stark pen-and-ink sketches that illustrate the brutalities. They are re-creations of the ones he drew using burnt sticks while deteriorating on the infirmary floor in a Japanese camp.

The Normans also landed unprecedented interviews with 23 former Imperial Japanese soldiers, who served under General Masaharu Homma, later executed for war crimes by a U.S. military tribunal. While not excusing the soldiers’ actions, the authors contextualize the culture of discipline, obligation, and conformity that created the climate of abuse.

Some confessed, for the first time, to having taken part in a massacre of 400 prisoners along the march. One veteran illustrated the affair for the Normans by pantomiming how he thrust his bayonet, screaming “Yah!” as he pretended to kick a body off the spade and into a ravine. As another veteran explained, he decided to finally speak, “Because it’s time for the world to know.”

And time is running out. As many WWII veterans reach their late eighties and early nineties, *Tears in the Darkness* may be one of the last Bataan histories compiled from first-person interviews. With its brutal honesty and panoramic narrative, the book is a vital addition to the literature on this episode. “It was not clear that this wall needed another brick,” *The New York Times* review notes. “But then you pick up [the book]...and you think: Yes, we needed another brick.” ■



ABOVE: STEELE’S JAPANESE PRISON CAMP ID PHOTO (LEFT) AND A PICTURE AFTER HIS LIBERATION (RIGHT). BELOW: HIS INK DRAWING OF SOLDIERS UNLOADING COMRADES INTO MASS GRAVES.



PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATION COURTESY BEN STEELE

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An Island Unsilenced

LAWYERS GIVE VOICE TO GUANTÁNAMO BAY PRISON DETAINEES WITH A NEW BOOK AND ARCHIVE

by John Bringardner / GSAS '03

At the height of the American civil rights movement in 1965, Mark Denbeaux was one of hundreds of white students from northern colleges who marched with black residents from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Along the way, Denbeaux (LAW '68) learned what it was like to become a part of history. The problem was he didn't realize it until after the fact. "When it was over, everyone disappeared," recalls Denbeaux, now a voluble law professor at Seton Hall University School of Law. "There were 3,000 people—many of them local blacks who risked a lot—and nobody wrote anything down. An awful lot of remarkable information had disappeared."

So on December 27, 2001, when then Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced that the United States would turn its sleepy military base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, into a giant holding cell for the prisoners of the U.S.-led global war on terror, Denbeaux was ready to start documenting. But as one of the hundreds of lawyers who threw themselves into the legal morass of defending the Guan-

tánamo detainees, he soon discovered that wouldn't be so easy. Within months it was clear that the Bush administration had chosen Guantánamo, popularly called "Gitmo," precisely because of its ambiguous legal status, which seemed to place it outside the reach of both U.S. and international courts. Looking beyond President Barack Obama's promised closure of the prison, Denbeaux now sees only two potential interpretations by future historians: "It's either a black mark or a black mark that's alleviated by the courts."

In an effort to lay the groundwork for that history, Denbeaux and fellow detainee lawyer Jonathan Hafetz, former litigation director for the Liberty and National Security Project at the NYU School of Law's Brennan Center for Justice who now works with the American Civil Liberties Union, pieced together dozens of firsthand accounts to create *The Guantánamo Lawyers: Inside a Prison Outside the Law* (NYU Press). More than just an addition to the genre of "Gitmo Lit," the book is a narrative of primary source material from the people closest to the approximately 770 detainees who

have been held at the base: their lawyers. While reporters are still denied access to the prisoners and members of the Red Cross who visit the base are bound by nondisclosure agreements, an eclectic mix of lawyers—corporate litigators from white-shoe law firms, death penalty specialists, personal injury

“Gitmo is either a black mark or a black mark that’s alleviated by the courts.”

attorneys, small-town lawyers, and academics—have spent thousands of billable hours working pro bono, first to gain access to their clients, then to help those clients gain access to American courts. For all intents and purposes, theirs are the voices of the detainees.

The book itself is just the starting point for a much larger project. As they continue to push the detainee cases, Denbeaux, Hafetz, and a roster of Seton Hall law students are working to expand the field of Guantánamo scholarship with an online archive—beginning with the unedited interviews from the book—and a permanent

GAINING ACCESS TO GUANTÁNAMO DETAINEES IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE.

physical archive of Gitmo documents to be housed in NYU's Tamiment Library, a center for research on civil liberties.

But getting valuable documents off the island hasn't been easy. The base wasn't built with lawyers in mind, either physically or bureaucratically. There are no spaces for private conversations, and even if there were, lawyers must turn over handwritten notes from client meetings for redaction before they can see them again back on the mainland, Hafetz says. Many crucial legal documents have been sequestered in a facility near the Pentagon.

The legal battle for information continues under the Obama administration, though lawyers and a group of major media companies gained a small victory last June when a Washington, D.C., judge rejected the government's request to seal hundreds of unclassified documents. Hafetz hopes these efforts will encourage more lawyers to join the project. As the authors write in the book's introduction: "Our goal is to create a historical record of Guantánamo's legal, human, and moral failings...[failings] that will take many years to repair even after the doors of the prison are finally shuttered." ■

PHOTOS © BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP PHOTO

MASTER PLAN

STUDENTS OF ALL AGES TURN TO GRAD SCHOOL FOR REFUGE, INSPIRATION, AND KNOW-HOW

by Brooke Kosofsky Glassberg / CAS '04

Char Woods Silberg, a seasoned freelance documentary producer, was wrapping up 2004's *Last Letters Home*, a film about American soldiers killed in Iraq, when she first seriously considered a career in public service. "That [film] was a very powerful experience," Silberg says. So when a colleague told her about an opportunity at Trickle Up, an organization that helps people in developing countries start small businesses, she nearly yelled: "I want to work [there]!" After landing the job, however, she realized that the most fruitful route from media to

micro-enterprise development included a return to the classroom for a master's degree. "It was daunting when I looked at the courses and thought, Oh, boy, can I handle microeconomics?" she says.

Silberg is now halfway through an executive MPA with an international focus at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. And her self-reinvention is emblematic of a shift occurring across the country, where an unusual confluence of events—economic, technological, personal, and political—has made this an unprecedented period for graduate study. For both recent graduates and longtime professionals,

school is a refuge from a brutal job market, where unemployment has reached highs not seen in generations, and companies plan to hire 22 percent fewer new college graduates this year, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers. These unsteady times have motivated people like Silberg to question what they want to do with their lives, as President Barack Obama's call to service has also reinvigorated the public sphere.

The changes on campuses are palpable. While NYU's Graduate School of Arts and Science reflects the national average of a 6 percent uptick in applications, many individual fields—such as public policy, technology, and new media—have recorded double-digit increases. "In economic downturns, we see increases for demand in higher education," says Robert S. Lapiner, dean of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies. "There's a rising sense that a master's is the new bachelor's degree and interest in specialized graduate study is a growing phenomenon."

There are no statistics on hiring rates for advanced-degree holders, but their lower unemployment rate implies that they do get jobs more easily, notes Stuart Heiser of the Council of Graduate Schools. This fact is driving new graduates straight back to school. According to an annual survey by the Wasserman Center for Career Development, almost a quarter of 2008 NYU grads are now enrolled in graduate programs. Among the rest, 79 percent plan to go within the next five years. "An advanced degree is intellectual preparation for mobility," says Catharine R. Stimpson, dean of GSAS. "What's interesting about the MFA or an MA is that these are pathways to a variety of stages in life's journey—maybe to a PhD, to a particular job, or to a greater appreciation of yourself and reality."

Some universities have also noted an "Obama effect," where the president's messages of change have turned a spotlight on public service,

education, and the environment. At the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, applications are up 13 percent. But within the school, some programs have been deluged by applicants: The Educational Leadership program jumped by 76 percent, and Environmental Conservation Education is up 126 percent. "With Obama talking about renewable energy and overturning some of Bush's more noxious rulings, people are jazzed," says Katharine Davis, an online consumer health editor who entered the latter program this fall.

Deriving personal satisfaction from work is a relatively modern phenomenon, and it steers some to more creative programs. The Gallatin School of Individualized Study (where applications are up 19 percent) and the John W. Draper Interdisciplinary Master's Program within GSAS, for instance, manifest this desire to tailor a degree to one's passions. Adam Harvey, a student at the Tisch School of the Arts Interactive Telecommunications Program, left a Web design business to both bone up on technical skills and pursue his art. "Usually those two things conflict," says Harvey, whose projects include a paparazzi-deflecting handbag—which sets off a flash when detecting another flash—for those who don't want to be photographed.

And yet the gates may not open for all. Many universities already have more qualified candidates than spaces and, to protect limited scholarship funding, plan to accept the same number of students as last year, Heiser says. This makes the choice to go back to school harder for adults who may still be paying off college loans, carrying a mortgage, or raising a family. But schools want these types of students. "They have a boatload of other responsibilities, [but] they bring self-discipline and wisdom," Stimpson says. And they are eager to be more than just aware of market trends. She says: "You know how to Twitter, but do you know how to build Twitter?" ■



ILLUSTRATION © LEIGH WELLS

CUTTING-EDGE

biology

SAVING FACE—WITH STEM CELLS

by Matthew Hutson

USING CERTAIN STEM CELLS, SCIENTISTS CAN NOW GROW NEW FACE MUSCLES.

PHOTO © ROBERT PRICE

WHEN CELL BIOLOGIST LOUIS TERRACIO STARTED TISSUE ENGINEERING, THE PROSPECT OF GROW-

ing facial muscles seemed so far-off that he assumed he'd sooner see pigs fly. But thanks to rapid advances in stem cell science and, this year, a \$1 million grant from the New York State Department of Health, Terracio and his team will soon cultivate pig muscles for transplant into a pig's head and neck. And what they learn from these pigs, they hope, may eventually help to reconstruct the smiles of an increasing number of cancer, war, and accident survivors for whom facial trauma is psychologi-

cally and emotionally debilitating. "Craniofacial injuries aren't usually life-threatening, but they're tremendously life-altering," says Terracio, who is the associate dean for research at the College of Dentistry. "You are who you are through your facial expression."

Fortunately, the fibers of skeletal muscles—the muscles that move your legs and animate your grin—contain a type of stem cell, called satellite cells, that can develop into new muscle relatively easily. Terracio has already mas-

tered the art of isolating these cells from rats and growing them into patches that can be sutured back into the donor animal. Working with Michael Yost of the University of South Carolina, Terracio applies satellite cells to collagen and places them in a bioreactor where they can multiply and grow. When he first tested the results, he recalls, "Everybody said, 'My God, it's beautiful! It acts just like muscle!'"

Now he's turned to a larger animal. Pigs are good models for humans because they share similar physiology, and he's also planning experiments to see whether nerves will grow into their muscle once

it's transplanted. Other labs in the field are working to speed the sprouting of nerves and blood vessels into new tissue. Terracio hopes that all of these efforts "will coalesce, where a clinician can take the technology we develop and grow new muscle for somebody's face—or maybe, way down the line, replace much larger muscles." He's already seeking NIH funding for human testing.

Terracio is not the only scientist trying to isolate and culture muscle cells, but so far no one else's protocol has worked. In this, as with fine facial movements, "there's such nuance," he says, with a hint of a smile. ■

medicine

FEELING GOOD ABOUT FISH

by Kevin Fallon / CAS '09

Is salmon a postsurgery savior? That might be overstating it a bit, but new research suggests that nutritional supplements containing omega-3 fatty acids, commonly found in oily fish such as salmon and mackerel, can have significant benefits for cancer patients recovering from surgery.

The new study found that people undergoing surgery for esophageal cancer (chosen be-

cause the procedure is associated with severe loss of muscle mass) are likely to maintain their weight when treated with nutritional supplements containing high doses of the fatty acid. The weight retention in turn improves patients' quality of life and reduces complications. "They're able to get up, get dressed, and go to shop," says Aoife Ryan, an assistant professor of nutrition at the Steinhardt School of Culture,

Education, and Human Development, who conducted the study in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin and St. James Hospital.

The findings, published in *Annals of Surgery*, were based on a double-blind experiment of patients awaiting esophagectomy surgery. Both groups were given a nutritional supplement each day beginning five days before and continuing 21 days after the proce-

dures, but the treatment group received a formula enriched with the omega-3 fatty acid. While the group receiving the standard supplement experienced "clinically severe" weight loss—on average, four pounds of muscle mass—the group treated with omega-3 retained their weight and experienced no negative side effects.

Ryan hopes that the treatment will soon be standard care for major surgeries, including procedures to treat head, neck, colon, and stomach cancer. She notes: "It saves thousands of dollars by getting patients healed faster instead of hanging around in hospitals picking up infections." ■

transportation

A WALK IN THE FIGURATIVE PARK

by Lindsay Mueller / CAS '09

In 2005, the Department of Transportation failed to spend \$1.6 billion in its pedestrian planning budget. Why? No one knew what to do with the money, says Zhan Guo, because most research focuses on highways and car congestion. But Guo, an assistant professor of urban planning and transportation policy at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, hopes to change that by identifying what makes us get out of our cars—or the subway—and walk.

In a recent Boston-based experiment, he quantified how walkers value “amenities” encountered along their path. These could be flowers, retail stores, security, or anything that contributes to a positive experience. Guo compared the actual time it took to walk somewhere to the perceived time and found that most people would rather spend a few extra minutes strolling through bucolic Boston Common, for example, than a narrow side street with fewer trees and less to see.

Guo hopes the research will guide future planning, and eventually help to reduce carbon emissions and tighten Americans’ literal and figurative belts. “Right now, walking is a decoration in the whole transportation program,” he says. “My point is: It’s the foundation.”

PARKS SUCH AS BOSTON COMMON HAVE AMENITIES THAT WALKERS WANT.



politics

No Black and White Answers

by Padraic Wheeler / CAS '09

Last year, when Californians voted to eliminate same-sex marriage, many pundits rushed to explain Proposition 8’s passage as a clash between race and sexual orientation. The record election turnout among minorities, they supposed, had reversed the tide in one of the more gay-friendly states. The *Washington Times* declared “Blacks, Hispanics Nixed Gay Marriage,” and similar headlines peppered papers across the country. Some exit polls claimed that 70 percent of black voters had supported the ban.

This was a red flag to Patrick Egan, an assistant professor in the Wilf Family Department of Politics. “It seemed like the exit polls didn’t square with how blacks and Latinos voted in previous referenda about same-sex marriage,” Egan explains. So he, with Kenneth Sherrill of Hunter College, pored over

election returns and demographics from precincts where the majority of African-American voters lived. In a paper published by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, they report that party identification, age, religiosity, and political view drove voting far more than race, gender, or even having gay or lesbian family and friends. And while 58 percent of African-Americans—compared to 52 percent of all Californians—voted for the measure, the authors conclude that this is the result of greater religiosity among that group.

Now that the California Supreme Court has upheld Prop 8, Egan plans to track how state court decisions, there and elsewhere, have influenced public opinion of same-sex marriage. “This is a big issue,” he says, “and for the foreseeable future there’s plenty more to examine.”



PHOTO © ISTOCK

IN BRIEF

by Emily Nonko / CAS '10

PLANNING A UNIVERSITY AS GREAT AS ITS CITY

What are the next essential areas of scholarly pursuit? We cannot know, but we can be sure of two things: that NYU's entrepreneurial faculty will want to pursue them, and they will require space.

Developing the room to keep pace with its academic aspirations has been a serious struggle for NYU, and the university projects that by its bicentennial, in 2031, it will need an additional six million square feet—half for academic purposes and half for student and faculty housing. This fall, the university formally unveils NYU 2031: NYU in NYC, a road map for strategic growth. This project was launched in 2006-07 with immersive community outreach, and some 18 months of intensive analysis of both planning consultants' recommendations and community feedback.

The plan will outline opportunities to recreate portions of the Washington Square campus and establish new academic centers outside of the central campus in areas such as downtown Brooklyn. As President John Sexton says, NYU will work hard to maintain "the delicate eco-systematic balance" between the school's needs and a respect for the concerns of community members who want to sustain the neighborhood's unique character.

To learn more, visit www.nyu.edu/nyu.plans.2031.

GAUGING RISK

Predicting the stock market is not unlike forecasting the weather, but there are some reliable tools to foretell coming storms, says Robert F. Engle, a 2003 Nobel

Prize laureate in economics and professor at the Leonard N. Stern School of Business. Engle runs the Volatility Institute, a research center in financial econometrics housed within Stern's Salomon Center for the Study of Financial

Institutions, where academics share ideas on risk in the financial markets. In March 2009, the institute launched the online Volatility Lab, which forecasts volatility each day and in the year ahead and gauges stock fluctuation. When

stock prices spike, for example, volatility is high and so is the risk to investors. "It's designed to help practitioners, individual investors, students, and academics everywhere understand the risks they are taking," Engle says. Now if they just paid heed.

To visit Engle's Volatility Lab, go to <http://vlab.stern.nyu.edu>.

AN APP-LE FOR THE TEACHER

The iPhone catch phrase "There's an app for that" rings increasingly true; there are applications for just about anything, from the playful iWhoopie Cushion to Google Earth, which beams satellite images from around the world to your phone. But knowing how to design those apps, well, now there's a class for that. Last spring, NYU became only the second university, after Stanford, to offer an iPhone application course, where students create unique, innovative apps while also learning about the business side of the hand-held computer industry.

"With most computer-science courses, students have to lock their imagination in the cabinet," says Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences clinical professor Nathan Hull. In his class, they were encouraged to stretch it. And they did: One designed iNYU Bus, an app with a GPS monitor to locate the university's free shuttle routes; another, iHungry, spits out recipes tailored to whatever ingredients you have on hand in your kitchen. While the class may seem like all fun and apps, "These are real-world skills," Hull says. "These kids can create a business on their cell phone."



TRAIN YOUR DIGI-PET FOR BATTLE WITH THE EPIC PET WARS APP.

© RICKY CHENG

ADOPT-A-CLASS

Last year, Ira W. Miller, a non-grad alum, and founder and owner of Zone Capital Partners, got a welcome earful on the five-hour flight he took from New York City to Los Angeles. He was sitting next to Ellen McGrath, adjunct professor at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, who told Miller that she was teaching a course on "state-of-the-art social entrepreneurship," where students tackle social problems by designing and executing business-minded blueprints for change. By the time Miller exited the aircraft, he had an invitation to sit in on a class, which he did. He was so impressed that he "adopted" the class last spring and funded the students' projects. "The class is designed to create instruments as social change makers," McGrath explains. Miller's sponsorship, which he agreed to continue for the spring 2010 semester, allowed students to create Web sites, publish brochures, and advertise for projects, such as a "green" rock concert and the "Youth in the Booth" organization, which aims to increase young voter participation.

HONOR ROLL

Who's the most important New Yorker in education? Merryll Tisch (STEINHARDT '79),

whose colleagues recently voted her chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents. Since April 1, the seasoned educator and philanthropist has led the board, which supervises all educational activities in the state, from pre-school through grad school. The only unfortunate part is that Tisch has had to step down from the Dean's Council at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, where she will be missed.

LAWYERS-IN-RESIDENCE

Writers-in-residence are fairly common fixtures at most universities, but NYU's new Straus Institute for the Advanced Study of

Law & Justice, located at the School of Law, provides legal minds a similar space to flourish. The institute is a high-level research center where academics are invited to study a law-based theme for 11 months. Last month, 15 distinguished scholars from a variety of disciplines began to focus on different aspects of global governance, pursuing individual projects and participating in weekly public seminars. NYU professor and Straus Fellow Benedict Kingsbury plans to write a book on global administrative law. "Because we're free from any teaching obligations," he explains, "we're able to focus in a very stimulating environment."

VIOLET NIGHT



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NOW AN NYU TRADITION, THE LIGHTING OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING AGAIN TOOK PLACE ON THE EVE OF COMMENCEMENT, HELD THIS YEAR AT THE YANKEES' NEW HOME STADIUM. THE 177TH CEREMONY FEATURED A KEYNOTE SPEECH BY U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY CLINTON (SEE PAGE 5).





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