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BRENDAN BALLOU-KELLEY • REBECCA HIRSCH •
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THE PHILOLEXIAN FOUNDATION

News • Events • Self-Aggrandizement

Issue #5, Fall 2009

A NEW CONSTITUTION FOR A NEW PHILO

—Thomas J. Vinciguerra CC '85

Certain principles of Philolexian have remained inviolable from our inception. Never, for example, have we wavered from our stated aim of improving our members in oratory, composition and forensic discussion. However, changing times and circumstances dictate that periodically, our constitution be amended. This was the case this spring, when the most extensive changes to that document in five years were enacted.

The impetus came from Raza Panjwani CC '07, who had been contemplating the overhaul ever since serving as Moderator, and whose powers of drafting authoritative papers have only been sharpened by his current attendance at Columbia Law School.

“Under the old system, ultimate responsibility for getting anything done almost always fell on either one or two people—the Moderator and the Exchequer,” he said. “Simply trying to keep up with ‘what we’ve always done’ was exhausting and time consuming.” Also, said Mr. Panjwani, “There was no effective executive board. Over time, the ‘board’ had grown to 14 to 15-plus people, an unwieldy body that was hard to bring together.”

The goal, then, was to better accommodate all manner of Philo activity by establishing a more clearly defined hierarchy of officers. “The former constitution was very focused on the weekly meetings; in fact, in the document, the board members were defined by their role in the meeting,” said self-described constitutional “conspirator” Kazim Panjwani CC '11, a.k.a. “Panjwani Minor.” “The result was that while the meetings were run as scripted, there was no space to expand beyond that. To ameliorate this, we created some positions, consolidated others, and reorganized some of the board structure and responsibilities.”

The first step was summoning a constitutional convention. Because Philo’s 2004 constitution permitted only a single amendment to be passed during a meeting, an amendment that allowed for the calling of said convention by petition was necessary. This provision passed by a two-thirds vote of full members present and a majority of the executive board at the meeting of April 16. In accordance with the duly submitted petition, the convention was held three days later. The process took several hours, with much debate generated

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Celebrating Halloween in a Philo suite

PHILO SUITES COME TO CAMPUS

—Thomas J. Vinciguerra CC '85

Almost 25 years into its latest incarnation, Philo has not yet achieved its ultimate dream of permanent halls. Nonetheless, a major step toward that goal was made this fall when three suites populated solely by our members took root in East Campus.

Dormitory suites composed largely of Philos are not exactly a novelty; among them is one currently in Plimpton Hall. But taken together, the exclusively Philo suites of 1210, 1412, and 1414 East Campus constitute a cohesive campus presence unmatched in recent memory, one that their inhabitants say has redounded to the society’s benefit.

“It’s an incredibly fun setup that results in a bunch of friends getting to live together and facilitate group socialization, all within a legitimately nice building,” said Moderator Jane Friedhoff CC '10, who resides in 1210 East Campus. “Philo suites have definitely resulted in increased attendance at actual Philo meetings. Even the busiest and most stressed of members can generally be convinced to come along to meetings when the rest of their suite is going.”

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A LETTER FROM THE MODERATOR

Greetings from Nova Scotia! As I lead a small band of Philos through the Canadian snow, I cannot help but reflect on the economic circumstances that forced Philo to explore options outside the United States. You see, the recession left no student organization unscathed, scattering slashed budget sheets and petitions for bailout money across Lerner Hall. Our Mr. Potato Head bank grew too empty to buy a real potato; our podilectern eventually fell apart, becoming a no-dilectern; and our full-member coat rack had to be downgraded to a single hook. Concerned that Philo would not survive into the fall semester, the society resolved to send a cadre of members to look for foreign investors. As such, I write to you from Canada, proposals for The Philolexian Society of McGill University in hand.

However, I can say with confidence that this proposal will not be needed, as we've heard only good news from the Philos back home. Their debate skills have translated well into these hard times, allowing them to use wit and convoluted rhetoric to argue all foes into submission. So, despite hard times, small budgets, and endless bureaucracy, I am pleased to say that Philo is not only surviving, but thriving.

For example: after pre-calendaring forced us out of key debate spaces early on in the year, we turned problems into opportunities by hosting outdoor debates, drawing huge crowds of curious freshlings into the society. (We're looking at more than fifteen potential new members now, only halfway through the semester.) When Columbia refused to grant us real halls for the nth year in a row, several crafty Philos banded together to outsmart the housing lottery system; now, we have three suites full of Philos who host post-meeting get-togethers, allowing old and new members to connect and become friends. When the Activities Board decided to entirely wipe out our funds for *Surgam*, we approached the Gatsby Charitable Organization and received a hefty grant; this will help us expand *Surgam* into three full-length issues this year. We've even begun to set up a program for Professor Teas, allowing us to forge better ties with the University at large.

In the face of all this, moving to Canada hardly seems necessary. So geezers, take heart: even in a recession, with the economy crashing all around us, Philo is still your home at Columbia. Even if you can't count on your stocks, you still can count on a Thursday night debate with good conversation, good heckling, and good friends. I'll meet you there soon. Now, to find that full member hot tub. . .

Surgam,

Jane Friedhoff CC '10
213th Moderator
Philolexian Society



Another wedding, another excuse for a Philo mini-reunion! Celebrating the marriage of Michelle Pentecost CC '07 and Robert Smith in LeBlanc, La. on July 18 were (from left) Leo Gertsenshteyn SEAS '06, Elliot Kaplan SEAS '06, Jonathan Treitel CC '05, Stephanie Feldman BC '05, Edward Rueda CC '05, Ms. Pentecost, Everett Patterson CC '06, Tamar Zeffren BC '06, Neil Flanagan CC '08, Caitlin Campbell CC '07, Anna Love Sproul CC '07, Eric LeSueur CC '06, and Andrew Liebowitz CC '06.

PHILOWIXIAN OFFERS PHILO LORE ONLINE

—Amitai Schlair GS '09

All true geezers know a fair amount about the long and storied history of Philolexian—everything from our status as the campus's oldest student group to the sordid tale of how our light blue hue was appropriated by alma mater. But just how much of that history do we all know? And where can it be found? Turn to Wikipedia and you will be disappointed by the answer. In that ostensibly all-encompassing font of knowledge you will find precisely one entry for Philo, another for the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Bad Poetry Contest, and a few dozen more about various illustrious members. That's it.

Ladies and gentlemen, this will not do! Our fair society is far too venerable, its workings too labyrinthine, its arcana too arcane, to be wholly encompassed within a few pages on some other Web site. Thus, it is imperative that we band together, current members and geezers alike, to ensure that Philo's history endures in a more comprehensive format. And it is for this purpose that, taking a page from Wikipedia, we have created a site that is up to the task—an entire wiki of our very own, Philowixian.

On Philowixian (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/philo>) already are such gems as the full text of our constitution and by-laws; past resolutions, going back several years; letters of the Nomenclaturist General; literary exercises; information

IN MEMORIAM

—Thomas J. Vinciguerra CC '85

We note with sorrow the passing of the following Philos:

Lester Shapiro CC '33 died on April 15. A psychiatrist who practiced in Manhattan and later from his home in Rockville Center, L.I., where he had lived since 1948, Les was affiliated with Mercy Hospital and also Pilgrim State Hospital in Brentwood, L.I.

Last December 10, **Forest Lombaer CC '35** passed away in Florida after a long career in human resources in the insurance and retail industries in New York, Ohio, Minnesota, and Belgium. We remember Forest for always enjoying news of our activities, as well as for providing us with irrefutable memories of the hitherto unverified Philo membership of **John La Touche CC '37**, librettist and lyricist for such Broadway hits as *Cabin in the Sky* and *The Golden Apple*.

Lincoln Diamant CC '43 passed away in Williamstown, Mass. on October 20. Linc was a wry, delightful fellow who reconnected with us in 1986 after reading about us in *The New York Times*. In his student days he was a pioneer of WKCR (then CURC) and was in fact its first voice on the air on October 10, 1941. Linc parlayed his expertise into a career as a communications consultant; besides publishing the classic *The Broadcast Communications Dictionary*, he wrote several books about American history and the historic Hudson Valley.

Linc's good friend, and ours, **Ted Hoffman CC '44** died a short time before, on July 9. It was Ted who, at the behest of **Jacques Barzun CC '27**, revived a virtually moribund Philo during the war years so that we could hold our quadrennial Centennial Washington Prize Competition—a contest that Ted, with his savvy and dry humor, naturally won. Ted spent his professional life in the theater, producing, directing, teaching, and administering; perhaps the greatest of his many achievements was building the theatre program at what is now the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

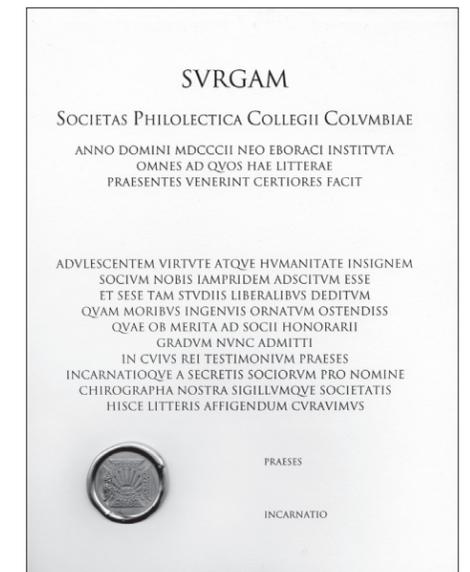
Stanley Mellon CC '50 left us on September 3 of last year. Stan was a specialist in revolutionary France and the works of Guizot, teaching at Michigan, Berkeley, Yale, Columbia, and the University of Illinois-Chicago. He was the author of *The Uses of History: A Study of Historians in The French Restoration* (Stanford, 1958). In his last years, while living in San Francisco, Stan saw a good deal of his fellow historian **Bernard Wishy CC '48**, who still lives there.

Finally, we were stunned by the passing of **Carl Hovde CC '50** on September 5. With his keen intelligence and gentle demeanor, Carl was the ideal dean of Columbia College in the aftermath of 1968. After helping to restore calm to the campus, he returned to what he loved best—

teaching Emerson, Thoreau, and other giants of American literature. Carl's comrade **Rudolph Weingartner CC '50** spoke movingly at his memorial service in St. Paul's Chapel on October 22; other Philos in attendance were **Wm. Theodore de Bary CC '41**, **John Rosenberg CC '50**, **Thomas Vinciguerra CC '85**, and Carl's son **Peter CC '93**.

In addition, we only recently learned of the deaths of **Sidney Goetz CC '33** in Florida on June 23, 2008, and of **Russell H. Lord, Jr. CC '46** in New Hampshire on August 15, 2008.

PHILO DIPLOMAS NOW AVAILABLE!



Admit it: You've always wanted to shout your Philo membership from the rooftops, or at least proclaim it on your wall. Now you can with these deluxe graduation certificates. Printed on heavy stock and embossed boldly with the Latin inscription (translation available upon request) of our 19th century originals, the Philo diploma comes complete with a light blue wax seal bearing the imprint of our Maltese cross "Surgam" logo, as well as the signature of Avatar Thomas J. Vinciguerra CC '85. It's up to you to fill in your name and the signature of the moderator of your choice. All this for only \$5! Send your check to The Philolexian Foundation, P.O. Box 250849, Columbia University Station, New York, NY 10025. Or pay via PayPal; the e-mail address is philodinner@gmail.com.

Thanks to Jonathan Treitel CC '05, Tamar Zeffren BC '06, Raza Panjwani CC '07, Tao Tan CC '07, Samantha Kuperberg BC '09—as well as Ms. Kuperberg's classics instructor, Christina Matone—for their hard work on producing these beauties.

PHILO'S AMBASSADORS: THE "BROADS ABROAD"

—Thomas J. Vinciguerra CC '85

When Megan Shannon BC '11 decided to spend the current semester at University College Cork, in Ireland, she did more than undertake study in foreign climes. She found herself anointed Philo's latest ambassador at large—or, in society parlance, the designated "Broad Abroad."

Much discussed, not always entirely understood, the Broad Abroad occupies a lofty position in the Philo hierarchy. Although Philo men have been known to pick up their books and cross the ocean, e.g. Jordan Fraade CC '10, who recently spent time in Spain, it is Philo women who have made a habit of it.

"It feels like a sort of secret sisterhood," said Mikah McCabe BC '08, who spent a spring semester at Cork. "As silly titles are much coveted by Philos, I dreamed of assuming the mantle."

And there is no sign that the trend is ebbing. Next semester, Abbey Warner BC/JTS '11 will be at King's College, London, studying film and the Bible. "My goals are to have great European adventures and to take on London colloquialisms," she declared.

Like many Philo institutions, the Broad Abroad was not so much formally promulgated as it was gradually realized. The very first of our ambassadors—the ur-Broad Abroad, if you will—was Beth Chung CC '88, who spent her junior year at Pembroke College, Cambridge University. "Truth compels me to say that I was a Broad Abroad before I was a Philo," she points out. "I was only at one meeting before I went." (She notes, however, that that meeting was in the spring of 1986, not long after our revival, when membership was not nearly as formal a matter as it is now.)

In any event, the die was cast. But the position had no proper name until 1997, when Maria King BC '99 decided to spend a year studying Italian culture, language, and literature at the University of Florence. "I think I just raised my hand and announced that I would be the 'Broad Abroad,'" she recalled. "I may not even have come up with the term." Whoever was responsible, it was David Damast CC '99 who, as Moderator, pretty much elevated the position to an established office. Since then, Philo has rarely been without a Broad Abroad.

In general, the Broad Abroad attempts to spread the good word about Philo to an unsuspecting foreign public, especially our sister literary societies. This is more difficult than it sounds, as Mikah McCabe discovered when she sought out Cork's Philosophy Society. "They were very serious, debating things like 'Free Tibet,' and 'Abortion Should

Be Legal in the Country of Ireland,' and other such lofty subjects I wasn't willing to touch with a 10-foot pole," she said. "It gave me a better appreciation for absurdist debate. The real thing isn't quite as entertaining."

Megan Shannon has also found Cork's Philosophy Society to be "far too serious for any Philo's taste. I've realized that nothing in the world is like Philolexian, and there's no use looking for a substitute group for the four months I'm away."

Marley Weiner BC/JTS '10 encountered far different challenges as a Broad Abroad at the University of Haifa this spring: "There's nothing in Israel comparable to Philo. The way the Israeli university system works, they really don't have things like clubs. And Israelis aren't so much witty as shouty. You say to yourself, 'Where am I going to get my dose of snarkiness?'"

Still, cultural clashes can be highly instructive for Broads Abroad, as Reina Hardy CC '03 found during her junior year at St. Peter's College, Oxford University, where she spent one night a week tending bar at the famous Oxford Union. "Not only did they beggar us in their bar and owning of property, they beggared us in their eccentricities," Ms. Hardy recalled. "My favorite character was a fellow called 'The Vicar' who had been a vicar and had been defrocked and was such a bad alcoholic that he had the D.T.'s." (He was not, Ms. Hardy added, a convivial soul. "His attitude was, 'You're an American. And you're a woman.'")

Indeed, the best part about being a Broad Abroad may very well be the fundamental realization that there is no place like Philo. "It was so comforting to know that Philo would be waiting back there for me," said Anna Love Sproul CC '07, a Corpus Christi College, Oxford University Broad Abroad in 2005-06. "More than a sense of pride, Philo is a source of great comfort—knowing that beneath the pompousness is a sense of love. And nowhere is that better expressed than in the Broad Abroad program."

PHILOWIXIAN (CONT.)

about our multifarious awards and prizes; a "Philexicon" of our distinctive patois (with a particularly fabulous entry about the podilectern); tips for conducting Philo research; and gobbets of trivia.

Philowixian provides the firm technological foundation on which we, as a society, shall build a grand Web edifice for the ages, one that is truly worthy of our heritage. What Philo lore, trivia, and information in general do you know best? Come, share now and for all posterity. To join in this historic effort, email schmonz@philo.org.

HOW PHILO CONQUERED THE CAPITAL

—Megan Shannon BC '11

Philo is no stranger to the broader world of collegiate literary endeavors. In 1986, shortly after our refounding, we were happily inducted into the Association of American Collegiate Literary Societies. Since then we have taken numerous road trips—from all of which we returned more or less intact—to debate our sister groups at various campuses. It was in this spirit that Philo sent a small delegation this April to the biannual meeting of the Collegiate Conference of Literary and Debating Societies.

Our hosts, the Philodemic Society of Georgetown University, planned two days of workshops, lectures, and other activities, all of which made them seem far too serious to be genuine college students. The conference started off with each society giving a presentation explaining itself. Megan Shannon BC '11 dazzled the crowd with a Powerpoint presentation as well as her good looks, wit, and charm. (Kazim Panjwani CC '11 and Stephen Blair CC '11 provided appropriate comic relief during the talk.) The sole representative of the Yale Political Union explained that his group focuses entirely on political debate; happily, his demeanor was more relaxed than this somewhat narrow vision would indicate.

The Phi Kappans and Demosthenians of the University of Georgia, both of whom displayed quasi-Confederate tendencies, described themselves as dedicated debaters; the consensus among Philolexian was that we would not be engaging them anytime soon, as their mutual rivalry consumes far too many resources for them to do battle further north. As for our Philodemic hosts, they presented themselves as mature debaters—a guise that was immediately punctured when they imbibed too much at the party that followed the first night of the conference.

During the second day of the conference, the societies shared tips on how to run a society smoothly. Our Philodemic and Demosthenian brethren explained the reason for their success: generous slush funds and skillful money laundering. At around that time, a detachment from the Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania mysteriously showed up. They had taken the directive to wear Western business attire quite literally, arriving in a profusion of cowboy boots and bandanas. Philolexian's participation in the conference ended with a short debate in Philodemic's impressive halls, where the New Yorkers proved that they could wax as eloquent as any of their peers.

At weekend's end, our sophomore sophomores missed their bus back to Gotham and found themselves stuck in a D.C. parking lot for four hours, waiting for the next one. Mr.

Panjwani spent the time on the phone plotting the revolution that was the Philolexian constitutional convention (see page 1). For Ms. Shannon the wait seemed eternal, especially after watching the elusive bus turn left on a red light, apparently to escape the several college students who were hopelessly chasing after it.

Join the Whip List!

Email philo@philo.org and request to be added to the Whip List to receive announcement of Philo events.

PHILO SUITES (CONT.)

Ms. Friedhoff continued, "Being able to live with a group of people with the same sense of humor is a major plus, and relieves a lot of the stress of typical suite life. Most suites end up having a lot of impromptu movie nights, Apples to Apples games, and such. Aside from these benefits, living in such close proximity allows board members to meet much more frequently and with greater ease." She added, "This situation works out well for Philos who don't live in the suites. Since we don't have to worry about V&T's closing (we still eat there every so often), we can have debates that go late into the night, giving old and new members greater time to speak."

Indeed, it might be said that suite living constitutes the continuation of Philo by other means, with members extending the weekly debates into the wee hours, long after the ringing of the ceremonial bell signals the formal end of a meeting. "It's pretty rowdy sometimes on Thursday nights," said Chancellor of the Exchequer Beezly Kiernan CC '11, of 1414 East Campus. "No music, just voices. We talk a lot."

There is no mistaking the essential Philo nature of these enclaves. When not unfurled at our weekly meetings, the blue-and-white Philo banner is proudly displayed in Suite 1414. And, of course, the periodic parties held therein always include a hearty exhortation of "Hold fast to the spirit of youth/Let years to come do what they may" at some point during the evening.

"This is definitely the best living situation I've had in my time here," said Keeper of the Halls Daniel Walden CC '11, a satisfied denizen of 1412 East Campus. "We all have the sort of disposition whereby we enjoy each other's company while everyone pretty much does their own thing as well. There's no friction between us, which is the main danger of suite living."

He concluded, "There are also some of the coarser benefits of having one of the best liquor cabinets on Morningside Heights."

A REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT

"I've been happily busy in my retirement from St John's College," writes **Elliott Zuckerman CC '52**. "My latest song cycle, which is based on my own translations of poems of La Fontaine, has been performed and shall be recorded. A set of new poems has been included in a Festschrift. And in January I'm having a show of my latest paintings, at the Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, in Annapolis."

From Lexington, Ky., **John Cirigliano CC '64** has sent along some archival material from his student days. The package includes a news clipping about his receiving a National Merit Scholarship commendation while a senior at Westbury (L.I.) High School, and a press release from Columbia's Office of Sports Information that mentions him as a starting center and captain of the varsity lightweight football team. John also gave us a September 29, 1960 copy of *Spectator* with a front-page story about Carman Hall (then New Hall) being flooded by a faulty sprinkler; a delightful photo shows John mopping up the mess.

Scott Schrum L '89, senior attorney with Safeco Corp. in Seattle, has been suffering from cancer for some time now. He was featured in a *New York Times* article in May about the problematic aspects of assigning power of attorney; the piece included a lovely picture of him, his wife Wendy Goffe, and daughter Maya. We wish Scott the very best; check up on his progress at Wendy's blog: www.caringbridge.org/visit/scottschrum.

Edd Case CC '92 lives on in our hearts and now on our official rolls. At the annual alumni reunion weekend this June his father, University Trustee Steve Case CC '64, signed the Philo membership scroll in his memory.

Rob Mitchell CC '92 and **Ashley Normand BC '97** are engaged to be married next summer. Rob is the senior lead developer at the p.r. agency Ruder Finn; Ashley is a litigator specializing in employment and real estate law at the firm of Brill & Meisel. For the record, Ashley avers, "We are deliriously happy, albeit overwhelmed with all this wedding planning." Also for the record, this is the fifth Philo-Philo marriage to date.

"I am finishing law school this December and taking the bar in February," reports **Kate Fredland BC '92**. "Meanwhile I am raising my toddler, Miranda, who will be 2 in December, trying to find a job and managing my household, which includes a husband and seven pets. I passed the signpost for sanity long, long ago."

Send us your accomplishments & activities, or update your contact information:
foundation@philolexian.com
P.O. Box 250849, NYC 10025

Everything is God: The Radical Path of Nondual Judaism, the latest book by **Jay Michaelson CC '93**, has just been published by Shambhala/Trumpeter. To celebrate, a panel discussion and other events that Jay has described as "a Jewish spiritual Woodstock" was held at the Center for Jewish History in New York on October 29.

"About six months ago I bought a house here in Melbourne, and my boyfriend and I moved in together, along with his son, who stays with us on alternating weeks," writes **Ali Lemer CC '94**. "This month [October] I celebrated my 2nd anniversary as an editor at Lonely Planet, and am currently editing my 7th guidebook there. In December my boyfriend and I are off to Japan on holiday; as big geeks we're both looking forward to wandering around Tokyo's 'Electric Town' district. I hope to see Philo folk the next time I'm in New York, maybe in 2010?"

Rob Sloane CC '96 reports, "Our daughter, Miranda Isabel Sloane (named for Shakespeare's *Tempest*, not for the character in *Sex and the City* or that moral paragon Mr. Miranda of *Miranda v. Arizona* fame) entered the world on September 3." Rob is a visiting professor at the University of Michigan Law School for the winter/spring 2010 semester.

Nat Daw CC '96 and Yael Niv welcomed the arrival of their son, Eitan Daw-Niv, on September 22. Eitan came six weeks early but completely healthy, Nat says: "He was born 5 lbs. 3 oz. but is taking after his father in terms of gluttony and lack of self control and is easily 8 lbs. by now." Nat adds that he's training Eitan "for the inevitable moment when he romances his Philo-baby contemporary, Miranda Sloane." Nat is an assistant professor of neural science and psychology at NYU, specializing in decision-making and neuromodulation.

Ilana Garon BC '03 received her MFA in creative non-fiction writing from Sarah Lawrence College in June: "She teaches 9th-12th grade English (yes, every one of those grades) at a public school in the Bronx, and tutors high school students in preparation for their standardized tests and college applications. She has also just written her first book. She doesn't have any spare time, but if she did, it would be spent reading, running, and drinking exotic teas."

Self-described "snuggly geezer" **Batsheva Glatt CC '03** says she's "been puttering about the greater Kansas City area" and adds, "By day, she divides 401(k) plans via qualified domestic relations orders in divorce cases. At night, she infiltrates the minds of susceptible high school students with lessons on Judaism and the environment at Hebrew High. (If Batsheva's not shocking them, she's not doing her job.) Alice the kitten, the magnanimous furry overlord, allows Batsheva and the other human (Batsheva's mate Mitch) to continue to live in their house, provided they proffer kibbles and snuggles appropriately. Batsheva would still

rather be reading science fiction novels and drinking Earl Grey. Hot."

Erratica, a play by **Reina Hardy CC '03**, received its world premiere at Capital Stage in Sacramento, Calif. in July. Philos may remember that *Erratica* was produced at Columbia in 2003 as the 2002 Brick Memorial Prize winner and the first work to benefit from our then newly established **Robert C. Schnitzer CC '27** Theatre Fund.

Heather Harker BC '06 is a registered nurse at St. Luke's/Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan and is studying for her master's at Columbia's School of Nursing. She recently became engaged to Zachary Ryan GS '06—or, as she put it, "Barnard Philo marries Columbia bandie :)"

Following the collapse of Lehman Brothers, **Tao Tan CC '07** says he has "returned to the nurturing embrace of Alma Mater" by enrolling in the MBA program at the Columbia Business School. At Geezer Night in October, Tao arrived relatively fresh from his recent sojourn in Hong Kong wearing a Mao jacket.

Mikah McCabe BC '08 recently spent a year in Boston looking for work. But "eight snowstorms later," she says, "she moved to DC (where all the money lives) and had better success." Today, Mikah works on the Energy Star program, "a lovely desk job that allows her to avoid grad school in comfort." Off the job, "she plays Dungeons and Dragons, quotes Shakespeare to unsuspecting passersby, and memorizes the latest football score and *Glee* episode summaries to pretend she's normal at work."



In what they say was the world's first zero-gravity wedding, Noah Fulmor CC '99 and Erin Finnegan tied the knot aboard "G-Force One," a modified Boeing 727-200 that offers weightless flight, on June 20. As they soared above the Gulf of Mexico, the bride and groom found the experience to be everything they'd anticipated—and then some. "The physics of the first kiss were off," said Noah. "I could feel where I was going, I knew where I needed to be, but it was hard to reconcile the differences." Still, he said, "I think that weightlessness is probably the best metaphor for love that one can experience."

PHILO CONSTITUTION (CONT.)

by the approximately 30 students and geezers in attendance. By day's end, a compromise document was proposed and, at the final meeting of the year, on April 30, adopted.

The most significant changes were in the titles, responsibilities, and relationships of the officer corps. The executive board now consists of seven members. Five are familiar: Moderator, Censor, Scriba, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Editor of *Surgam* (now renamed "Literary Czar"). Two, however, are new: Minister of Propaganda, who oversees all public relations efforts, and Impresario, who handles special events and new programming.

In the new bylaws are enshrined such by-now-familiar supporting positions as Keeper of the Halls, Sergeant-at-Arms, Minister of Internet Truth, Herald, and Whip. Here, too, are two new posts, Quaestor and Tea Marm. The former is business manager of *Surgam*; the latter, previously a usurpable position, has been codified to ensure that sustenance will always be provided at meetings.

What distinguishes the new arrangement is how these officers will function. For example, the executive board will now meet every other week. To take strain off the Moderator, the Scriba now has greater responsibility for organizing the weekly meetings. Further reducing the Moderator's burden is the Impresario's lead role in organizing the Alfred Joyce Kilmer Memorial Bad Poetry Contest, Beat Night, Symposium, and other periodic events.

In addition, the 2009 constitution is replete with new rules, voting procedures, and other bits of business. Perhaps most significantly, the qualifications for Moderator have been liberalized. Previously, only those who had served as Exchequer or Editor of *Surgam* were eligible. Now, the field is open to anyone who has served on the executive board (except for Censor) and two semesters in a position of responsibility (executive board and/or supporting officer) as a whole.

Finally, among the constitution's myriad minor tweaks is an entirely new chapter on fines. Troublesome members are urged to read the provisions most carefully.

It is a tribute to all those involved in this extensive process—especially Ian Crone C '10, Beezly Kiernan CC '11, Megan Shannon BC '11, and Amitai Schlair GS '09, in addition to the aforementioned Panjwanis—that the new constitution has so far met with favorable results and general approval.

"There was a question of whether the students could surpass the splendor that was our work," said Moderator Emeritus Jonathan Treitel CC '05, the primary architect of the 2004 constitution. "But I think they did a great job in coming up with new bylaws and outlining the responsibilities of the new offices." He concluded, "They have the approval of the forefathers."