When the first profiles of “Columbians Ahead of Their Time” went up on the Columbia 250 Web site last summer, religion student Paul Hackett had a candidate of his own in mind: Theos Casimir Bernard.

While not widely known, Bernard, who received his Ph.D. in philosophy at the University in 1943, was indeed a remarkable individual. In the 1930s he traveled widely in India and Tibet, writing extensively about his experiences. He was the first American to be initiated into the Tibetan Buddhist canon, which he brought back to the United States. He disappeared in the Punjab in 1947.

Hackett, who is in the Ph.D. program in religion but who also works as a computer programmer and consultant, decided to combine both pursuits. Using research and photos he’d collected over the years on the philosopher-explorer, he created a Web page on Bernard using the Columbia 250 Web site template, so that it resembled the profiles of other Columbians Ahead of Their Time, who range from philosopher John Dewey to founding father Alexander Hamilton to poet Allen Ginsberg.

Hackett submitted his completed Web page on Bernard to the Columbia 250 Web site staff, who were so impressed by Hackett’s work that they decided to add Theos Bernard to the diverse group of Columbians already profiled on the Web.

In an effort to encourage the kind of passion that Hackett brought to his project, the Columbia 250 Web site recently added a feature to form solicitations for Columbians Ahead of Their Time.

Another new feature is an invitation to “Write Columbia’s History.” Those who’ve studied, taught or worked at the University, and anyone else for that matter, can add their thoughts to a kind of virtual oral history of Columbia. Recent contributors have minced on the rapid advances in technology in education and Columbia’s contributions to the evolution of the computer.

Jerry Kisslinger, the University’s director of communications for development and alumni relations, explained the site’s new interactivity: “The goal is to include as many people as possible in telling Columbia’s history at 250. The site issues an invitation—to come and learn, and also to help us get the story right.”

“The city of New York, Columbia has at times been so busy growing that it has not done enough to collect and present its own history,” Kisslinger continued. “The 250th anniversary is an occasion to catch up, not just for professional historians, but for anyone who has insights and personal perspectives on that story. Columbians are notoriously opinionated, and we’d like to capture some of the energy of informed debate that marks our campus and alumni gatherings.”

For his part, Hackett says he’s “overjoyed” that Theos Bernard is now officially a Columbian ahead of his time. “The Columbia celebration in front of the Butler Library really inspired me,” Hack ett said. “It’s all starting to get to me. For the first time, I’m really proud to be part of a university movement—will be passed to keep the government funded until after the election.

During the week of March 7, the House and Senate budget committees are developing their separate budget resolutions for fiscal year 2005, which begins Oct. 1, and will subsequently attempt to work out their differences. Because of large deficits and disagreements about spending and savings, most budget predictions point to a “pay-as-you-go” budget year.

Departments of Defense and Homeland Security will be passed at the beginning of the fiscal year.

In fact, it is widely assumed that the presidential election, which usually helps to drive the passage of bills, will have little effect on final passage of the budget this year. Many observers believe that a continuing resolution—a stopgap measure that would keep federal agencies running—will be passed to keep the

C250 Web Site: Help Us Tell Columbia’s History

SOA Students Win Coca-Cola Refreshing Filmmaker’s Award at ShoWest Convention

SOA film students Brett Levner and Steve Sole have won the 2004 Coca-Cola Refreshing Filmmaker’s Award for their short film titled Being Reel. As the winners, their film will be shown on nearly 21,000 movie screens nationwide.

“This is an amazing opportunity,” said Levner, who wrote and directed the short. “Win ning the Coca-Cola Refreshing Filmmaker’s Award offers us our first chance to have a piece of our work viewed across America. It’s extremely rewarding to see so much hard work pay off in such a big way.”

“This competition gave us real experience in making a film, and being recognized as the winner is an opportunity for us to officially begin our careers,” added Sole, who produced the short.

Inspired by the passing of Levner’s grandmother, Being Reel begins with an older woman cleaning out her closet and disposing of a box of film reels. The films are found by a homeless man digging through the trash and are quickly discarded. But in the chaos that ensues as he tosses the trash into the street, the film is strong through a bike wheel like a projector. A flashlight shines through the celluloid reel while a Coke bottle reflects the moving images onto a white van, which serves as a screen.

Theo Goldberger, a New York native, he graduated in 1986 with a B.A. in music, and then studied music composition at Columbia University. He has worked as a musicologist and music critic, and has contributed to several music journals. He is currently a senior editor at Columbia University Press, and teaches music theory and composition at Columbia.

He is the author of several books on music, including “The Columbia Guide to Classical Music” and “The Columbia Guide to Jazz.” He is also the co-editor of “The Columbia Guide to Popular Music.”

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