

libraries

THE REAL ROSIES

A VIDEO ARCHIVE CAPTURES THE TRUE PICTURE OF A GENERATION—BEFORE THEY’RE GONE

by Megan Doll / GSAS '08

Seated in her bedroom, next to her metalworking tools, 91-year-old Jerre Kalbas recalls laboring at the California Shipyards during World War II. Though her bosses had promised her a promotion within four months of starting, as the date approached, Kalbas realized they planned to stonewall her. Taking matters into her own hands, she applied pressure to the union leader who, seeing that Kalbas was not going to back down, reluctantly secured her promotion and raise. But Kalbas was not satisfied. “I said, ‘Oh, no, not enough. You’re going to get it for all the other women,’” she remembers. “And so we got it.”

This story is part of a collection of filmed oral histories, called *The Real Rosie the Riveter Project*, which aims to capture the experiences of the generation of young women who went to work during the Second World War. In the space of a few years, the number of women in the workforce swelled from 13 to 19 million as they filled the unconventional roles of riveters, welders, mechanics, and drill press operators left vacant by men gone to the fronts.

Time was of the essence for the project, spearheaded by Elizabeth Hemmerdinger (TSOA '03), as the team set about recording the recollections of these women, now in their eighties and nineties. “There’s something poignant about these very alert, contemplative, philosophical women reflecting at the end of their lives,” says Hem-

merdinger, who is at work on a documentary that will bring the archival material, housed by NYU’s Tamiment Library, to a wider audience.

The figure of Rosie the Riveter, who appealed mainly to young women, first appeared in 1942 as the title character of a song by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb: “All the day long / Whether rain or shine / She’s part of the assem-

The number of women in the workforce swelled from 13 to 19 million during World War II.

bly line / She’s making history / Working for victory / Rosie the Riveter.” Norman Rockwell later depicted Rosie in a 1943 cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*, but today we associate her most strongly with J. Howard Miller’s “We Can Do It!” poster, which experienced a resurgence of popularity in the 1980s.

Working women have long been of interest to Hemmerdinger, who volunteered her editorial services to Gloria Steinem’s nascent feminist magazine *Ms.* in 1971 and, through a bit of bluffing about having some expertise with cars, landed a byline in the iconic July 1972 *Wonder Woman* issue. Hemmerdinger started working with the archetype of Rosie the Riveter in 2002, as a student in dramatic writing at the Tisch School of the Arts. Her Rosie-inspired play, *We*

Can Do It!, won the Goldberg Playwriting Award in 2003 and enjoyed a brief run at 12 Miles West Theatre Company in New Jersey. A few years later, Hemmerdinger received an unexpected call from country singer and songwriter Larry Gatlin, a former collaborator, and decided to rekindle their partnership by adapting the piece into a musical. She brought on another former collaborator, writer and di-

rector Anne de Mare, to help draft the book for the new musical, which they titled *Dupsky Does It!* Searching for more immediate sources beyond books, films, and websites, they located and interviewed two women in New York City, Jerre Kalbas and Esther Horne, who had worked on the home front.

The interviews gave a sudden dimension to Rosie’s flattened image and would become the seeds of the archive. Hemmerdinger went to Carol A. Mandel, dean of the Division of Libraries, to see whether the Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives had any other primary source material. There were a few resources, but Hemmerdinger and library head Michael Nash both saw an opportunity to broaden Tamiment’s collection. They agreed that the library

ESTHER BECKER (NOW HORNE) TAKES A BREAK OUTSIDE OF GUSSACK’S MACHINED PRODUCTS, IN LONG ISLAND CITY, WHERE SHE WORKED FROM 1942 TO ‘44. SHE WAS ONE OF 48 WOMEN INTERVIEWED FOR THE ROSIE ARCHIVE.



PHOTO COURTESY ESTHER HORNE

would serve as a repository for the material gathered, and the videos are now available on its website.

The stories that have emerged from the 48 women interviewed in New York, Michigan, Maryland, and Tennessee are varied and richly textured: from Angeline Featherstone Fleming, who relocated from rural Mississippi to Detroit to work as a riveter at Ford Motor Company, to Idilia Johnston, who took a contract with the defense department to escape her authoritarian Scottish father. Despite their variety, one common sentiment among the “Rosies” is an exhilarating sense of newfound independence and economic freedom. “We take that idea of one Rosie, and she steps out of that poster and becomes all these different, very real women with many different lives and experiences,” explains Kirsten Kelly, director of the videos.

While most of the women interviewed returned to their pre-war roles, a handful continued to seek work outside the home. Mildred Crow Sargent, for instance, went on to rivet again during the Korean War. She used the money she saved to pay her way through college and graduate school. Though her husband’s declining health kept her from completing her doctorate, she later published three scholarly books. The war effort also helped Jerre Kalbas explore her talent for working with her hands—something she had had few opportunities to put into practice. Even in her nineties, Kalbas continues to work with metal, fashioning small objects of art out of silver.

Hemmerdinger, de Mare, and Kelly are presently raising funds for a full-length documentary that will weave together the disparate threads of their interviews into a narrative. “We’re hoping to make a film that will be an inspiration to people who don’t even know that this is a part of history,” Hemmerdinger remarks. “Because these stories are not in the history books, except in a glancing way.” ■

NEWS DITTY

JOURNALISM—THE MUSICAL

by Kevin Fallon / CAS '09

Like so many writers before him, David Holmes (GSAS '12) experienced a eureka moment at the most unexpected of times: while riding the L subway line after a night of watching back-to-back episodes of *Battlestar Galactica*. He was writing a song about fracking, in which pipelines inject chemically infused water into the ground in order to crack open and tap reservoirs of natural gas, and was attempting to explain that—and the potential health risks to a community's water supply—with the added elements of a rhyming scheme, chord pro-

Holmes decided, couldn't be more suited for each other, especially considering how complicated and controversial the fracking issue is. It hit him: "What the frack is going on / With all this fracking going on?" became the hook for a track that started as a class assignment, grew to a professional-grade music video, and, eventually, an inventive, extremely popular new medium for journalism.

"My Water's on Fire Tonight (The Fracking Song)" is a two-and-a-half minute original song and corresponding animated music video created by Holmes and fellow student Niel Bekker for a graduate

tigative journalism nonprofit ProPublica to find innovative ways to break down complex news stories. The finished product combines the musical learning tools from *Schoolhouse Rock*, the irreverence of HBO's former comedy *Flight of the Conchords*, and the journalistic integrity of NPR. More important, the vibrant clip—which pairs incisive lyrics about the process of fracking with an unshakable beat and that earworm of a chorus—provided an entry point into ProPublica's three years' worth of extensive, if

David Holmes's dream is that news outlets will soon hire staff composers as they would a writer.

sometimes dry, reporting on the controversy. As a music video, it's highly entertaining; as news, it proves that journalism may be more exciting than ever.

Early on in the process, Holmes invited his childhood friend Andrew Bean, an audio engineer with

Coast duo was passionate about the environment. "As soon as I saw the kind of animation being put together with the lyrics, I knew the project would be successful," professor Rosen says.

In fact, it received more than just a passing grade. The completed video was posted on explainer.net, the official website for the Studio 20 "Building a Better Explainer" project, and, after Rosen broadcast it to his 70,000 Twitter followers, became an online sensation. "We thought it would be cool

if the video would receive a few thousand hits within a few weeks," Bean says. It received 20,000 views in one day, and currently has about 260,000. Mainstream sites, such as The Huffington Post and *The New York Times*, picked it up. In its year-end countdown, *Time* named it the

Euro crisis. Next came another collaboration with ProPublica called "The Redistricting Song," a hip-hop explainer about how politicians carve up voting districts to their advantage. Currently, Holmes and Bean are crafting a song on the housing crisis inspired by Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. Holmes estimates that each number, including meticulous research and fact-checking, takes about 80 hours to produce.

Holmes's dream is that news organizations will soon hire staff composers, like him, just as they would a staff writer or copy editor. He believes such nontraditional news media are integral to getting consumers excited about issues they would ordinarily ignore. "The best part of the digital revolution is that we've got all these different tools at our disposal," he says. "I think that people who are able to look at a topic and know instinctive-



what they're learning

The Class: Post-Catastrophe Reconstruction

by Amy Rosenberg

On the first day of assistant professor Corinne Packard's Post-Catastrophe Reconstruction seminar, students do not meet in a classroom. They don't even meet in the United States. Instead, a couple of weeks before the start of the semester, they travel together to a part of the world that has suffered disaster—whether naturally or through terrorism—and partner with nongovernmental organizations to assess damage to buildings, homes, livelihoods, and infrastructures. Then they travel back to NYU's Schack Institute of Real Estate, in the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, and get to work designing proposals for rebuilding.

This semester, the fourth time she's teaching the course, Packard is at NYU Abu Dhabi focusing on reconstruction in Sri Lanka, which still suffers from the effects of both the 2004 tsunami and a recent civil war. Previously, the class has traveled to Chile once and Haiti twice. "The Chinese symbol for

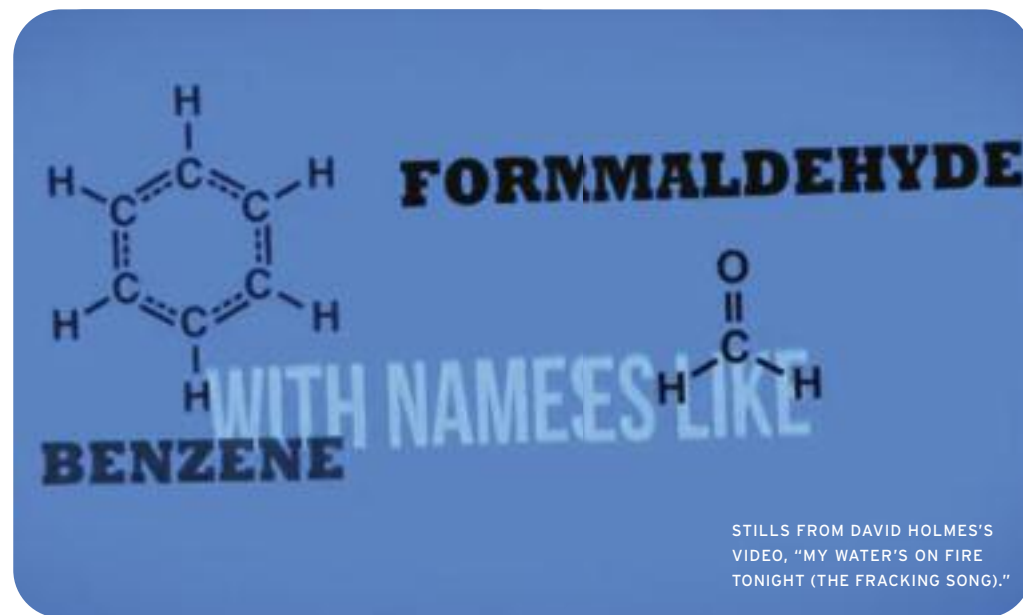
crisis means both danger and opportunity," Packard explains. "The two are connected. We focus less on the danger and more on the opportunity. We ask, 'How do you create more stable communities?' We're trying to see what good can come out of something terrible."

On the second trip to Haiti, last semester, students met with groups such as Architecture for Humanity and Habitat for Humanity to discover what projects are under way and how they could help. One aimed to create jobs, housing, and small businesses in an area north of Port-au-Prince, where earthquake refugees had settled with no infrastructure. Another sought to increase commercial development, and a third required a plan for building an orphanage on an empty field outside the city. Back in New York, students—who come not only from the Schack Institute but also from the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, with backgrounds in business, public policy, and planning—undertook

SRI LANKA, WHICH HAS STRUGGLED TO REBUILD AFTER THE 2004 TSUNAMI, WAS A RECENT FOCUS OF THE COURSE.

feasibility studies, analyzed data, created budgets, studied previous disaster recovery efforts, and came up with proposals for implementing the projects in Haiti.

Distant lands are not the only beneficiaries. In the context of readings and discussions, the class also considers how it could help improve New York's own potential for dealing with the aftermath of a catastrophe. Last semester, they investigated options for the swift completion of four-story housing, so that residents forced out of their homes by disaster might remain in the area and continue to support local business. Whether its focus is close to home or far away, Packard's hope for the class is that it will result in real change. "I'd like the students' project proposals to be implemented," she says. "They are passionate about their work, and they come up with excellent plans. I'd like to see those plans transform lives."



STILLS FROM DAVID HOLMES'S VIDEO, "MY WATER'S ON FIRE TONIGHT (THE FRACKING SONG)."

gressions, and harmony. As an environmental term, "fracking" is awkward. On *Battlestar Galactica*, "frack" is used in lieu of another, not so family-friendly word that begins with "f" and ends in "ck." The two different meanings,

journalism course taught by Jay Rosen, director of the Carter Journalism Institute's Studio 20, which focuses on adapting journalism for the Web. The assignment was called "Building a Better Explainer" and partnered students with the inves-

whom he had played music in college at Ohio State University, to help hone the lyrics and craft the song's score. They were then set up with Los Angeles-based animators Adam Sakellarides and Lisa Rucker by a friend who knew that the West

second most creative video of the year and called it "a great, viral way to get the basics" of fracking.

In the wake of this success, Holmes and his team were commissioned by Britain's *The Guardian* to create a song and video about the

ly the best way to communicate that story to the public—be that through infographic, article, or even a song—"those are going to be the people who will create the best journalism." ■

THE SUSTAIN GAME

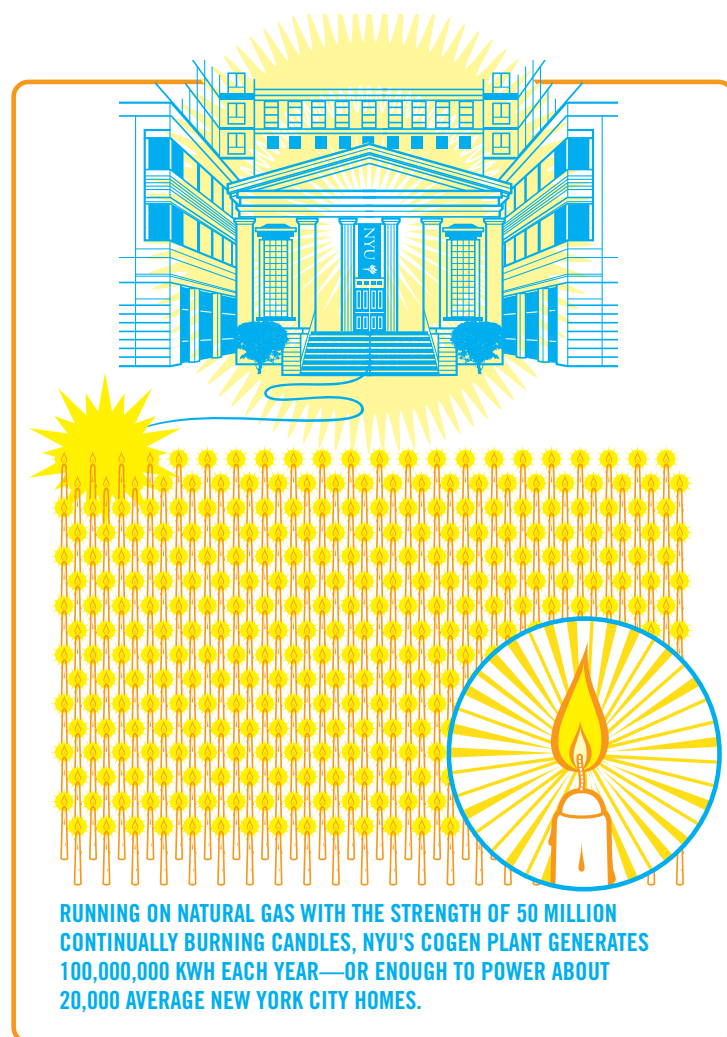
NYU HITS ITS GREEN GOALS YEARS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE, BUT IS THAT ENOUGH?

by Andrea Crawford

Five years ago, anyone taking a late-night, summertime stroll around NYU would have seen clear evidence of a city that never sleeps. No matter the hour, lights in most university buildings would have been ablaze and had one stepped inside, an icy blast of air-conditioning would have greeted them. Things have changed.

The moment NYU saw the light, as it were, dates to the fall of 2006 when the university launched a formal green initiative. The following spring, it hired Jonah “Cecil” Scheib, as its first director of sustainability and energy, and Jeremy Friedman, as manager of sustainability initiatives, and announced a bold mission. As part of New York City’s PlaNYC 2030, NYU took up the mayor’s challenge and pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 30 percent per square foot by 2017. Last fall—some *six years* ahead of schedule—NYU kept that promise to the city. “We’ve been enormously aggressive on reducing our energy use,” Scheib says. “I don’t know anyone else who’s cut 30 percent in five years.”

But Scheib and Friedman aren’t ready to accept any accolades on the university’s behalf; there’s plenty of work left to do. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, or the amount of carbon



that’s released into the air, can be accomplished in two ways. The first is to use cleaner energy sources—more highly refined oil, natural gas, or renewable sources such as wind, geothermal, and solar power. In fact, to mark the launch of its sustainability initiative, NYU made one of the nation’s largest purchases of wind power in 2006 and ’07. More significant, the university invested

\$120 million to replace its 30-year-old, oil-fired power plant with a new natural gas-powered co-generation plant. This facility, which went online in 2010, now supplies electricity to 22 campus buildings, while using the steam it generates to supply heat and hot water to another 37.

The second way to lower emissions is to reduce energy usage, and when Scheib arrived at NYU,

he was determined to focus first on consumption, and then supply. “There’s no point in putting solar panels on the roof to run a space heater in the summer because people are so cold in their office,” he notes. At first, NYU took the most straightforward steps. “You know how your mom told you to shut off the light when you leave the room?” Scheib asks. “We weren’t doing that.” Scaling heating or cooling and lighting of buildings back to a minimal level from midnight to 6 AM, for example, reduces energy consumption by 25 percent. Even shutting it down for just a couple of hours a night still creates sizable cuts.

But turning off the lights also meant breaking electrical wiring apart, so that one out of every few lights in an office or hallway remains lit for safety purposes, or making light switches operable office by office, rather than a whole floor at a time, so janitorial staff can use only the specific light they need. NYU installed new, higher-efficiency lamps and ballasts, which alone can cut lighting loads 40 to 50 percent, and occupancy-based or daylight harvesting sensors, which means office lights grow dimmer when sunlight fills a room.

“It’s been a building-by-building approach to see what we can do,” says Dianne Anderson, manager of sustainable resources, who oversees these efforts. In student residences, for example, she and

her staff installed some 4,000 individual “smart thermostats” in an occupancy-based system, which knows to scale back heating or cooling when no one is in a room. Another project involves making data centers, the rooms that store the university’s servers, more efficient because they must be kept very cool to offset the heat they generate. Based on the slew of projects planned, Scheib estimates that within the next three to five years, NYU will have cut energy consumption by 50 percent, a number he says is “not pie in the sky.”

Beyond this, the university is aggressively studying the potential of biofuel mixtures and requesting proposals for renewable energy alternatives. But harvesting such power in the middle of Greenwich Village poses many obstacles. “With tall buildings and skinny roofs and heavy loads all the way down, there’s literally not enough sun input, or wind input, or geothermal inputs to power [these] buildings,” Scheib says.

“But it can help.” Also helping are innovations from students, faculty, and staff who have received nearly \$400,000 in NYU Green Grants for some 61 original projects since 2007. The aim is to engage the community in devising sustainability efforts—and the program has yielded many now-institutionalized projects, including a campus bike share and an initia-

Jonah Scheib projects that within the next three to five years, NYU will have cut energy consumption by 50 percent.

...
 tive that uses overflow food in dining halls to feed the homeless. Scheib says that NYU embraces the challenge of pursuing clean energy in an urban setting: “If we can do this in Lower Manhattan, we’ve shown that you can do it anywhere.”

This progress has not gone unnoticed. Last year, the Association

for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, or AASHE, gave NYU its highest rating, one of only 23 colleges and universities in the country to receive a “gold” distinction. This system, an independent program called STARS (the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System), considers broad criteria, measuring an institution’s entire

educational, cultural, and operational approach to sustainability. In the operations category, NYU ranked highest among all 122 schools assessed. AASHE also presents individual national awards, and last fall its top prize for student research went to Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development graduate stu-

dent Annie Bezbatchenko for her dissertation on student behavior and sustainability.

Meeting its pledge to New York City so far ahead of schedule will be a significant accomplishment, but Scheib suggests that the philosophy of “cuts” may already be outdated. Instead, he and others are asking new questions: Should the university simply pick an arbitrary number to aim for? Or is there a better way to create new targets? In essence, how much energy does a building actually *require*? In 2007, President John Sexton signed the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment to reach “climate neutrality”—or net-zero carbon emissions—which NYU estimates it can achieve by 2040; engineering studies are now under way to help make that happen. Scheib says: “Right now we’re driving 80, and I don’t know if the speed limit is 65 or 35.” ■

DUMPSTER DETECTIVES

Once a year, Jonah “Cecil” Scheib and the rest of NYU’s sustainability staff can be found roaming campus and snatching trash bags off the sidewalks. They’re not looking for thrown-out treasures, but rather are attempting to “characterize our waste.”

The staff gathers garbage and recycling from a representative sample of NYU buildings and brings them back to the facilities plant, where they tear open the bags, sort and weigh the contents. From this, they have determined that NYU is diverting just above 30 percent of its waste from landfills. The team estimates that another 60 percent of what’s in the trash is actually compostable material. “Only about 10 percent of what we’re actually throwing away needs to go into the landfill,” Scheib explains.

To improve these numbers, NYU has launched composting pilot projects in a few locations, primarily in dining halls and student residences. It recently started a techno-scrap program, and brown bins to collect dead keyboards, CDs, tapes, and other media now stand on nearly every floor. It also plans to investigate composting paper towels from bathrooms, which account for a large amount of waste.

So what was the most significant discovery lurking in the garbage? Perhaps not surprising for denizens of the city that never sleeps: lots and lots of disposable coffee cups. In fact, in some buildings, cups accounted for almost all of the trash.

As a result, students on the green committee at the Leonard N. Stern School of Business are now working with neighborhood coffee providers to lower the price of beverages for customers who bring their own cups—hoping that a financial incentive will wean students, faculty, and staff off disposable ones.

The goal for landfill diversion, which Scheib believes is well within reach, is 90 percent. Once NYU gets to that level, it will be worth looking at the last bit. Then, for example, the sustainability staff might work with the purchasing department and its suppliers, perhaps lobbying a computer manufacturer not to install the one plastic piece in its keyboards that prevent them from being recycled. “But right now,” Scheib says, “there’s no point in fighting that battle when I’m swimming in coffee cups.”

—A.C.

ILLUSTRATION © JAMESON SIMPSON

S.R. SRINIVASA VARADHAN AWARDED NATIONAL MEDAL OF SCIENCE

S.R. Srinivasa Varadhan, a professor in the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, received the 2011 National Medal of Science, the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on scientists and engineers. Varadhan and the six other recipients of the medal received their awards at a White House ceremony.

Varadhan's scholarship has centered on the theory of large deviations—the probability of rare events. His contributions have provided a method for understanding a range of phenomena, and his work has been employed in a variety of fields, including finance, traffic engineering, and biology.

In 2007, Varadhan was awarded the Abel Prize in Mathematics by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters for “his fundamental contributions to probability theory,” which the academy characterized as “highly influential” and lauded for its “great conceptual strength and ageless beauty.”

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC AND SPIRITUAL LIFE OPENS ON WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK

With a weaved facade dubbed “solid but penetrable” by the architects at Machado and Silvetti Associates, NYU's new Global Center for Academic and Spiritual Life offers the height of both introspection and connectivity. Since opening in January, the center's “global network classrooms” are being used to conference with students and professors across the globe, making colleagues in Abu Dhabi or Shanghai feel as if they're at the next desk. In the largest colloquium room, a 17-x-10-foot

video projection wall connects to four tracking cameras, giving 66 individuals the ability to communicate seamlessly. But the cutting-edge technology in the building—constructed to LEED Silver standards—is complemented by space for music rehearsal, traditional classrooms, and spiritual life. In a nod to the long-standing religious presence at the site, the ground floor houses a Catholic center, while the fourth floor provides offices for the university's 20-plus chaplains, open space for prayer gatherings, and a 24-hour meditation room.

NEW CENTER FOR CRANIOFACIAL BONE BIOLOGY IS SAVING FACES

More than 7,000 children born in the United States each year suffer from craniofacial syndromes, abnormalities of the skull that affect the facial plate and head, and can result in a concave face or a cleft palate. Working with the pediatric neurosurgery division of NYU Langone Medical Center, the new Craniofacial Center aims to offer the latest research and treatment for those afflicted. Nicola Partridge, founding director of the center, will recruit scientists at the College of Dentistry to expand their range of reconstructive repair.

TO RUSSIAN STUDIES, WITH LOVE

One of the unforeseen casualties of the fall of the Berlin Wall was our understanding of Russia. “All of us are living the legacy of the Cold War,” says Yanni Kotsonis, associate professor of history, Russian, and Slavic studies, who notes that government spending on Russian studies has slowed to a trickle and a new “Russophobia” has taken hold. He hopes,

however, that the opening in fall 2012 of the Jordan Family Center for the Advanced Study of Russia—made possible by a gift from Boris (WSUC '88) and Elizabeth Jordan—will help bridge that gap. As a unit of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the center will function under the auspices of the

Department of Russian and Slavic Studies, while also benefiting from an advisory board of leading figures in Russian affairs. With the means necessary, Kotsonis anticipates that the Jordan Family Center will be a base for Russian influence and understanding in our country.



PHOTO © FRIDA WESTHOLM/THE NOBEL FOUNDATION

Thomas Sargent Wins 24th Nobel Prize for NYU

The Noble Prize committee honored Thomas Sargent (above left, receiving the award from His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden) last fall for his groundbreaking research, which has influenced numerous capitalist economies over the past two decades.

Sargent, the William R. Berkley Professor of Economics and Business, a joint position in the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Leonard N. Stern School of Business, became NYU's 24th Nobel winner among faculty and alumni, and is regarded as a pioneer of the rational expectations school of macroeconomics. His work with 1995 Nobel Laureate Robert Lucas provided the basis for the adoption of monetary and fiscal policies that replaced Keynesian ideology.

Still, Sargent—who shared the prize in economics with Princeton University's Christopher Sims—remains humble about his vocation: “We're just bookish types that look at numbers and try to figure out what's going on.”

global

SHANGHAI CALLING: A NEW CAMPUS IS BORN

by Sally Lauckner / GSAS '10

For NYU students in New York, campus life is synonymous with the rhythms of the city: Bustling streets, honking taxis, towering skyscrapers, and world-class culture all mingle to create a cosmopolitan experience. Soon, students can enjoy all these urban delights a bit farther east—in China. Come 2013, the university will add a third urban campus (following NYU Abu Dhabi) to its global network. NYU Shanghai, a brand-new liberal arts and science college, will complement China's goal of keeping talented students at home. But the campus will also offer opportunities for others from across the globe to study in one of the world's most vibrant cultural and financial centers.

With plans for NYU's latest campus moving full speed in preparation for its fall 2013 inaugural semester, *NYU Alumni Magazine* spoke to R. May Lee (LAW '90),

associate vice chancellor for Asia, about the challenges of creating an American university in China's largest city.

HOW DID NYU DECIDE ON CHINA FOR ITS NEWEST CAMPUS?

If you think about the world's idea capitals, it makes sense to have a presence in Asia. Shanghai has a lot of similarities to New York, and because of our study-away site there, we already had a six-year relationship with the city.

HOW WILL THE CAMPUS COMPARE TO WASHINGTON SQUARE?

English will be the language of instruction, but we expect all students to be fluent in Chinese by graduation. Just like the Square, it's going to be in and of the city. We'll have a building of about 550,000 square feet of usable space in downtown Pudong, which is right in the heart

of Shanghai—the equivalent of being at Park Avenue and East 57th Street in New York. We've already found another space for us to build a bigger, more beautiful campus for when we're ready to expand, but that's not until much further down the line.

WHAT KINDS OF STUDENTS WILL YOU ADMIT?

We'll enroll both international students and Chinese students, and initially there will be a different process for each. We're in the throes of preparing a global admissions system that will cover NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai, but that's still being refined.

WHAT'S THE DRAW OF STUDYING IN SHANGHAI?

Shanghai is a great option for a student who wants to be in a major city but also wants to be part of a smaller cohort. In New York,

you're one of 20,000 undergrads. [In Shanghai] you'll be one of, at its biggest, 2,400 undergrads. The campus might also attract more adventurous students. When our New York students travel, they go to D.C. or California. Our students in China can travel to Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, or even Australia.

WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF THE ENTERPRISE?

We want to be a part of the city of Shanghai, and it's complicated to build that robust community. The vision of the global network, even by [President] John Sexton's admission, is audacious, but we have the benefit of coming after NYU Abu Dhabi and learning from them about how to attract the best students in the world and how to recruit faculty. They've developed a real identity and vision.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ IN SHANGHAI SO FAR?

Shanghai is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world and has an incredible talent pool. There's palpable excitement in China about NYU coming, and our potential there is limitless. ■

\$25 MILLION GIFT WILL FURTHER SUPPORT NYU'S GLOBAL NETWORK AND U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

Wenliang Wang recently pledged \$25 million to support and expand NYU's Global Network University (GNU). The gift will significantly further the study of U.S.-China relations at NYU and support students and faculty who are active in the university's global network.

Wang is actively engaged in fostering the bilateral U.S.-China relationship, as well as those in Southeast Asia and on the Korean Peninsula. He has generously supported the creation of various scholarly and exchange programs to this effect at several universities, including NYU, the National Uni-

versity of Singapore, and Harvard University, where he is an advisory committee member of the Harvard University Asia Center. He established the Wenliang Wang Center for U.S.-China Relations at NYU in 2010, marking the first time such a center was created at a major university in New York. The center has since become a highly respected base for critical discourse of issues crucial to both the United States and China.

Wang's philanthropy will create great momentum in advancing President John Sexton's global vision for NYU. His most recent gift will endow the Wenliang Wang

Center for U.S.-China Relations in NYU's Faculty of Arts and Science, ensuring that the center remains a strong and permanent aspect of NYU's academic program. The center will continue its academic vision of research on timely, real-world issues, with a focus on economics and foreign policy, and will be housed at the NYU Shanghai Institute at Washington Square.

Wang's contribution will also endow two faculty positions, the Wenliang Wang Distinguished Global Network Professors, and appointees will be selected from world-renowned scholars in various academic disciplines. In addition,

his gift will support financial-aid awards for the most talented students—to be known as Wenliang Wang Global Scholars—wishing to study in any of NYU's schools, colleges, study-away sites, or portal campuses.

Wang is chairman of Rilin Enterprises, Ltd., a privately held global infrastructure, logistics, and construction firm based in Hong Kong. His transformative gift will have an extraordinary impact on NYU and will encourage students to develop an international consciousness that will prepare them to excel in an increasingly globalized world. ■

business

THE WISDOM OF OTHERS



Last September, shortly after introducing a steep price hike, movie-rental giant Netflix unveiled a plan to separate its DVD delivery and online streaming into two distinct services—with two distinct

fees. According to a *New York Times* article published last October, a friend of Netflix CEO Reed Hastings warned him that splitting the services was a terrible idea, but Hastings was undeterred. Customer outrage was so overwhelm-

ing that Hastings appeared in a rare video mea culpa and the company scrapped the plan within a month.

This may seem like an unusual incident, but it's part of a noticeable trend of people in power

ignoring advice from others, according to researchers Kelly See and Elizabeth Morrison. The two Leonard N. Stern School of Business professors co-authored a paper that shows powerful people—CEOs, high-level managers, and political figures—are less likely to heed advice from others. Published in the journal *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, the paper combined results from four studies, including one in which researchers asked participants general-knowledge questions (such as estimating the tuition at several universities), and then gave them advice from others before allowing them to submit a final answer.

The study revealed that people in power have higher levels of confidence in their own judgment, and a decreased willingness to incorporate input from others. "Part of what gets you promoted is being knowledgeable and confident," says See, noting that this

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trait also has a downside. "Our studies showed that while powerful people were more confident in their judgment than lower-level people, they were also less accurate in their answers."

This problem extends beyond the workplace, and See believes that our view on leadership needs to change at a societal level. "There's a general feeling that a good leader is decisive at all times," she explains. "That's a wrong theory. A leader doesn't always need to know the right answer, but they need to know how to find that answer." In today's information age, See argues that it's more valuable for a leader to know where to seek reliable information and honest feedback, and how to synthesize those resources in order to make the best decisions. Her recommendation: "Identify members of your team who don't agree with you, and promote people who aren't afraid to challenge you."

—Sally Lauckner

health care

RIGHTING A WRONG RX

In 1999, a Congressional-sponsored study on U.S. health care turned up some disturbing results: Minority patients are less likely than whites to get organ transplants, to undergo bypass surgery, to receive kidney dialysis, and even to receive heart medication. Further, minorities face financial, geographical, and language barriers preventing them

from accessing high-quality care. In response, in 2006, the state of Massachusetts passed a pioneering law attempting to drastically reduce these differences. Through the ambitious "pay-for-performance" initiative—part of the state's Medicaid program—hospitals that showed a significant reduction in care disparities would become eligible for financial

bonuses. Sounded like a win-win.

"They were just wrong about that," says Jan Blustein, professor of health policy and medicine at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, who examined hospital records for treatment patterns and spoke to government officials and hospital workers in response to the effort. Her study, published in the journal *Health Affairs*, revealed little evidence of race-based disparities.

Blustein (WAG '93) explains that she believes racial disparities do exist, but that they're quite difficult to pin down. "Legislators made the leap that people were being treated differently in hospi-

tals in ways that could be demonstrated within the program," she says. But Blustein adds that "the inequities aren't measurable in a program like this." Due in part to racial segregation within cities, nonwhite patients receive care from a subset of providers that tend to be of lower quality. Therefore, racial disparities are more likely to occur between different hospitals and not within single institutions as the pay-for-performance model assumed.

Blustein's study showed that the policy could even end up hurting minority patients. Hospitals that treated a majority of nonwhite patients were penalized un-

der the program because they provided a lower level of care across the board. "We want low-performing hospitals to improve, not to be punished," she says. One viable solution would be to simply offer additional money to hospitals that most need it, but Blustein warns that this is harder than it sounds. "Politicians may not want to announce more money for hospitals that are doing poorly," she explains. "[Voters] have this idea that we should reward those that do well. Rewarding hospitals that are struggling, even ones that serve mostly minority patients, is difficult to sell."

—S.L.

education

Fundamental Questions

NEW LESSONS AIM TO INSPIRE YOUNG SCIENTISTS

Imagine a third-grade classroom in which students spend a full week exploring the origin of knowledge and certainty. They interview one another with questions such as, "What is something you know?" and "How do you prove it?" They analyze texts, identifying claims authors make and the evidence behind them. They pinpoint sources—books, movies, the Internet—and evaluate their validity. "The focus," explains Susan Kirch, associate professor of science education at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, "is on giving students the opportunity to learn to use the tools of a scientist."

Most science curricula in the United States fail to do this, Kirch argues. Instead, they focus on presenting formulaic models that emphasize practical skills. For example, instead of showing kids how to use evidence to support or challenge a given scientific claim,

many programs merely teach how to produce a report in the correct format. Instead of conveying the algorithms that underlie math problems, many lessons merely demonstrate how to "do" problems. No one is arguing that practical skills aren't useful or necessary, but, Kirch says, "students have to understand the tool they're using before they begin using it."

With this in mind, Kirch and her colleagues at NYU's STEME Education and Research Center, a new facility devoted to understanding how teachers learn to impart these subjects and how children grasp them, are seeking new ways of teaching science to young children.

Along with her co-principal investigators, Kirch has secured nearly \$450,000 from the National Science Foundation for an initiative called the Scientific Thinker Project. The curriculum is based on the idea that evidence is a fundamental scientific tool and that children

have the capacity to understand its nature—what it is, where it comes from, how to evaluate it.

Pamela Fraser-Abder, associate professor of science education at Steinhardt, also recently won a three-year, \$2.1 million grant from the New York State Education Department, which funds a pilot program aimed at integrating new science teachers more deeply into the communities they serve and improving retention rates among them. "Gradually," Fraser-Abder says, "participants take on greater responsibilities for teaching, so that by the end of a school year, they have gained solid practice. They are more likely to remain in the science education field because they become more invested in the work."

There is often talk in this country of a crisis in science education. But, Kirch says, while American students may perform dismally on international standard exams, or avoid career paths in STEME fields altogether, the real problem is that, from the earliest years of schooling, curricula fail to instill a true understanding of how to think scientifically. While it's not clear whether great science lessons translate into more biologists and engineers, the goal for now, Kirch says, is to help children realize "the scientific way of living is exciting, fun, and rewarding." Once that happens, she hopes more students may just be inspired to explore a career in science.

—Amy Rosenberg



AMERICAN STUDENTS PERFORM POORLY ON INTERNATIONAL EXAMS AND SUSAN KIRCH SAYS THE SOLUTION LIES IN TEACHING THEM TO THINK SCIENTIFICALLY.

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