

# ampersand&

THE MAGAZINE OF THE UK COLLEGE OF  
ARTS&SCIENCES

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We'd like to hear from you. Send letters and story ideas to, *Ampersand*, at the address on back cover or by fax to (859) 323-1073.

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FRONT COVER PHOTO submitted by Tama Thé

INSIDE FRONT COVER PHOTO by Brian Connors Manke

INSIDE BACK COVER PHOTO provided by UK PR

BACK COVER PHOTO by Monica Udvardy

Fisherfolk off Watamu beach on Kenya's central coast. 2006.



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Dear A&S Alumni & Friends,

As you receive this issue of Ampersand magazine, the spring semester is well underway and my tenure as interim dean is coming to a close. It has been an honor to serve the college in this capacity and help to sustain the commitment to excellence that lies at the heart of Arts & Sciences.

I am pleased to report many achievements over the past year. Our new international studies major now boasts 218 students. Professors Dan Breazeale (Philosophy) and Peter Kalliney (English) both received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a rare and distinguished “double” for the college. Our graduation rates are at an all-time high. We continue to move forward with our strategic initiatives in biological-related sciences, risk-related behaviors and internationalization, to name but a few. This is only a small handful of the countless accolades I could give to the college, to its faculty and staff, and to our students.

This issue focuses on awakening global awareness. You will read about our students exploring other cultures and recounting first-hand stories of life in the Middle East (page 16), our faculty working to save a language on the verge of extinction (page 20), and how A&S is becoming a leader in Asian studies (page 24). The college has worked hard to internationalize its programs and student opportunities; doing so is vital in today’s society and will only become more important in the future.

None of our achievements would be possible without the continued support of our alumni and friends. The college is pleased to announce a \$500,000 pledge by four donors to assist with much-needed science lab renovations in the Chemistry/Physics building, as well as two new scholarships: the William R. & Lucy Salmon Crain Scholarship in Health Sciences for pre-professional majors, and the Scott and Sue Ann Foster and family scholarship in Arts and Sciences.

Other generous contributions include a \$50,000 endowment by Dr. Laura Rankin to facilitate teaching excellence in the college and a \$50,000 gift by Jill Rappis, a member of the A&S Dean’s Advisory Board, which will also support faculty. The college also recently received two bequest gifts: the Martha B. Reynolds estate has created the Martha B. Reynolds Endowed Professorship in Arts and Sciences, and Robert L. Anderson has dedicated more than \$90,000 to the Department of Chemistry.



Lee Thomas

Mark your calendars for the A&S annual Phonathon, April 5 – 30. We’ll be sure to give you a call, as your annual gifts help support scholarships and student research and truly make an impact in our students’ lives. Thank you for continuing to support the College of Arts & Sciences!

All the best,

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# out & about

Uganda Madrid Cultural Anthropology Rome

## STUDENT VIEW



Tama Thé, a physics and mathematics senior, helped run Elizabeth House, an orphanage for mentally and physically disabled children, in Uganda.

## Limitless Ambition

A&S senior’s humanitarian efforts change lives

By Brianna Bodine

AFTER SUFFERING A BOUT OF cerebral malaria as a baby, 13-year-old Selena suffers from blindness, deafness, neurological deterioration and motor deficiencies as a result of calcified muscles; in addition, she has already given birth to a child – by her own father. In Uganda, where staggering poverty turns children into workers at the age of four, Selena would normally be abandoned out of sheer necessity.

“Selena is my little sister’s

name, and they are about the same age,” said Tama Thé (pronounced *Teh*), a physics and mathematics major speaking about the uncanny parallels between his own sister and the girl named Selena he met in Africa. “Kids in Uganda are an economic investment, not family, and they’re essentially your retirement plan,” he explained. “So if your kid has disabilities, it is not only looked upon as a bad investment, but it reflects negatively on both parents.”

Tama traveled to Uganda in the summer of 2008 to help run Elizabeth House, an orphanage for mentally and physically disabled children. He created individualized therapeutic treatment plans for each of the approximately 30 children attending the institution, 15 of whom are permanent residents.

“We did physiotherapy, working on gross and fine motor functions, and developed sensory activities for Selena, who is

completely unconscious of the world around her,” Tama said. “Things like filling a tub full of shaving cream or sand, letting her run her hands through it to feel the different textures.”

Tama trained the staff at the orphanage in treatment programs, developed documentation and formal profiles, created spreadsheets to track each child’s goals and made sample daily protocols, troubleshooting guides and prog-

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ress assessments. The structure and organization he left behind ensures that the work he has done will be sustainable.

In Lugazi, Uganda, Tama also worked at a children’s clinic, mostly cleaning and disinfecting wounds. He treated an epidemic of scalp fungus that swept through the entire population of children. At one point, he removed an infected earring that had healed over and created a massive abscess the size of a tennis ball on a young girl’s ear. Tweezers and a blade from a Swiss army knife, the cotton from a tampon and a bottle of antiseptic were his only tools for the operation.

“She never cried, but there were tears streaming down her face,” he

recalled. “My hands were shaking because of the obvious pain I was putting this child through, but we got this disgusting, black, gooey earring out of her ear after about thirty minutes.”

Tama decided that if he could treat injuries and illness in Africa, he could do it anywhere. Despite having little hands-on clinical experience, he decided to add biology and chemistry to his curriculum, take the MCAT and apply to medical school.

“Once he gets an idea, he puts his full heart and soul into attaining it,” said Dorcas Tomasek, camp director at Camp Boggy Creek, a year-round camp in Florida for children who have chronic or life threatening illnesses, where Tama has served

as a counselor for two summers. “Tama has an aggressive passion that is just contagious.”

As a camp counselor, Tama is charged with 10 campers, ages six through 16, and he plans evening activities for up to 40 campers. “The care and love that he shows for his kids is just amazing,” Tomasek said. “He makes other people around him better because of the high standards he sets.”

Tama is also an A&S Student Ambassador, a math tutor, and the student representative to the Educational Policy Committee for the College of Arts & Sciences at UK. Russell Brown, director of undergraduate studies in math, supervises Tama, and has been impressed by his drive and commitment. “I had

to tell him to quit working when the tutoring center closed, because he wanted to go out in the hallway and just keep at it,” Brown said.

As an undergraduate, Tama worked in a physics lab studying the nuclear spin of subatomic particles like quarks and gluons, and he had planned on obtaining a master’s in radiological medical physics. However, with only nine months and 12 credit hours between him and a double major in physics and mathematics, Tama switched his career path to medicine.

“Research is the luxury of rich countries,” Tama said. “In Switzerland, the Large Hadron Collider, an \$80 billion mechanism, was just built to find the Higgs Boson, but that’s not going

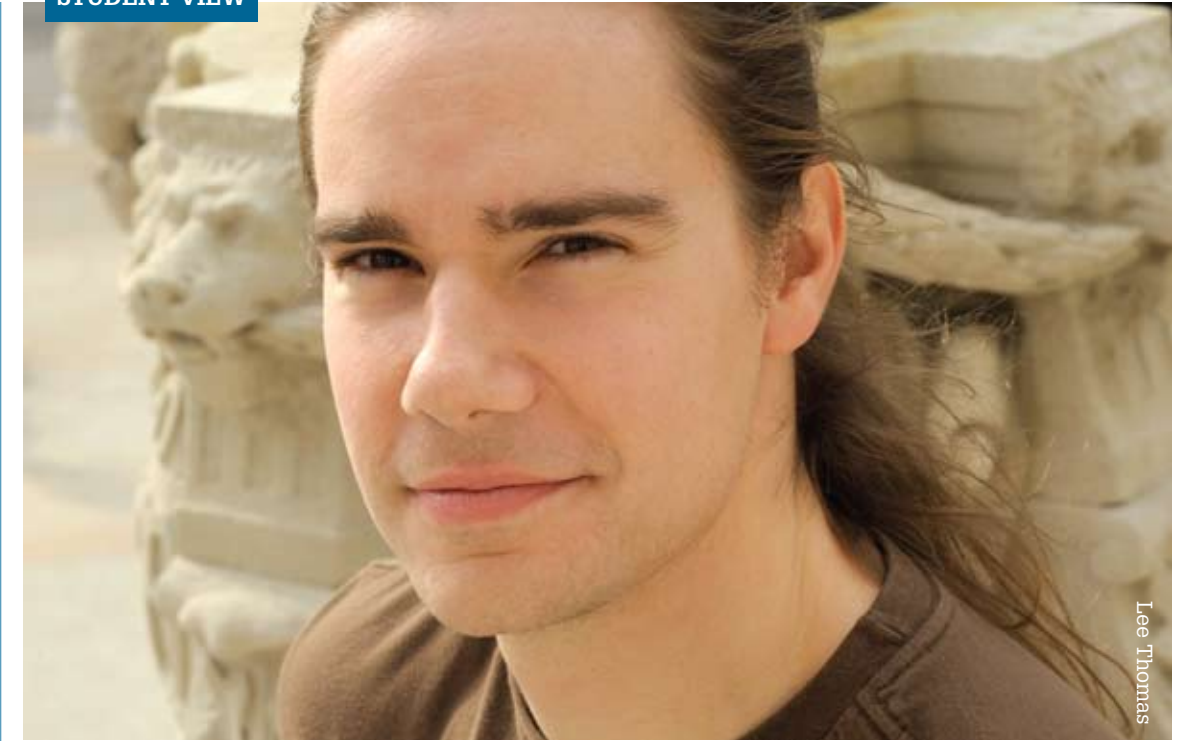


to feed people.”

Tama works with children at Boggy Creek and in Africa to make research less about him and more about humanity. Ever the mathematician, Tama calculates that if every able-bodied person in the U.S. donated five hours, then that would equal approximately 1.2 billion hours of humanitarian work.

“You have to do the whole soul-enriching thing, whether that’s going to the wreckage of Hurricane Ike or building a house in your own community; otherwise, you get so caught up in blackboards and numbers that you have a skewed perspective of reality,” Tama said. “Many communities are in ruin from poverty or war, and there is always a place you can go to change the world.” &

STUDENT VIEW



Lee Thomas

## Inquiring Minds Want to Know

Chaz DeBord, a philosophy graduate student, is focusing his studies on Hegel.

By Saraya Brewer

*“Only one man ever understood me, and he didn’t understand me.”*

– G.W.F. Hegel

WHILE THE ABOVE QUOTATION, attributed to 19th century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel, may — for all we know — be true, it is widely known that Hegel charged himself with the task of trying to understand quite a lot.

Noted for creating a philosophical system through which he attempted to comprehend the world by taking virtually every area of inquiry — nature, science, religion, philosophy, etc. — into account, Hegel was both admired and criticized for his seemingly paradoxical explanations of things.

While University of Kentucky philosophy scholar Chaz DeBord is by no means trying to gain a comprehensive understanding of Hegel the man, he does spend much of his time these days intimately intertwined with Hegel’s work. For his doctoral dissertation, DeBord is studying Hegel’s theory on art, ultimately hoping to determine

whether or not the theory is relevant to the way we look (or ought to look) at art today.

“The bulk of what I’m doing is to look at Hegel’s lectures to see if they are internally consistent — are there contradictions within the system? Does it hold up under its own weight?” DeBord explained.

Hegel’s aesthetic theory, which seeks to answer questions about what art is, what it does and what it says about society, was controversial when it surfaced because it rejected the popular notions that art was an imitation of nature, or that the true purpose of art was to teach something to society.

Instead, Hegel’s theory claims that works of art are actually the “very first manifestation of human religion ... reflections of the sorts of ways the culture sees divinity and comes to terms with what’s not physical about us,” said DeBord.

“We want to say that as a people, there are certain things about us that transcend particular physical conditions — how the weather is today, what we had to eat — and Hegel wants to say that art is like the

mirror to the things that transcend those particular physical things,” DeBord explained. “That’s a weird enough thing to say, but then to go on and say that that mirror is sort of giving birth to concepts ... these are very counterintuitive.”

DeBord, who has taught a number of different philosophy courses at UK and who is currently teaching a course exploring theories of human nature, said that his teaching experience at the University of Kentucky has been interesting in unexpected ways.

“Kentucky is diverse in different ways than other states I have known. You’ve got students from the citified areas like Lexington and Louisville; but then you also have students with more of a Midwestern background from the western part of the state,” he said. “And then you have students from an Appalachian background, which is quite different.”

“One of the interesting parts of being involved with the undergraduate student body is being able to experience a variety of perspectives,” DeBord said. &



# syllabus

ANT 220

## Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

Faced with an increasingly interconnected world, UK students find themselves needing to be better prepared to find work in a cross-cultural or international setting. Monica Udvardy's Introduction to Cultural Anthropology is one of the classes designed to introduce students to anthropological understandings of culture, ethnicity and race by exposing them to methods and theories used in the various subfields of cultural anthropology.

"My goal is to teach these students the basic concepts, methods and tools for understanding multiculturalism, either within the U.S. or internationally," Udvardy said. "I would like to teach students to understand why there is no such thing as 'race,' what ethnicity is and how important it is in the world today, what ethnocentrism is and how anthropology combats ethnocentrism through the concept of cultural relativism."

Aside from class readings and presentations, Udvardy encourages her students to attend various cross-cultural events on UK's campus and in the community. These events not only promote interaction between international and American students, but also allow participants to explore their own cultural influences while learning about the influences of others.

"The method anthropologists use to study cultures is called 'participant observation,' a method of coming to understand another culture by fully immersing ourselves in it – living with members of the group, learning their language, eating their food and drinking their beverages, participating in their rituals, ceremonies and everyday practices," Udvardy said. "I tell students it's kind of like doing education or study abroad and living with a host family."

These cultural anthropology concepts have strong meanings in today's global society.

"More than ever before, businesses and corporations from insurance to cell phone

companies recognize that the methods of cultural anthropology are relevant to their goals as well, and are hiring students with degrees in anthropology because they learn how to interact with people from many cultural backgrounds," Udvardy said.

Cultural understanding is becoming more necessary than ever, Udvardy said. "Consider that we have more immigrants in the U.S. than at any time since the turn of the 20th century. The nation's Latino population could triple by 2050 and become America's largest minority group. The Detroit area may be home to more people of Arab ancestry than any place outside the Middle East," she said. "These facts give you an idea of the value of learning about inter-cultural understanding."

### RECOMMENDED READING

Lassiter, Luke. *Invitation to Anthropology*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

Holloway, Kris. *Monique and the Mango Rains*. Waveland Press, 2006.

Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997.

Holtzman, John and Foner, Nancy. *Nuer Journeys, Nuer Lives: Sudanese Refugees in Minnesota*. Allyn & Bacon New Immigrants Series, 2007.

Bixler, Mark. *The Lost Boys of Sudan: An American Story of the Refugee Experience*. University of Georgia Press, 2006.

Saitot, Tepilit Ole. *The Worlds of a Maasai Warrior: An Autobiography*. University of California Press, 1988

& The Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry and United States' Universities, sponsored by the Spanish Embassy to promote scholarship and research focused on the culture of Spain, awarded three \$3,000 grants to University of Kentucky Hispanic Studies graduate students **BRIAN COLE**, **MICHELLE DUMAIS** and **MATT FEINBERG**.

"This is a rare occurrence because the program is highly competitive and usually attempts to distribute funds more evenly," Assistant Professor Susan Larson said. "This just illustrates the high quality of our students' research projects and our department's commitment to the conduct of worthwhile scholarship."

The grant recipients will travel to Madrid, using the funds to travel to neighborhoods and research in libraries to which they would otherwise never access. "The program gets our students abroad and allows them access to archives that they will need to write the absolute best dissertations, which we hope will become their first books once they can get a tenure-track job," Larson said. "This experience will be a real boost for their future research."

Cole will investigate Spanish avant-garde novels of the 1920s and 30s, specifically how visual arts such as painting and film play an important role in those novels. Dumais will examine the narrative representation in Spanish tourism novels during the 1960s and 70s, when Spain opened its doors to the outside world after decades of maintaining a closed economy and culture. Feinberg will focus on the neighborhood of Lavapies, incorporating geography and literary studies in an interdisciplinary approach to study the intersection of theater, urban development and gentrification. The students' advisors who assisted in the grant application were Susan Larson, assistant professor of Hispanic Studies, and Ana Rueda, chair of the Hispanic Studies Department.

– Brianna Bodine

### STUDENT VIEW



International Studies senior Patrick Sgueglia visited family in Calabria, Italy, during one of his many trips to Italy.

## Wherever he may Rome

Student embraces Italian heritage

By Laura Sutton

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES SENIOR Patrick Sgueglia (pronounced Skwail-ya) has a way with Italian words. He can take a common one like spaghetti and pronounce it in such a way that the listener's mind is immediately transported to a gondola or an outdoor café near the Pantheon.

Sgueglia's talent for speaking Italian is not surprising – his father's side of the family is from Caserta, a provincial capital near Naples in southern Italy, and he claims dual citizenship. Growing up, he visited his Italian cousins frequently, thanks to his father, James (Biology, '80), an airline pilot. But he also has Kentucky roots. His mother, Michelle (HES, '80), is a Lexington native, and his parents met as students at UK.

Sgueglia arrived at UK in 2005 as a Legacy Scholar with an interest in international affairs and busi-

ness. Although he'd never studied Italian, it became part of his course of study the moment professor Gloria Allaire, head of the Italian Program, discovered his perfect pronunciation.

For Sgueglia, studying Italian provided a way to integrate his love of travel, his interest in business and his passion for politics and history. It opened the door to a summer internship with PreGel, an Italian-owned company in Charlotte, N.C., that imports gelato and raw pastry ingredients. At UK, he got a taste of academic administration when he served as the only student representative on an Arts and Sciences committee charged with exploring and ultimately creating the new International Studies major.

Sgueglia spent his junior year attending John Cabot University in Rome. There, he took a full load of classes, studying European Union

politics, Italian history and Russian government, and shared an apartment with Giuseppe, a friend of one of his Italian cousins. Living as the Romans do – shopping for dinner in the market, hanging out with Giuseppe and his friends, visiting Naples on the weekends, attending soccer games – enabled Sgueglia to truly master the language and watch first-hand as events he had been studying played out.

While he was in Rome, the Italian government collapsed and new elections were held, he helped a friend's father campaign for a seat in the Italian Parliament (he marvels at the 30 different political parties in Italy) and lived the near-epic soccer, or calcio, rivalry between the Naples and Rome teams. He knew he had really mastered the culture when he could translate Italian political graffiti. "It's so neat to see how all this stuff ties in," he says.

Sgueglia is fascinated by Italy's regional character, a remnant of a time when the country was comprised of around 10 separate kingdoms, each with a unique dialect. "I can hear someone speak and I can immediately tell where they are from," he says with pride.

Now back at UK for his final year, Sgueglia is taking electives, including an independent study course on post-unification Italy, planning for a visit from Giuseppe, staying in touch with Roman friends via Skype and thinking about his future. Like many gifted students, he is anxious to begin a career, but will likely continue his studies through the TransAtlantic Masters Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which appeals to his practical side as well as his desire for continued study abroad. &



## STUDENT VIEW



Lee Thomas

## Classic Films to Modern Thought

English graduate student Colleen Glenn specializes in film studies.

By Saraya Brewer

LEAVE IT TO A GRADUATE student in film studies to hammer out aspects of horror from one of America's most beloved family classics.

"It's film noir," said Colleen Glenn about "It's a Wonderful Life." "It's an extremely dark film."

"It's a Wonderful Life" is just one of the handful of Jimmy Stewart films that Glenn, a University of Kentucky English Ph.D. candidate with a specialty in film studies, has watched (and re-watched, analyzed, paused, rewound, and watched again) for her dissertation. Stewart and other great actors of the mid 20th century — including Paul Newman, Frank Sinatra, and John Wayne — will each get their own chapter.

"I grew up watching old classic movies on PBS with my family, so I really have my parents to thank for my original interest in film," Glenn said. "I grew up knowing

Bing Crosby and Bob Hope and Grace Kelly. I think I was fortunate to have been exposed to those kinds of classic films."

It was the chronically hysterical characters played by Stewart that initially piqued Glenn's interest in the subject that would come to be the topic of her dissertation: the crisis in masculinity in post-World War II films.

"I noticed that he's always so tortured, suicidal, deviant in some kind of way, distressed, obsessive," she said of Stewart. "As I was sort of investigating what might explain this, I made the connection with post-traumatic stress syndrome. World War II is a war in which you have 16 million veterans coming home at one time. This massive influx of returning veterans, mostly men, caused a tremendous amount of anxiety within the culture. While there was joy with the homecoming, there was also a lot of fear and con-

cern about how the veteran would readjust to peacetime America."

Post-traumatic stress syndrome was unheard of during and immediately following World War II — at the time, it was called combat fatigue, though it was rarely spoken of at all, as Glenn points out.

"There's a lot of silence about war trauma," she said. "There is even now, even though we talk much more about it since Vietnam than we ever did before. But part of what I am arguing is that when you have an unpopular war, it opens the door for speaking more frankly with the trauma associated with that war."

This historic silence created somewhat of an obstacle in finding primary sources from the period about war trauma, forcing Glenn to get a bit creative in her research.

"Ladies Home Journal" and "Science Newsletter" have provided some of the most important

sources," she said. Glenn has also looked to material published in fan magazines as sources that might help her argument that "each one of these stars negotiates the malady of PTSD in some way."

Films Glenn has looked at for her research include "From Here to Eternity," "Vertigo," "Rear Window," "The Manchurian Candidate," and "The Man with the Golden Arm."

"For the most part, I'm not looking at war movies," Glenn said. "I'm interested in how the trauma of the war gets displaced in these films that claim not to be about the war at all."

Originally from Ohio (where she got her bachelor's degree in English at Ohio University), Glenn cites the relationship she was able to develop with her professors at UK as a primary factor in her decision to continue on with her doctorate after getting her master's at UK. She cites Michael Trask and Pearl James, two of her committee members, as careful readers whose advice has helped shape her methodological approach to her project, and courses she took with Armando Prats with exposing her to the films that would trigger her interest in masculinity in film. Glenn also cites Alan Nadel as a "terrific mentor" who guided her to think "beyond the term paper" well before she was at the dissertation stage and is helping prepare her for the job market.

Glenn has also enjoyed her professional experience at the University of Kentucky, where she has been grateful for the opportunity to teach a number of film and literature courses. "It's wonderful being able to teach something you're passionate about," she said.

Another way that Glenn has optimized her time in Lexington is by participating in the Bluegrass Film Society. The society recently initiated a once-a-month screening of cult films at Al's Bar, a favorite north Lexington hangout.

"We felt that cult films and B movies would be the right kind of genres for a bar setting," Glenn said. "We want people to feel like they can talk. Heckling is encouraged." &

# news & endeavors

Distinguished Professor Project Graduate

## TEACHING



Tim Collins

Francie Chassen-Lopez, chair of the History Department, is the College of Arts & Sciences Distinguished Professor 2008-09.

## Francie Chassen-Lopez

Department of History, Arts & Sciences Distinguished Professor 2008-09

By Stephanie Lang

FRANCIE CHASSEN-LOPEZ, AN internationally respected historian of postcolonial Mexico and Latin America, has spent the last two decades using her experiences to teach and inspire students at the University of Kentucky. Her talents extend past her impressive teach-

ing and research resume to include community activism. Not only is she involved with various interdisciplinary programs at UK, she is also a co-founder of the Kentucky Coalition on Comprehensive Immigration Reform and is currently working to create a founda-

tion for Latin American and Latino arts and culture in Lexington.

Sometimes it is a book, a conversation, or travel that profoundly influences the future path of an individual. For Francie Chassen-Lopez, it was the inspiring lectures of David Schalk. Schalk taught at

Vassar College where Chassen-Lopez was an undergraduate. "I walked into the Intellectual History of Europe class and I was hooked," Chassen-Lopez said. "And it was his first year of teaching." Chassen-Lopez attributes Schalk's class as one of the major reasons why she

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Chassen-Lopez specializes in Mexican and Latin American history and also has a vast collection of Mexican art and cultural items.

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became so interested in the field of history. “Dr. Schalk encouraged his students, gave us confidence to think and explore history, and let us know our opinions mattered. I still send him papers I’ve written and as a teacher myself, I can see why he loves to be in contact with his students. It makes him feel like he had a small role in my accomplishments.”

Chassen-Lopez received her doctorate from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and taught for 10 years at National University (in Mexico City) and later at the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico City where she became an associate professor with tenure. Since 1988, Chassen-Lopez has taught in the History Department at UK and was recently appointed the first female chair of the department. Her enthusiasm for teaching earned her the 2000 “Teacher Who Makes a Difference” award from UK’s College of Education. As a result of her research, teaching, and service, both within the university and the local community, Francie Chassen-Lopez was named Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor 2008-09.

**&: As a historian of Mexico and Latin America, how has your research grown and changed over the past 20 years to reflect your international interests?**

By definition, research makes us grow and constantly explore new ideas and new fields. My interests are, by definition, international, given that I work on Latin America, but I have explored new areas. When I arrived at UK, I was enthusiastically welcomed by the Women’s Studies program. My conversations with colleagues there deeply influenced me and I have moved more and more in the direction of gender history. I have always been interested in nation building and state formation, but I have focused more on the role of women and indigenous peoples and their participation in these processes because they seem to have been below the radar of many historians. I only like to work on topics that have not been studied previously.



Tim Collins

**&: You have been involved in the Latin American Studies, Gender and Women’s Studies, Appalachian Studies, and Social Theory programs at UK. What are some of the benefits of an interdisciplinary approach to history?**

I can’t imagine history that is not interdisciplinary. My work is constantly renewed and challenged not only by readings in anthropology, social theory, gender studies, political theory, geography, Latino studies, Appalachian studies, etc., but also by conversations with my colleagues in these fields and of course in Latin American Studies. Historians tend to be interdisciplinary whether they admit it or not. We constantly borrow concepts developed by other disciplines and employ them in our own work—for example, the analysis of class developed by sociologists or the analysis of space by geographers. I also strive to demonstrate in class how the best research is necessarily interdisciplinary, so that students see how important it is for them to make connections between different classes.

**&: With an international approach to history, do you get to travel often to Mexico and Latin America? Where are some of your favorite places to visit and how has this influenced your work?**

I would not call my approach to history international but transnational, a history that crosses all sorts of borders. International is often understood to imply that relations are equal among nations, but as Latin Americanists, we are painfully aware of how unequal and exploitive our relations with other nations have been. We are very attuned to inequities both internally and in the international arena of nations.

As to travel, no student gets out of my class without learning about the stark and majestic beauty of Oaxaca, a state in southeastern Mexico, which has become my “patria chica,” my “small homeland.” I had married an Oaxacan and we visited family frequently, which encouraged me to study the history of the state. In 1985, when five Oaxacans and I published a book on the Mexican Revolution in Oaxaca, it was presented by the vice governor of the state at a celebration. He looked straight at me and announced to the audience that the book had been written by six Oaxacan social scientists. So ever since then, people consider me an honorary “Oaxaqueña.” Of course, Mexico City, where I lived for almost 18 years and where I received my master’s and doctorate degrees from the National University

of Mexico, is also home. It is an amazing city with a fantastic cultural life and great restaurants. Other cities I love are Barcelona, Bahia in Brazil, and Cuzco, Peru. Having been able to travel throughout Latin America has enriched my teaching considerably.

**&: As the first woman to chair the History Department, what are some of your goals for the program?**

I would like to promote interdisciplinarity—for example, working more closely with the interdisciplinary programs mentioned previously. At the same time, last semester we created four new thematic fields of concentration in the graduate program: women’s and gender history; culture, ideas and society; the making and unmaking of empire; and religions and history. This initiative also speaks to another goal of mine: to stimulate a greater intellectual life in the department by encouraging the faculty to engage in more conversations across geographical and chronological borders. We have an excellent faculty in the History Department and I believe we are highly underrated.

I am not only the first woman to chair the department, but at present I am the only female full professor in the department. So understandably, one of my goals is to facilitate the promotion of my female colleagues in addition to the male associate professors who are also close to promotion.

I am not only the first woman, but also I am the first non-Western historian to chair the department. One of my goals, is to expand the number of faculty and classes offered in non-Western history and the history of minorities in the U.S. The number one goal is that we absolutely must hire an Africanist, since we lost ours last year.

**&: What advice would you give to students interested in your field of study?**

The study of Latin America is a fantastically rich field—possibilities are never ending. Students must speak a foreign language; it is the gateway to understanding other cultures. And they must travel. It is very hard to teach or write about a place to which you have never traveled.

**&: Your service record goes well beyond teaching, research and writing. How are you involved in the local community?**

Latin Americanists tend to be activists, given the region’s long history of exploitation and po-

litical domination by other nations. I personally owe so much to Mexico; living there changed my life forever, having the incredible opportunities offered by so rich a culture and history. I am forever indebted to the extraordinary education I received at the National University, my professors and colleagues there, and at the Metropolitan University in Mexico City and the University of Oaxaca. How could I not work with the Latino community here? Especially when I see the injustices visited upon people who are trying to make a living and take care of their families. I was an immigrant in Mexico for 18 years. Thus, I was a founder of the Kentucky Coalition on Comprehensive Immigration Reform. We organized the biggest public rally since the civil rights era. It took place on April 10, 2006. I have also on occasion spoken to groups outside the university on the history of Latinos in the U.S. Unfortunately, since I have become chair of the History Department I have not been able to carry on this work.

**&: What do you find most inspiring and rewarding about your work?**

I have lived through a severe economic depression in Mexico in the 1980s and watched the buying power of my salary as a university professor reduced by 75 percent, to the point where my salary equaled my rent. I didn’t have a single peso left to buy even a tortilla for my daughter. People here complain all the time, but they have no idea how hard it is for academics in other parts of the world. And here I get to do the research that fascinates me and I get to teach young people with inquiring minds. I truly feel very privileged to have a job that I love with a secure income.

On the spot, I can think of two rewards. One is when I am sitting at the computer finally writing; when research and analysis come together in the writing process, I find that moment very exhilarating. The other comes sometimes with responses to an extra credit question I add on the final exam in my undergraduate courses: “At the beginning of the semester, we defined stereotyping with respect to Latinos and Latin Americans. Can you describe one stereotype (and we all have stereotypes) which you held at the beginning of the semester that has been modified or changed in some way over the course of the semester?” When I receive answers that I know are sincere and [realize] that students have actually learned to recognize and perhaps overcome their own stereotypes, that is my greatest reward. &



## STUDENT VIEW

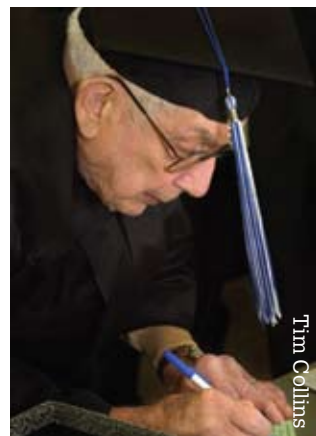


Howard Dickey received his diploma last May, 60 years after first enrolling at UK.

# Project Graduate

Bringing students back to UK

By Allison L. Elliott



Enrolling in Project Graduate "just makes you feel good."

HOWARD DICKEY ENTERED THE UNIVERSITY of Kentucky in 1948 as an undergraduate studying political science. Sixty years later — after fighting in the Korean War, building a successful career and raising two daughters and two sons with his wife — he walked across the stage in cap and gown. Dickey received his bachelor's degree in 2008 as a participant in Project Graduate, an initiative designed to encourage those who left UK with at least 90 credit hours to return and finish their degrees.

Back in 1950, Dickey had been admitted into the UK College of Law with two years of undergraduate study in the College of Arts & Sciences under his belt (at that time students could be admitted to professional school before completing undergraduate degrees). Dickey left UK to enlist in the military and serve in Korea, where he received an injury that still

makes it difficult for him to walk. Upon his return to the U.S., he set about living his life, marrying Carol Dickey, who holds a master's in nursing from UK, and raising a family. One of his daughters, Elizabeth Dickey, graduated from UK with a graduate degree in material science and engineering and now teaches at Penn State. With both of his daughters and his wife recipients of advanced degrees, Dickey said he and his sons took some good-natured ribbing from his family, who teased "Only girls must get degrees in this family."

Ready to rectify his status as the only non-degree holder in his family, when Dickey heard about Project Graduate, he called for information. He said he was ready to take on whatever coursework he might need to complete.

Dickey received the surprise of his life when Sean Cooper, assistant director of A&S Advising,

called to inform him that he had enough credits on his transcript to qualify for a bachelor's degree in political science. Taking 18 to 20 hours a semester, Dickey had completed all the requirements for his degree between 1948 and 1950.

"I said fine, I'm ready! So in May I graduated." Dickey put aside the walker he uses because of his old injuries, and walked across the stage at the May 2008 A&S commencement ceremony. He was greeted by a standing ovation.

"It was quite a thrill," he said.

After a busy career -- during the course of which he trained saddle horses, served in the military, worked in the state prison system, served as a state chair of the Kentucky Young Republicans, worked with the campaigns of U.S. Sens. John Sherman Cooper and Thruston Ballard Morton and even ran for office himself -- Dickey said he is ready to just enjoy the satisfaction of having his degree.

## Project Graduate Program

Project Graduate is part of an effort by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education to increase the number of college degree holders in the Commonwealth. The ultimate goal of CPE is to double the number of Kentuckians with bachelor's degrees. In order to re-enroll in college programs, students must have at least 90 hours of credit in good standing, not have earned a bachelor's degree from any institution and be over the age of 25. To date, UK has identified 926 past students eligible to participate in Project Graduate. As of fall semester 2008, 284 past UK students were at some stage of participation in the program. More than 150 of the students have either graduated from, enrolled in or hope to enroll in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Since A&S is the largest college at UK, it comes as no surprise that more than half of Project Graduate students are pursuing programs in the college. The surprises have come as A&S advising staff members have examined old transcripts to determine how close past students are to degrees. Cooper notes that old transcripts often include classes that are no longer offered at UK. Some students have credits toward programs that no longer exist, such as zoology.

Cooper, who keeps UK course catalogs going back to 1900 on a bookshelf in his office, said that students' records are often complicated by changes of major and changing university requirements. A student might have 90 credit hours, but spread across various fields. Or their general education classes might not match 2008 requirements.

"We try to go with whatever is most practical, but hold to the integrity of the degree," Cooper

said of advising Project Graduate students. In the case of Howard Dickey, Cooper said that it was simply a matter of auditing his transcript and determining that he had fulfilled all requirements for a bachelor's degree according to the degree program set out for him in 1948.

And what was it like for Cooper to notify Dickey that he was ready to graduate after 60 years?

"It was just one of those feel-good moments," said Cooper.

The integrity of the educational experience is important to Project Graduate participants, many of whom enroll either for personal satisfaction or to further their careers. Cecile McKinney and Jerry Price in the UK Office of Adult Student Services emphasize to potential Project Graduate participants that they will be earning their degree through hard work. "We do not give degrees away at UK," said Price. "When you get a degree here, you earned it."

Returning to school is a big commitment, and students often need support. As the first point of contact for students returning to UK through Project Graduate, Adult Student Services works with Advising to determine the eligibility of participants as well as how much coursework they need. The goal of the office is to ease the transition back into the classroom for adult students through support inside and outside the classroom.

"The whole family has to sacrifice when an adult student returns to school," notes McKinney. These sacrifices may come in the form of saving money for tuition, pulling together to make arrangements for child or elder-care and giving up quality time with family. To ease the financial burden, Project Graduate has a dedicated financial aid officer at UK. Adult Student Services also offers scholarships, and provides information about child care, counseling and academic support resources. Many students who have been out of the classroom for a long time find that they need to brush up on skills -- particularly in math and foreign language -- so Adult Student Services helps them find tutoring. They also provide a listening ear to adult students who are struggling to find balance in their busy lives.

When asked to describe the typical Project Graduate student, McKinney and Price concur that there is no single mold for returning students. They do have some stories, though, of a laid-off computer technician who found that he needed a degree to even qualify for a job interview, and of a businesswoman who feared her lack of a degree made her vulnerable as her company faced downsizing. They believe that the recent downturn in the economy encourages adults to think about returning to school. Price notes that after job losses in the

1990s, "People were left without jobs after 30 years and showed up on our doorstep." Between recruitment efforts for Project Graduate and the tanking economy, they anticipate another uptick in adult enrollment. Returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan may provide another group ripe for recruitment to adult education.

"Adult students usually do better than traditional students," said McKinney.

Adds Price: "When they come back, they know that if they persist they will get an answer to their questions. Professors like that. As an adult, you're paying for it so you have to get something out of it."

So far, Project Graduate has yielded 24 new graduates from UK. In the College of Arts & Sciences, three people graduated in May 2008, and another three will be ready to graduate after filing paperwork. McKinney and Price say they would love to see all 926 eligible students earn their diplomas.

Project Graduate was launched in October 2007, and has been well-received across Kentucky. The program offers returning students an on-ramp to get back into college, including a streamlined application process, access to priority registration and cooperation among Kentucky institutions to ensure proper transfer of credit hours.

Anyone considering enrolling in Project Graduate should perhaps consider the words of Howard Dickey, who said, "I certainly would encourage others. It just makes you feel good." &

## LEARN MORE

*Ampersand* readers interested in more information about Project Graduate should contact Cecile McKinney at (859) 257-3802, toll-free (866) 900-4685 or by e-mail at [cmckinn@email.uky.edu](mailto:cmckinn@email.uky.edu).

For more information:

**Council on Postsecondary Education  
Double the Numbers Program**

<http://cpe.ky.gov/doublethenumbers/>

**UK Adult Student Services**

[www.uky.edu/AdultSS/graduate.htm](http://www.uky.edu/AdultSS/graduate.htm)

**UK College of Arts & Sciences Advising**

[www.as.uky.edu/advising/](http://www.as.uky.edu/advising/)

**College of  
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## ***A&S Travels the Globe***

*From experiencing the Middle East and discovering similarities to Kentucky's culture to saving a language on the verge of extinction, the students and faculty in the College of Arts & Sciences are awakening global awareness. In the next few pages, you will journey to Salalah and attend a mahrajan, travel to the Pamir Mountains in eastern Tajikistan to "hear" a language in need of rescue, and learn how A&S is building momentum in its Asian studies program. The students and faculty of Arts & Sciences are sharing similarities and exploring differences – join them.*





# Similar Southern Hospitality

A first person account of life in the Middle East

By Jordann Sullivan



*Jordann Sullivan, a political science and Middle East Studies senior, is living in the Middle East as she works on developing her Arabic language skills. She received the Critical Language Scholarship offered by the State Department and the National Security Education Program Scholarship offered by the Department of Defense to fund her travels.*

FAR LEFT:  
The Empty Quarter  
in Northern Oman.

Usually, when I tell people that I live and study in the Middle East, I am met with reactions like “Are you crazy?” Given our nation’s state of affairs, I can certainly understand their surprise when I tell them about my travels. However, I can’t help but want to change their opinion about this part of the world.

After the tragedy of 9/11, the world’s attention was turned to the Middle East, and not in a good way. The price of oil skyrocketed, Iraq was invaded, countless people were killed. All of these factors contributed to the fear and anger that most Americans feel when thinking of the Middle East.

This is exactly the reason I wanted to pursue a degree in Middle East Studies at the University of Kentucky. I knew that the Arab world wasn’t the terrifying monolith the media had made it out to be. There was something more.

After completing a semester abroad in Egypt, I was lucky enough to travel to Oman last summer on the State Department’s Critical Language Scholarship. To be honest, I had no idea what I was getting into. Most people I knew couldn’t even locate Oman on a map; I certainly couldn’t before I started studying the Middle East.

I arrived in Oman’s capital of Muscat at midnight. As soon as I stepped off the plane, a wave of heat overcame me. I immediately broke into a sweat. I thought to myself, this heat can’t be real, it must be from the jet engines. It has to be. Unfortunately for me, the heat wasn’t emanating from the jet engines. It was around 100 degrees at midnight in Muscat. I didn’t even want to think about what the heat would be like once the sun came up.

Luckily, I only stayed in Muscat for a few days. Soon after my arrival, our group of Americans was transported to the

[continued on page 18](#)



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small coastal town of Salalah. Due to the path of the monsoon rains from India, Salalah acts as a unique biosphere within Oman. While the rest of the country suffers oppressive 130 degree summer heat, Salalah enjoys temperatures in the high 80s, and plenty of misty rain. Looking around at the rolling green hills and feeling the light rain on our faces, it was hard to believe we were still in Arabia. In fact, it looked a lot like the Appalachians in eastern Kentucky.

After a few weeks, I realized that there was a lot more about Oman that reminded me of Kentucky. It surprised me, actually, how much a formerly isolated Middle Eastern nation resembled my home state (and the American South in general). Let me explain.

Many know Southerners are famed for their incredible hospitality. I've often had friends from above the Mason Dixon line drop in to visit Kentucky, and of course the first thing they mention is how nice everyone is. Where I grew up, you can't go to the grocery store without striking up a conversation with the lady at the cash register. Strangers smile and wave from their cars as they let you cross the street. I found the same sense of warm hospitality in Oman. It was nearly impossible to leave our rooms without a kind stranger offering us a cup of tea, a sandwich or directions. Most people just wanted to talk, and to find out why we were visiting their sleepy little town. I couldn't hide my astonishment when I took a cab from one end of town to the other and the elderly driver refused to take my money, telling me that I was a guest in his town and in his country.

Every summer, Salalah hosts a mahrajan, or festival, celebrating the coming of the monsoon rains. All the students in my program were told about the festival when we arrived in Salalah, and our excitement escalated the more we heard our Omani counterparts talk about it. I walked into the mahrajan expecting an exotic and distinctly Omani experience. Much to my surprise, the mahrajan turned out to be exactly like a large "county fair" in the United States. The rickety rides, vendors in stalls selling snack

food and soft drinks and live music were all there. The only difference was that the crowd wore abayyas and dishdashas (traditional dress for Omani men and women) instead of cut-off jeans and t-shirts, and ate falafel instead of funnel cakes.

Southerners, and Kentuckians especially, pride themselves on their sweet tea. A pitcher of sweet tea on a Kentuckian's table is just about the most common sight you can see on a summer afternoon. Well, the same goes for Omanis. They love their tea, and they love it sweet and often. My very southern mother would be quite impressed, I believe. Omanis are also incredible cooks. If you enter an Omani home, you're going to eat. Even if you're not hungry, you'll eat. It reminds me of when my family has get-togethers, and all of the women who prepared the meal don't allow anyone to abstain from seconds, much less forego the meal entirely. I think this happens because both of us, Omanis and Southerners, develop a sense of community and foster a feeling of welcome through sharing food.

Besides our penchant for sweet tea and home cooking, Oman and Kentucky share other similarities. A strong commitment to religion and family values is deeply rooted in both cultures. In my opinion, a church-going Kentuckian and a devout Omani Muslim, despite their obvious religious difference, would actually share many of the same moral principles. And of course, I would be lying if I said that I didn't feel a little camaraderie with the people of Salalah, who told us how Omanis from the more developed city of Muscat teased them about their accents.

I never thought that I would feel at home in a country halfway across the world. I think a lot of Kentuckians would be surprised at how alike our cultures truly are. It's easy to look at the styles of dress, the religion, and the language, and dismiss the Middle East as completely foreign. But when given a second glance, the culture of these countries is actually not so distant from our own. With that, I will bid you *as-salaam wa alaikum*, or "peace, y'all." &



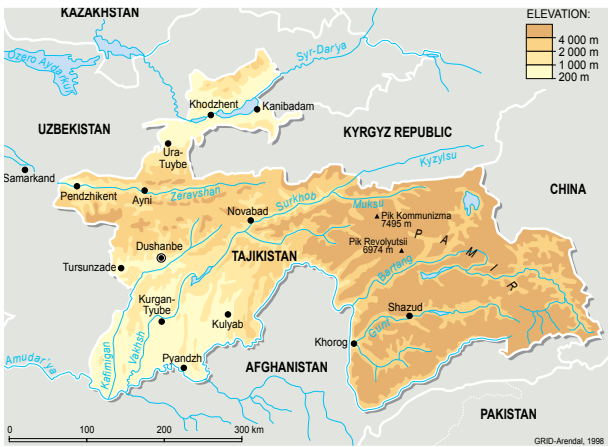
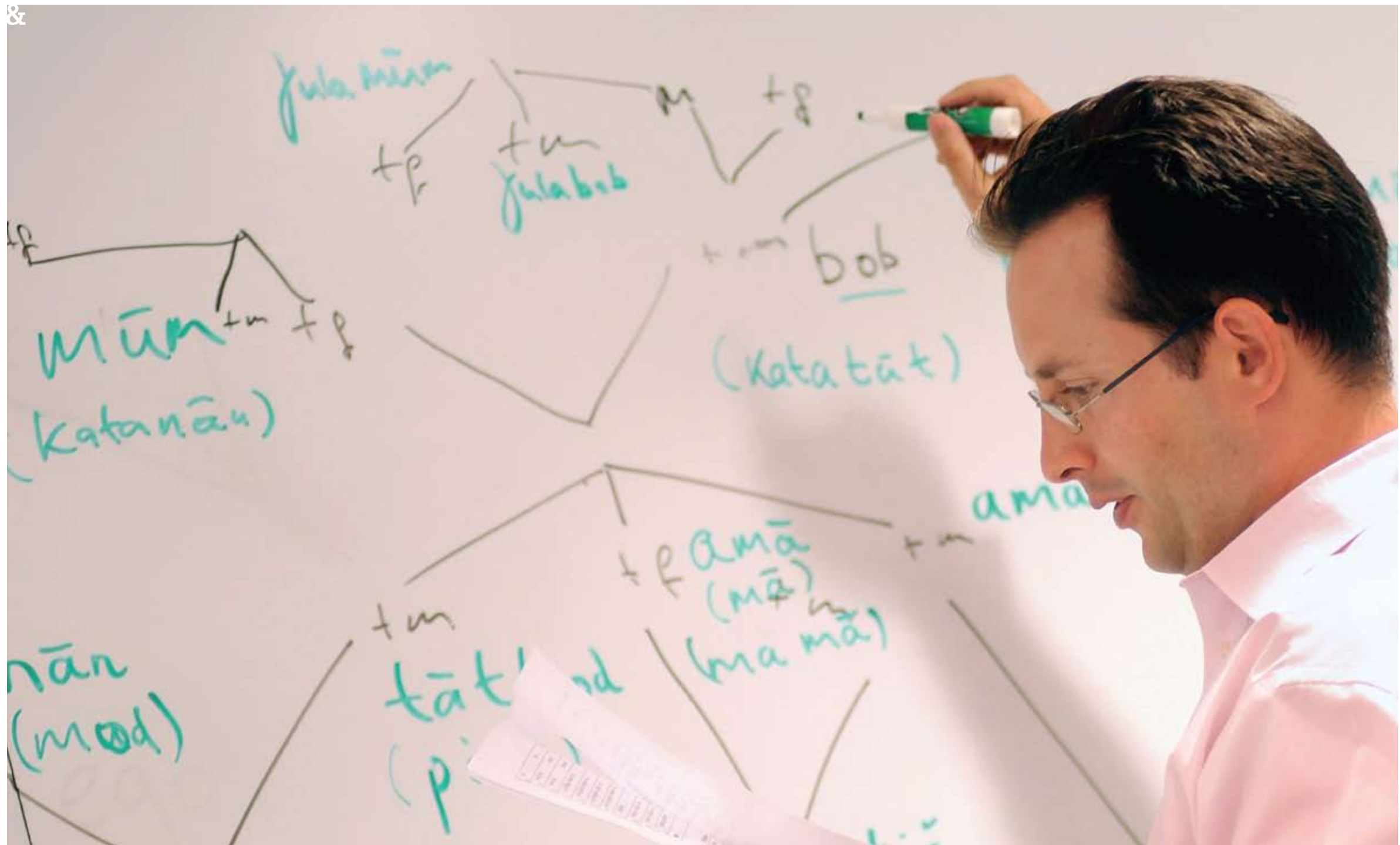
THIS PAGE:  
Green hills in the  
Dhogar Region  
of Oman.

OPPOSITE  
PAGE, TOP:  
Street sign in  
downtown Salalah.

MIDDLE:  
Men at a traditional  
Omani wedding.

BOTTOM:  
Jordann Sullivan, a  
political science and  
Middle East Studies  
senior, feeds a camel.





OPPOSITE PAGE: Linguistics professor Andrew Hippisley worked to diagram family relationships in the Shughni language.

LEFT: Map of Tajikistan – area where Shughni is spoken.

IN THE PAMIR MOUNTAINS OF EASTERN TAJIKISTAN, a language is spoken – not written, not taught in schools – simply spoken. With merely 60,000 speakers in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, the Shughni language is at risk of extinction. Linguistics professors in the College of Arts & Sciences are working to make sure that doesn't happen.

“Language is part of our culture and if you lose the language, you lose part of yourself. You lose your identity,” said Gulnoro Mirzovafoeva, who teaches English grammar, lexicology and discourse analysis at Khorog State University in Tajikistan.

Mirzovafoeva and two other Shughni scholars traveled to Lexington to collaborate with UK professors in hopes of creating a comprehensive grammar of the Shughni language.

“Shughni is passed down orally in families,” said Greg Stump, director of UK’s linguistics program and organizer of the summer workshop. “It has been very intriguing to work with a language that is only spoken.”

Tajik is the official language of Tajikistan and most of the population also speaks Russian. “I mix Russian words with Shughni and realize it more now that I’ve been here. If we continue like this, the language will be lost,” Mirzovafoeva said.

Shughni is an Indo-European language; that is, it is presumed to descend from the prehistoric Proto-Indo-European language that historical linguists have hypothesized to account for the observable similarities in vocabulary between various languages of Europe and Asia, Stump said. “There are words in Shughni that are very close to English.”

Throughout the month of July, the Shughni scholars met with faculty and students in UK’s Linguistics Program to begin the process of analyzing the language.

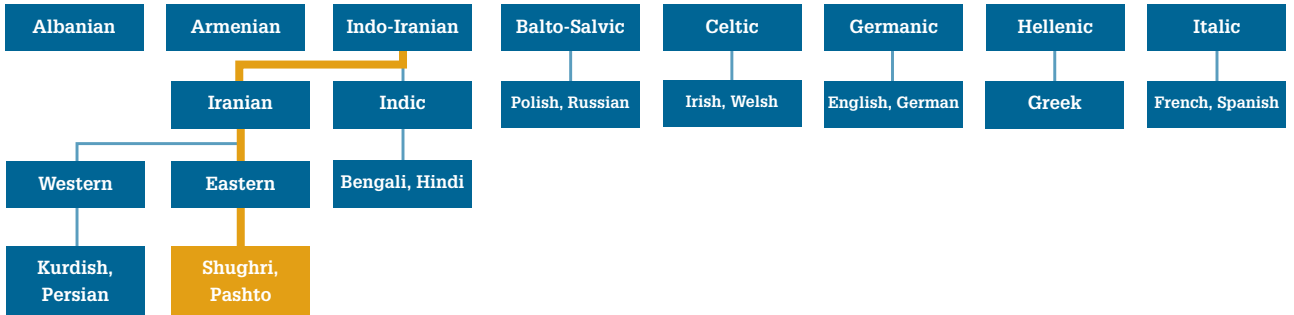
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# Writing it Down

A&S linguists are working to save a language on the verge of extinction.

By Jennifer T. Allen  
Photos by Tim Collins

## Indo-European Language Family







FAR LEFT: Linguistics professor Greg Stump works with UK professors and students and professors from Khorog State University in Tajikistan as they analyze the Shughni language.

THIS PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Scholars from Khorog State University traveled to Lexington to begin the process of analyzing the Shughni language.

Dustin Zerrer, a linguistics senior, worked to record and transcribe conversations between the scholars.

The group of scholars and students spent summer 2008 in UK's W.T. Young Library.

**LEARN MORE**

For more information, visit <http://web.as.uky.edu/linguistics/Shughni/index.htm>

**SIMILAR WORDS**

Shughni	English
brūč	birch
burs	brush
mīō 'waist'	middle
naw	now
naʒ	nose
nūm	name
wiftow 'knit'	weave
wūrj	wolf
žow	cow
ōēndūn	tooth

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"I didn't know this project would be as exciting as it is," Mirzovafoeva said. "I always just spoke the Shughni language and never thought much about it. Coming here, I realized things such as we have a perfect tense and it has caused me to analyze the language more."

The goal of the summer workshop is to begin creating a written grammar of the Shughni language to help with its documentation and preservation. "We would ultimately like to see the Shughni language included as part of the education of children in the mountain areas of eastern Tajikistan. It is an extremely rich language and we want to see it preserved," Stump said.

Using the international phonetic alphabet, the scholars have begun to record the language in a way that linguists around the world can understand, said Jeanmarie Rouhier-Willoughby, a professor of Russian in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

The group of scholars worked through aspects of Shughni grammar in carefully planned meetings, using video and audio

recordings and transcription in order to create a permanent digital record of their investigations. "But often, the real insights came when we stumbled upon something," said Andrew Hippisley, a linguistics professor in the English Department.

James Mastin, an undergraduate linguistics major, volunteered to help record and transcribe the meetings. "I have not seen linguistics in action and this was an excellent opportunity to see what linguistics is and what it can do," he said. "It's like a big Rubik's cube and it's amazing to get to see the pieces start to come together."

The team is currently working on articles about their analysis of Shughni and have begun presenting their work at professional conferences. They expect to have the grammar book completed within five to 10 years, Stump said. In order to continue their collaboration with the Shughni scholars, UK's linguists are now making plans for a research visit to Khorog State University.

"Linguistics lives and dies by collaboration," Hippisley

said. "If people don't work in teams and collaborate, this sort of research wouldn't be possible."

UK's linguists realize how important documenting the Shughni language has become and how it extends beyond just the language.

"All languages are extremely interesting. Each one gives us new and precious insights into properties of the human mind. And each one provides a very clear picture of its speakers' culture," Stump said. "We are not just studying the Shughni language, but also the Shughni people and Shughni culture in a part of the world that has long been quite inaccessible."

As Mirzovafoeva leaves UK and heads back to Tajikistan, she knows the team at UK has begun the important process of helping preserve a language on the path to extinction. "If Shughni is a small detail in a larger construction, if it is lost, the whole tower will collapse," she said. "If Shughni is lost, all of the world's languages will lose something."

And that is exactly what UK's professors are working to prevent. &



# Building Momentum

A&S is solidifying itself as a leader of Asian studies.

By Stephanie Lang

ASIA IS RICHLY ADORNED WITH different peoples, religions, cultures, foods, languages and histories, all forming a colorful and beautifully interconnected fabric. Visual representations of this fabric are readily available in the breathtaking sandy beaches and inspiring Buddhist temples dotting the island of Bali, Indonesia, or in intricately detailed Japanese kimonos, each showcasing just a fraction of the cultures held within this single region.

UK and the College of Arts & Sciences are working on the creation of new curriculum and research opportunities for students interested in learning more about this region. The Asia Center, housed in the Office of International Affairs, is committed to increasing the study and knowledge of Asia on campus. Recent successes strengthen the College of Arts & Sciences' commitment to internationalizing the campus.

To further this endeavor, the Asia Center will use funds received from two prestigious grants, the Institutional Project Support Award from the Japan Foundation and the Freeman Foundation's second Undergraduate Asian Studies Initiative. The Asia Center, a campus-wide group of interdisciplinary faculty and staff, received its first grant from the Freeman Foundation in 2002.

"While supporting faculty positions housed in the College of Arts & Sciences, these grants are bigger than A&S," said Doug Slaymaker, director of the Japan Studies Program. "It's a university-wide initiative which will extend across campus and have ramifications for many different colleges in the university."

The Institutional Project Support Award from the Japan Foundation is a grant that supports innovative projects in the field of Japanese studies. This grant, totaling \$178,000 of a \$500,000

project, not only provides funds to hire two new Japanese Studies faculty, but also allows A&S to build a long-term Japanese Studies concentration beginning with undergraduates then eventually extending to graduate studies.

"The grant, together with matching funds from the university, will improve our library collection in Japanese languages and culture. There is also funding during each year of the grant for arts and events that showcase Japanese and Asian culture," said Shana Herron, assistant director of the Asia Center.

The Freeman Foundation's second Undergraduate Asian Studies Initiative is a three-year grant providing \$300,000 of a \$450,000 project budget. The grant allows Arts & Sciences to add two new faculty positions, one in Chinese history in the History Department and one in Chinese language and culture in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

"It's exciting to get together new faculty for the program. A group like this will also give us the focus and cohesion needed to build the program from the ground up," said Slaymaker.

The funds received from the Freeman grant also help create scholarships for education abroad, permitting students to fully immerse themselves in an Asian culture. The Asia Center will grant \$2,000 to \$4,000 in scholarships to undergraduates going to Asia for study in 2009.

"These grants give us solid training for Chinese, Japanese, and Asian studies so there is a real undergraduate focus that will come out of this which will produce long-term benefits with the addition of new faculty members" Slaymaker said. "It also allows UK to have a significant number of Asian researchers in a way we did not before, which will establish the university as a leader of Asian studies in the region."

As an emerging leader of Asian studies in Kentucky, UK will be able to extend the benefits of these grants outside the university to surrounding communities and schools in the state.

"The Asia Center has been very involved with teacher training and bringing in teachers from kindergarten to 12th grade. These new hires will also greatly enrich the teacher-training seminars on Asian culture," Slaymaker said.

"We hold an annual seminar on teaching about Asia for social studies and arts and humanities secondary teachers. The new faculty language hires will make teacher certification programs in Chinese and Japanese possible as well," Herron said.

With the influx of funds, the Asia Center will continue to be a catalyst for educational opportunities that prepare students to face a global economy. "This is the culmination of many hours of hard work, by many people on campus" Slaymaker said. "The possibilities for UK, the possibilities for students, and the possibilities for the community of Asian researchers brings an excited energy to this growing program." &

## LEARN MORE

For more information on the Asia Center or education abroad scholarships, contact the Asia Center at [asia.center@uky.edu](mailto:asia.center@uky.edu) or visit their website at [www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia](http://www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia).



Doug Slaymaker, director of the Japanese Studies Program, Keiko Tanaka, co-director of the Asia Center, and Shana Herron, assistant director of the Asia Center, at a Kimono exhibit at Natasha's Cafe in Lexington, Ky.

Tim Collins



# 2008 Blazer Lecture

Michael Oppenheimer

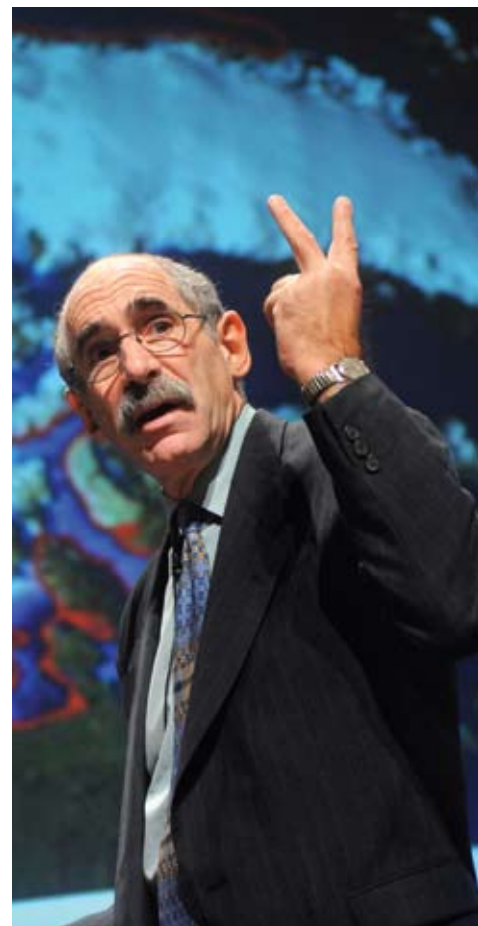
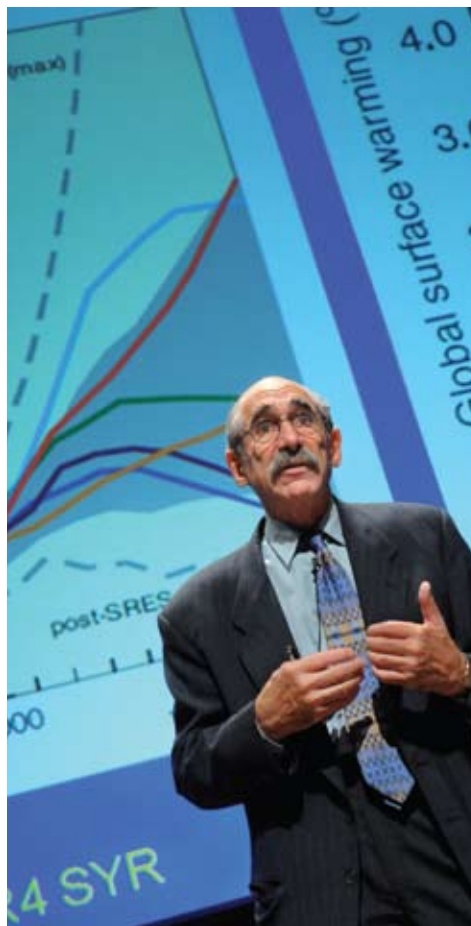
Photos by Tim Collins

Michael Oppenheimer, leading scholar on global warming, spoke in October on “The Global Warming Challenge: Can policy catch up with the science?” Oppenheimer is the Albert G. Millbank Professor of Geosciences and International Affairs at Princeton University. His interests include science and policy of the atmosphere, particularly climate change and its impacts. He is a long-time participant in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

For more information on Oppenheimer or to listen to the lecture, visit [www.as.uky.edu/alumni/events](http://www.as.uky.edu/alumni/events).

## MARK THE DATE

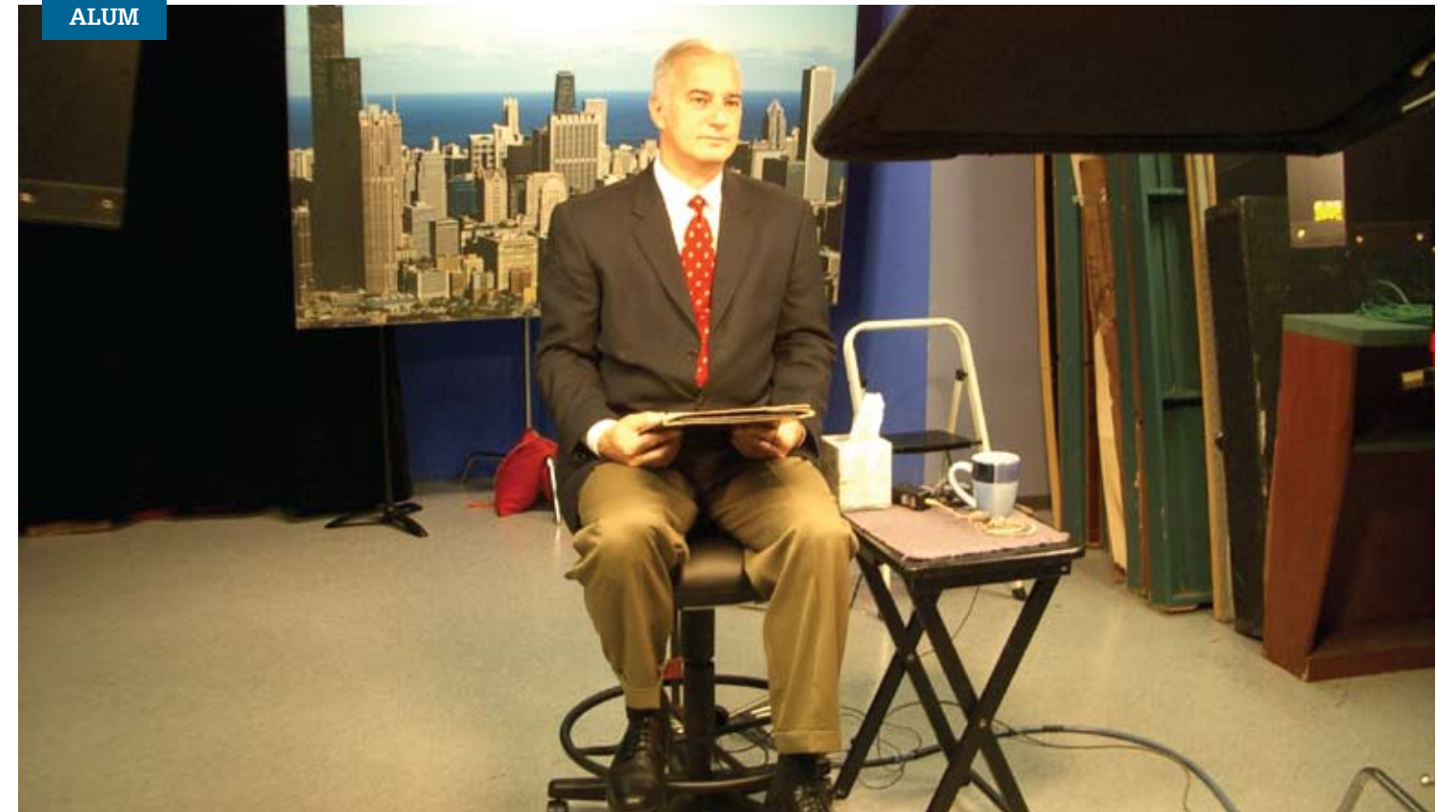
Join us Oct. 29 for the 2009 Blazer Lecture as we welcome Manil Suri, author and mathematics professor at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. Suri’s mathematical research is in the field of numerical analysis, but he also spends time devising ways to bring mathematics to the general public.



# alumni news & notes

Concert Safety Memorial Scholarship Young Alumnus A&S Alumni Tailgate

ALUM



Alumnus Paul Wertheimer interviewing for NBC TV in Chicago.

## Controlling the Mosh Pit

A&S alumnus leads global standards on crowd control

By Brianna Bodine

WHEN PAUL WERTHEIMER left his successful public relations career and started Crowd Management Strategies Inc. to champion peoples’ rights to safe, enjoyable concert environments, he knew it wouldn’t be an easy fight.

“The entertainment industry is so powerful and seductive,” he said. “The chances of me being successful were good, I thought. Working in the industry gave me an opportunity to discover the in-

dustry’s Achilles’ heel. I had credibility. I intentionally made this a solo venture, because I didn’t want outside influences to affect the direction of the company.”

A University of Kentucky alumnus who majored in speech and minored in political science, Wertheimer was brutally introduced to crowd safety issues on Dec. 3, 1979, at The Who concert tragedy in Cincinnati, Ohio, where 11 people died and dozens more were injured. “The incident was

not only shocking, the scene was surreal,” he recalled. “The image was that of a concentration camp – clothing, shoes, shirts were strewn everywhere or in piles, and medics tended to injured concertgoers.”

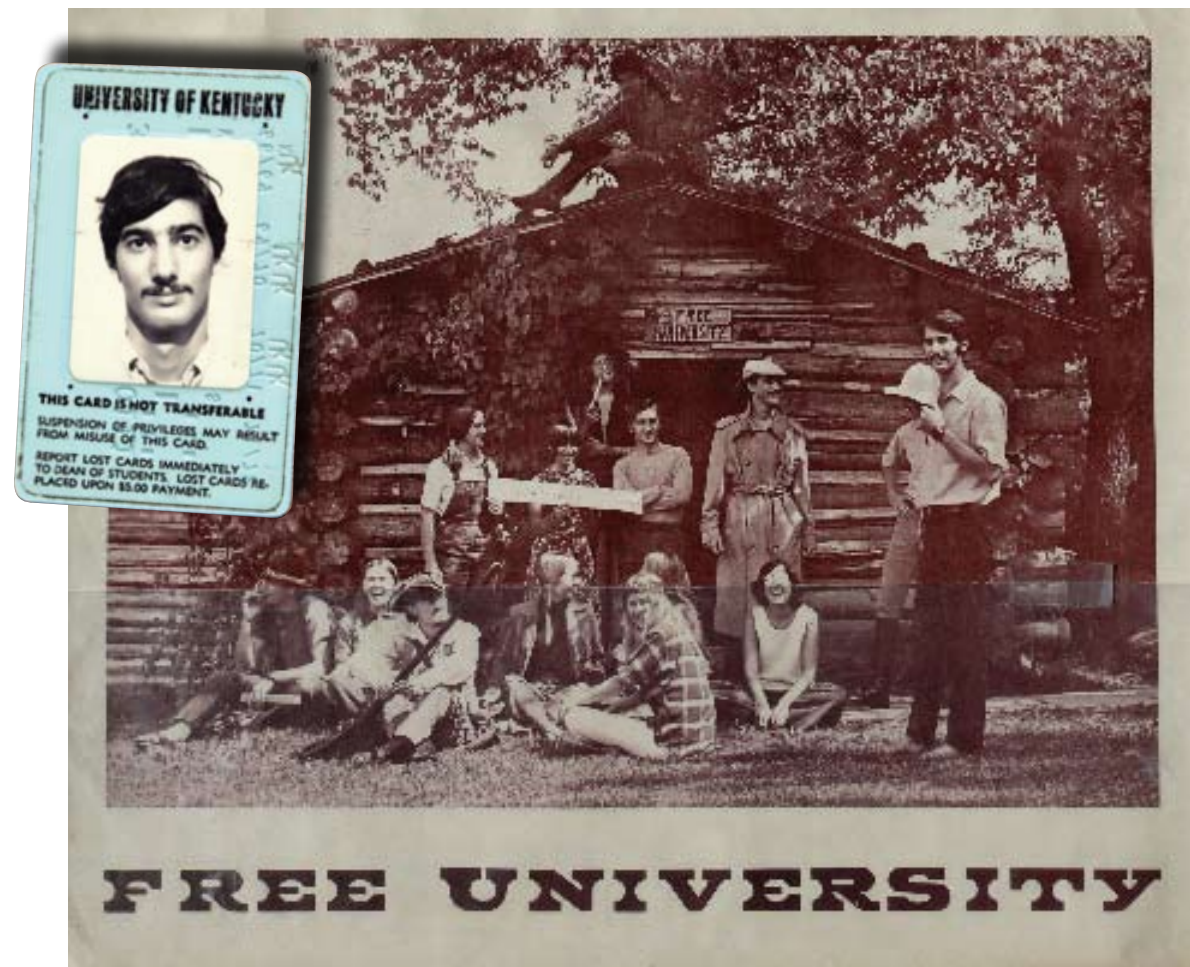
At that time, Wertheimer was Cincinnati’s public information officer, which led to his appointment as chief of staff for the citizen task force charged with outlining strategies to prevent concert-related deaths and injuries. After three

months of exhaustive research, the task force wrote its final report, a document that would become the “bible of crowd safety guidance and legislation.”

Wertheimer’s work attracted the attention of the Lexington Center Corporation, the management company running the Lexington Center and Adolph Rupp Arena. He was hired as assistant executive director and assistant director of operations. As far as venues go, Wertheimer

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The Free University Fall 1969 catalog heralded the second year of the free spirited student group promoting independent thought through education.

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said you just can't get better than Rupp Arena. "Rupp Arena is a well run venue," he said. "Concern for the public and event safety always came first."

Though Wertheimer eventually returned to a career in public relations in Chicago, he never forgot the lesson he learned in Cincinnati. "The Who concert tragedy continued to haunt me whenever a concert disaster or preventable crowd incident occurred," he said. "I would become especially angry when, in the aftermath of similar incidents, promoters, venue operators or security firms would blame the victims and claim the incident was not preventable. I knew better."

The turning point for Wertheimer came in 1991, when three teenagers were crushed to death at an AC/DC concert in Salt Lake City, Utah, and nine more were killed at a celebrity basketball game co-

promoted by rappers Sean "Diddy" Combs and Heavy D. "The concert industry and event promoters were obviously ignoring the lessons learned in Cincinnati," he said. "Once again, entertainment industry officials claimed these calamities were unavoidable or the fault of the victims. I couldn't take it anymore."

So, in 1992, Wertheimer reluctantly left the comfort of public relations and started the first and only company to offer consultation and research about crowd safety worldwide. "I left a career for a cause," he said.

And he is well qualified for the job. He traveled around the world jumping into mosh pits for hands-on experience so that he could develop meaningful guidelines for crowd control. His more than 15 years of hands-on experience in mosh pits, resulted in the development of the

first "safe moshing" guidelines that are referenced around the world.

"In the 90s, moshing was becoming more popular and I sensed that it was probably the most dangerous thing to happen at concerts since festival seating," he said.

Festival seating, which is standing room only, is the single most dangerous factor related to live entertainment crowd deaths and injuries, according to Wertheimer. Overcrowding, lack of sufficient exits, lack of crowd management and emergency plans, moshing, poorly trained security persons, unsafe venues and crowd provocation are also huge contributors.

"When you're in a crowd, you can often feel the camaraderie and communal spirit, but you still need someone to look after your safety and everyone else who is in the crowd with you," said Wertheimer, who has spent more than 1,000

hours as a participant in crowds of all types.

"I don't necessarily think that moshing or crowd surfing should be banned at concerts," Wertheimer said of the popular concert crowd activity. "But promoters and venue managers need to adequately prepare to prevent serious injury or death that can occur."

After his extensive fieldwork and research, Wertheimer created a CROWDSAFE® Database and annual Rock Concert Safety Survey Reports that were made available at his company Web site, crowdsafe.com, the first Web site to address crowd safety issues at live entertainment events.

His goal was to provide crowd safety guidelines for the entertainment industry and the government, as well as articulate arguments for victims to hold the industry accountable for negligence. His pioneering ambition has become reality and is now raising international awareness about crowd safety, reducing injuries and deaths at entertainment events and educating the public, event organizers and public safety officials about risks and preventative measures for crowd management.

Wertheimer has become the leading international industry official in crowd management and safety, with appearances on more than 100 television shows and hundreds of interviews for other media outlets. He has reviewed the national standards drawn up by crowd safety committees in Britain, South Africa, Australia and Denmark, and has produced brochures to educate concertgoers about safe concert strategies. In addition, Wertheimer acts as a consultant to government organizations and community organizers and as an expert witness in court during crowd safety litigation.

"One of the hardest things I do is work with the parents that have lost children or are left to care for their severely injured offspring following concert disasters," he said. "Even though you are there to help, you feel like you're invading their privacy at the worst possible moment."

Wertheimer said his message has been met with resistance in the industry, not because he is incorrect, but because he went public. "There's a lot of denial about the causes of crowd disorders in general and concert disasters in particular," he said. "Too many events are recklessly run."

Wertheimer's background in public relations, communications and political science has allowed him to approach the media and create a message that the public understands. "UK's solid liberal arts education had an atmosphere that fostered individuality and encouraged argument and debate," Wertheimer said. "The skills I gained from my speech and political science courses have been pivotal tools in my career." &

& Though she's not a UK alumna herself, AN LE knew the University of Kentucky was the right place to establish the Bill Bridges Memorial Scholarship – an award to honor and celebrate the life of Bill Bridges, a former University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension officer and community volunteer who helped her family during one of their most trying times.

In 1979, 8-year-old An Le and her family – her parents and four older siblings – escaped overnight from their native Vietnam. They had nothing but the clothes on their backs and the hope of a brighter future elsewhere.

The family shuffled from Hong Kong, awaiting sponsorship in the United States, to Michigan, home of an aunt, before settling in Lexington, Ky., where Le's father had some friends.

The move wasn't easy. Le's father was the only one in the family who knew any English. Her parents had owned a successful chain of pharmacies in Vietnam, but in Lexington, the best job her father could find initially was a nighttime shift washing dishes at a Chinese restaurant.

The family was struggling to learn English and piece together their new, American lives.

GIVING



That was how Bill Bridges found them, soon after their arrival in Kentucky.

A Mt. Sterling native with degrees from the University of Michigan and Columbia University, Bridges had been a longtime volunteer with the Peace Corps and the United Nations Association. He'd literally traveled the globe helping to build villages and run rural development programs in Nepal, Bangladesh and South Korea. He was also an active volunteer locally, helping foster Kentucky's 4-H program, the Donovan Scholars Volunteer Task Force, and Lexington's Christian Unity Task Force, among other programs. Over the years, he worked one-on-one to teach English as a

second language to students from more than 15 countries.

Before long, Bridges became a weekly fixture at the Le home, where he'd work with An and her siblings on their English and provide them with tape-recorded spelling lessons to work on throughout the week. With An, the youngest, he formed a special bond. Soon, the children came to call Bridges – who by then was a widower with no children of his own – their "grandfather."

After two years in Kentucky, the Le family moved to California, but An Le and Bridges maintained a steady written correspondence throughout the years.

"He was just a great man. So gentle and kind," Le said of Bridges.

"His whole life was about service and helping other people."

As a student at UCLA, Le wrote to Bridges about her struggles to put herself through college via a demanding job as a legal secretary and still maintain high grades in her honors classes. She had decided to study English literature, despite her parents' insistence that she choose a major with a more reliable career path.

What she got in reply was a shock.

In 1991 Bridges sent her a check for \$5,000, telling her to use it to help cover the cost of her books and other expenses. He also offered some much-needed encouragement: "He said, 'Don't worry so much . . . just do what you think is right. Everything will work out,'" Le recalled.

"That was the most wonderful thing. Just his words of encouragement. And his active generosity. It wasn't so much the money," said Le, who graduated Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa from UCLA and went on to pursue a law degree from UC-Hastings. She now works as a labor lawyer for ABC. "I couldn't tell you how much that meant to me. To have somebody outside my own family who believed that much in me."

For Le, that encouragement was enough. She decided not to use the money, but invested it in a CD instead, aiming to return it one day to Bridges.

Bridges was surprised to learn that Le never used the money and had saved it for him instead. When Bridges died suddenly in 2001 at the age of 89, Le knew right away that the money should go toward establishing a scholarship in his name.

Now each year the A&S English Department awards the \$500 Bill Bridges Memorial Scholarship to a first-generation college student majoring in English literature – someone much like Le was all those years ago.

"It feels like after all these years, Bill's gift continues to give," Le said.

– Robin Roenker



YOUNG ALUM



**& PATRICK KENNISON'S STUDENTS** at Philadelphia's Warren G. Harding Middle School never know what cool science experiments he'll have planned for them next. Whether it's a hands-on lesson in ecology and biology with dissected worms and owl pellets, learning about how forensics is used to fight crimes – CSI style or examining the true-life science behind a cloned world described in a science fiction novel, Kennison's classes are anything but dull.

Kennison, a 2005 graduate from UK with dual degrees in psychology and economics, completed a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in urban education in 2008. He's in his third year of teaching at Harding Middle School – a post he found through Teach for America, an organization that helps place recent graduates in schools, both urban and rural, with educational achievement gaps.

Kennison's school is in the poorer heart of Philadelphia. One hundred percent of the roughly 900 students there receive free and reduced lunch, meaning their

families' incomes are considered to be below the federal poverty level. By bringing engaging, challenging science content to the classroom each day, Kennison feels he's helping do his part to bridge the educational inequities that could otherwise keep his students from achieving their full potential.

The goal of making public education more equitable is why he got involved with Teach for America in the first place. It's why he still works with the agency each summer to help organize enrichment and training resources for new Teach for America teachers.

"Through my classes, I am able to expose my students to things they otherwise wouldn't see, and things they otherwise wouldn't consider to be something they can do," Kennison said.

Kennison has already made an impact at Harding.

In Philadelphia, all middle school students have the opportunity to apply to attend specialized, magnet high schools that help foster students' interests and skills in academics, fine arts, technology and

even military preparation. If they don't apply, they attend their neighborhood high school by default.

In his second year at Harding, by educating his students about the opportunities available to them, Kennison quadrupled the number of eighth graders there who applied for the specialized schools.

"I have several students who come back and see me, and they'll say, 'You were right, I did use that stuff in physics you were telling me about,'" Kennison said.

Living in Camden, New Jersey, and teaching in Philadelphia is a far cry from the rural-suburban upbringing Kennison had as a child living in central and northern Kentucky. In Kentucky, your identity is all about what county you're from. But in Camden and Philly, it's about which block, he said.

"There are so many little neighborhoods. Each has their own personality and culture. It's been so great to learn about that. And to try to become part of my school's community as I work there," said Kennison, a graduate of Covington Latin School in Covington, Ky.

Kennison always knew he'd end up a student at UK – it runs in his family's blood. His parents and uncles are all graduates, and his grandfather was a mechanical engineering professor at UK for more than 30 years.

Having come from a small high school, he loved that UK offered the variety of educational opportunities he was looking for – including the chance to study at the University of Heidelberg in Germany following graduation through an A&S German scholarship – while still letting him create small communities of friends through his involvement in the Honors Program; his fraternity, Phi Sigma Kappa; and as an A&S Ambassador, he said.

At UK, professors like his economics advisor Robert Gillette and education professor Virginia Davis Nordin, who collaborated with him on several Honors Program projects, were key to helping him find his path after graduation.

These days, Kennison knows he's just where he was meant to be—working long hours to make his classes the best they can be for his students at Harding.

"I believe very strongly in the idea of educational equity," Kennison said. "Public education is supposed to be the great equalizer, and right now, we're not living up to that promise to our citizens."

– Robin Roenker

**PATRICK KENNISON Q&A**

**Favorite place to hang out on campus:** *Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity house*

**Favorite place to eat on campus:** *Ovid's*

**Favorite dorm:** *Holmes Hall (the only one he stayed in)*

**Favorite extracurricular activity:** *A&S Ambassador*

**Favorite off-campus thing to do in Lexington:** *Keeneland*

**Favorite class:** *Psych capstone on the psychological impact of death & dying*

**Favorite non-major class:** *Freshman seminar on family and revolution in modern China*



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# Alumni Tailgate

October 18, 2008

photos by Tim Collins

