

# News in Brief

## Playwright Kushner to Speak at Columbia College Class Day



PHOTO BY JAY THOMPSON

**T**ony Kushner, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright of the seven-hour Broadway production of *Angels in America*, will be the keynote for Columbia College 2004 Class Day ceremony. Kushner's stage epic, which received two Tony Awards, was recently broadcast as an HBO film starring Al Pacino, Meryl Streep and Emma Thompson. Kushner, who was born in Manhattan and grew up in Lake Charles, La., graduated from Columbia College with a B.A. in English literature in 1978. "The depth of Kushner's views and global recognition make him an outstanding selection for this event," said Chris Colombo, dean of Student Affairs. "He is one of our culture's most thought-provoking voices."

## Annette Insdorf Honored For Cinema Books



Annette Insdorf

Columbia film professor Annette Insdorf is one of nine individuals and institutions to be honored March 30 by Anthology Film Archives for their contributions to the preservation and understanding of film heritage. Insdorf will be recognized for her books on Kieslowski, Truffaut and Holocaust films.

It will be a busy spring for Insdorf. On April 22, she will participate on a panel at New York's 92nd Street Y, titled "The Use and Abuse of the Holocaust." In May, she will host the opening and closing night coverage of the Cannes Film Festival for the Independent Film Channel (May 12 and May 24). Since the mid-1990s, Insdorf has cohosted closing night festivities with film critic Roger Ebert. She also translates the entire ceremony from French to English.

## Paul Fisher Wins Pancreatic Cancer Research Grant

**P**aul B. Fisher, Columbia professor of clinical pathology, recently received a one-year, \$100,000 grant from the Lustgarten Foundation to fund pancreatic cancer research. Fisher's research focuses on producing therapeutic viruses that replicate in and kill only tumor cells. Each year 30,000 Americans are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, which has a one-year survival rate of 18 percent, and a five-year survival rate of 4 percent.

## Physicist Booth, Who Built Columbia's Cyclotron, Dies



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Eugene Theodore Booth

**P**hysicist Eugene Theodore Booth, who was responsible for the construction of the Columbia University cyclotron, a nuclear particle accelerator (see photo on Page 2), died March 6 at the age of 91. Booth worked on the Manhattan Project and was widely recognized for his scientific and engineering contributions to the U.S. nuclear programs in the early days of atomic energy. He was cited by the Atomic Energy Commission for his achievements in nuclear physics.

Born in 1912 in Rome, Ga., Booth attended the University of Georgia, receiving a B.S. in 1932, M.S. in 1934 and his doctorate in 1937. Booth, a Rhodes Scholar, subsequently joined the Columbia faculty as lecturer. He was later appointed assistant professor of physics. During World War II, he was a member of Columbia's scientific staff of the Division of War Research.

## Community Impact Auction



"Photo of Little Girl" by Ken Heyman

**C**ommunity Impact, Columbia's largest service organization, will hold its 12th Annual Spring Benefit Auction on April 1, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The event will be held on the 30th floor of the Reuters building (located in midtown Manhattan, 3 Times Square). The evening will include a voice auction and a silent auction. Items for auction include a *Sex in the City* outfit worn by Sarah Jessica Parker, four center court tickets to a Knicks vs. Bulls game, a seven-day Holland America cruise for two to destinations including the Caribbean, Mexico and Alaska and an original print by renowned photographer Ken Heyman. Community Impact will present its "Making a Difference" Award to a long-time supporter and Columbia University trustee

## Don Melnick Appointed to New Columbia University Chair, in Conservation Biology

**D**on Melnick has been appointed to a new chair at Columbia, the Distinguished Professorship of Conservation Biology. Melnick, who has been on the Columbia faculty since 1981, has served as professor in the Departments of Anthropology, Biological Sciences and Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology. He has used molecular genetics to understand aspects of the ecology, behavior, evolution and conservation of vertebrates, from frogs to elephants.

Melnick is also executive director and founder of the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation (CERC). CERC is a consortium for biodiversity conservation education, training and research that includes Columbia, the American Museum of Natural History, the New York Botanical Garden, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Wildlife Trust.

The new chair has been endowed through the generosity of the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation.

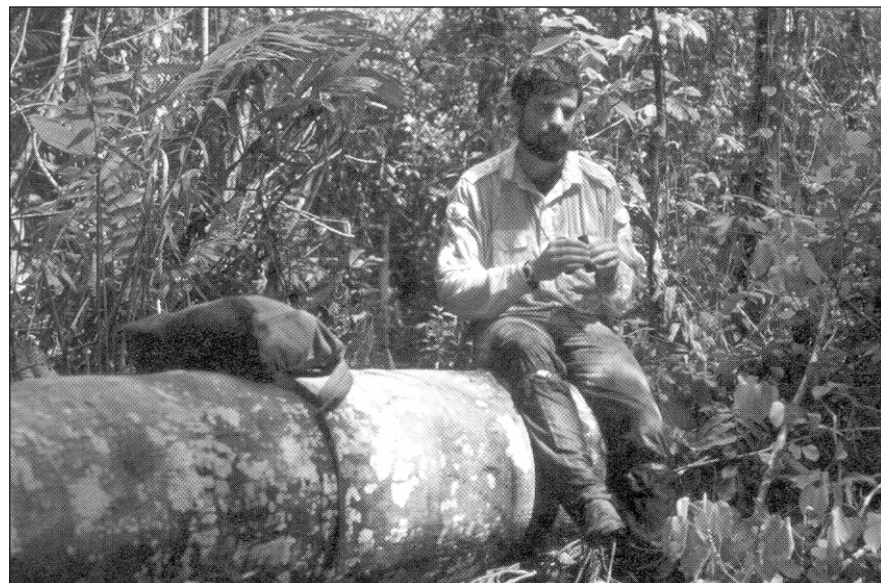


PHOTO COURTESY OF DON MELNICK

Don Melnick has been appointed Distinguished Professor of Conservation Biology.

emeritus, Jerome Chazen. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served all evening. Tickets are \$100, \$250, \$375 and \$500 each and can be purchased by calling (212) 854-5959.

All proceeds from the auction go to support programs that reach out into Columbia University's surrounding neighborhoods. CI strives to provide high quality programs, advance the public good, collaborate with other community-based organizations and foster meaningful service volunteer opportunities for Columbia University students, faculty and staff, instilling the importance of lifelong service.

## Donald Portnoy Wins Ditson Conductor's Award

**D**onald Portnoy, music director and conductor of the Augusta Symphony Orchestra and the University of South Carolina Symphony, has received Columbia's 2004 Ditson Conductor's Award for

his commitment to the performance of works by American composers.

Portnoy earned fame as guest conductor with major orchestras in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Buffalo and with other major and regional orchestras throughout the United States, Argentina, China, England, France, Germany, Russia, Taiwan and South Korea.

Robert Ward, chair of the Ditson Advisory Committee, recently presented the citation from President Lee C. Bollinger and a \$5,000 award from the Alice M. Ditson Fund to Portnoy at special performances with the Augusta Symphony Orchestra and the University of South Carolina Symphony Orchestra.

The Ditson Conductor's Award, the oldest award honoring conductors for their commitment to American music, was established in 1945 by the Alice M. Ditson Fund at Columbia University. Past recipients include Leonard Bernstein, Eugene Ormandy, JoAnn Falletta, Michael Tilson Thomas and James DePreist.

## Quotable Columbian

**P**eter Eisenberger, Columbia professor of earth and environmental science, recently testified before the House Science Committee on President Bush's Hydrogen Initiative to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil through the production of hydrogen fuel and a hydrogen-fueled car. The initiative envisions the competitive use of hydrogen in commercial transportation by the year 2020.

Eisenberger told the House committee: "The most promising hydrogen-engine technologies require 10 to 100 times improvements in cost or performance in order to be competitive. Current hydrogen production methods are four times more expensive than gasoline. Simply put, for the Hydrogen Initiative to succeed, major scientific breakthroughs are needed. The Hydrogen Initiative must not displace research into promising energy efficiency and renewable energy areas, and carbon sequestration. They become increasingly important means for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and enhancing our energy security in the event that the significant technology hurdles for the Initiative are not met within the proposed timeline."