Extreme Makeover: Student Services
By Dan Rivero

A nyone who walked into the personal office of Michelle Brown-Nevers this summer wouldn’t have found her there. Instead, they would have come across six members of her staff processing diplomas and trying to keep up their spirits despite the unexpected flooding of their building, Kent Hall.

On the weekend of June 23, flooding caused by renovations to Kent Plaza forced Brown-Nevers, assistant vice president for student administrative services and University Registrar, to displace 61 accounts, two separate areas. The registrar’s office and student administrative services, were finalizing phase one of bold steps. First, she had the one-floor of Kent, Brown-Nevers and Lisa Hogerty, executive vice president of student and administrative services, were finalizing phase two of their Student Services Transformation Initiative, which involved tearing down many walls, both physical and bureaucratic.

In a way, the flooding helped accelerate the work of our renovations,” Brown-Nevers said.

A few weeks ago, with the restoration of the staff to their original offices and a dry floor, Student and Administrative Services hosted an open house to celebrate the newly transformed Student Services Center.

“We wanted to cut the time that students spend here and we wanted to create an environment that was warm and inviting,” Brown-Nevers said.

To accomplish the transformation, Brown-Nevers took a number of bold steps. First, she had the center’s navigation signs amended for consistency, its walls repainted and its lighting improved. She also expanded the self-service corridor from four to 10 kiosks. On the personnel front, she arranged for the cross-training of employees who had previously worked in the registrar’s office and student accounts, two separate areas. The idea was that anyone at the front desk should be able to field diverse questions.

One of their Student Services Transformation Initiative, which involved tearing down many walls, both physical and bureaucratic.

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Václav Havel’s Columbia Opus

VAČLAV HAVEL’S COLUMBIA OPUS

By Mary-Lea Cox and Dan Rivero

A t last, the curtain has risen on Václav Havel’s residency at Columbia—a performance that has been several years in the making. CU Arts Initiative director Gregory Mosher, who is coordinating all the events associated with the visit of the Czech playwright-turned-president, remembers when President Bollinger first floated the idea.

President Bollinger suggested a Havel residency to me in the second conversation we ever had,” Mosher said. “Havel is an exemplar of everything the CU Arts Initiative is trying to accomplish because he energizes the arts on campus while also connecting the campus to the wider culture.

The opening act finally came on Oct. 26, when Havel turned up at the Stone Rose, an upscale bar in the Time Warner Center, for his official welcome to Columbia.

And now we’re reaching the climax of the show as the former Czech president delivers the Core lecture on Contemporary Civilization to sophomores today, the first of three scheduled performances during his seven-week residency, which ends on Dec. 15. The other two are a dialogue with President Clinton on Nov. 15 and a discussion on human rights with Nigerian writer and dramatist Wole Soyinka on Dec. 6.

The campus, meanwhile, is gripped by a kind of Havelmania, with “Havel at Columbia” gigs happening almost daily, taking advantage of the artist-president’s presence to explore new connections between the arts and the world of ideas.

As Gustavo Pérez Firmat, David Feinson professor of humanities and one of Havel’s many Columbia fans, put it: “Havel’s life and work demonstrate that conduct and performance can go hand in hand. Even though in contemporary American society the citizen-artist seems to have been replaced by the citizen-celebrity, Havel’s example is a powerful reminder that the arts can still be transformative.”

For event details, go to havel.columbia.edu.

Bilgrami Conjures a World Re-enchanted

Bilgrami Conjures a World Re-enchanted

By Mary-Lea Cox

If last year’s Columbia-hosted panel discussion on the intelligent design controversy made one thing clear: it’s that the stakes in the debate are much higher than simply arguing about whether the world was created in six days a few thousand years ago.

For Akeel Bilgrami, even though he is a secularist and an atheist, such spiritual yearnings are not only understandable but also supremely human. Columbia’s ljubomirsko professor of philosophy has argued in many essays that in our modern world, “religion is not primarily a matter of belief and doctrine but about the sense of community and shared values it provides in contexts where other forms of solidarity—such as a strong labor movement—are missing.”

Invited by President Bollinger and Provost Alan Brinkley to deliver this semester’s University Lecture on Oct. 25th, Bilgrami chose to focus on the roots of modern society’s “disenchanted,” a term coined by German philosopher Max Weber in reference to the process through which all aspects of the world become explainable by natural science.

Bilgrami argued that there is a distinction between a “thin” and “thick” notion of scientific rationality. The former is politically and culturally insidious whereas the latter views nature in essentially pedantic terms—as something that is to be conquered with nothing but material gain as its end. Many of us recoil from this “thick” concept, claimed Bilgrami, because it supports the destruction of nature and has disastrous cultural and political consequences.

Bilgrami devoted much of his talk to tracing the origins of “thick” rationality as well as to the critiques it has received over the years. He identified the 17th century as the critical turning point, when scientific theorists such as Isaac Newton and Robert Boyle put forward the idea of matter
Is Bard Hall a musical oasis for medical students?

Dear Alma’s Owl,

I was in Bard Hall the other day and heard piano music—what’s that about?

Music to My Ears

You might think that I never leave the comfort of Alma’s gown, but I do fly uptown from time to time, and one of my favorite perches is the balcony of the F&S Club lounge in Bard Hall. I love that view. If the undergrads in Morningside Heights knew about it, they might stop bragging about the view from East Campus.

Bard Hall is a superb Art Deco structure designed by James Gamble Rogers, who took full advantage of its cliffside location to provide sweeping views of the Hudson River and the newly completed George Washington Bridge. Both bridge and hall are 75 years old this year.

But digress. You were asking about music. Just the other day while perched on my preferred balcony, I heard a young medical student singing. “Chronic organic symptoms/Toxic or hypersensitive involving the eye, the ear, the nose and throat.”

At first, I thought she was studying for an exam—is singing a new mnemonic device for weary medical students? But then I caught the refrain. “In other words, just from worrying if the wedding is on or off a person can develop a cough”—at which point I realized that she must be practicing “Kid/alde’s Lament” for the Bard Hall Players’ upcoming production of Guys and Dolls (to be held in the Alumnae Auditorium, 650 W. 168th St, Nov 16-19).

— Music to My Ears

Ask Alma’s Owl

No, medical students don’t spend all their time in operating theaters. Many of the uptown students can act, sing and dance. They also have the good fortune to be able to practice on a piano once owned, according to Bard Hall oral history, by Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff.

It helps that several Medical Center faculty have taken an active interest in cultivating students’ artistic bent. After Guys and Dolls closes, the actress Angela Lansbury is scheduled to talk to the Bard Hall faculty and staff about her experiences as a stage and film star, and a former Bard Hall player.

For more information on Bard Hall, contact the special invitation of Jay Lefkowitch, a professor of clinical psychology.

FIDDLER ON THE STEPS

Buckling on the steps of Low may not make Rob Hecht a rich man, but the Illinois native, now a resident of Brooklyn, found it a pleasant way to entertain passersby.

Busking on the steps of Low may not make Rob Hecht a rich man, but the Illinois native, now a resident of Brooklyn, found it a pleasant way to

RECENT SIGHTINGS

2

MILESTONES

ROGER BAGNALL, professor of classics and history, is one of 10 corresponding fellows elected this year to the British Academy.

Among the 65 newly elected members to the Institute of Medicine, four from Columbia: SUZANNE BAREK, adjunct professor of nursing, NUNTY DIAMOND, chair of rheumatology, SHERRY GUID, professor and chair of the Palm Medical Group, and STEPHEN GOFF, Higgins professor of biochemistry and molecular biophysics.

MEDA BHADOLAKAR has joined CUIF in the newly created role of chief information security officer.

History professor MATTHEW CONNELLY is currently a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, where he researches how people think about and prepare for the future.

RAY FISMAN, professor of finance and economics at the business school, has earned a Rising Star Award from the Aspen Institute’s Business and Society Program for his promising work on corporate social responsibility.

VINCENT GUILLAM-ROMAS, an associate professor at the School of Social Work, has received the 2006 Comité Noviembre “Lo Mejor de Nuestra Comunidad” [The Best of Our Community] Award, in recognition of his work with Puerto Rican and other Latino families.

JOSEPH HARNEY has been appointed to serve in the new role of vice president for procurement services in the Finance Division.

JACQUELINE VAN GORKOM, professor of astronomy and an expert on the evolution of galaxies, has been elected as a corresponding member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences.

Phi Beta Kappa has honored CHARLES TILLY, Joseph L. Buttenreitter professor of social science, with its 2006 Sidney Hook Memorial Award.

FRANCES VAVRUS, associate professor of education at Teachers College, has received a Fulbright scholarship to lecture and conduct research in Tanzania.

GRANTS & GIFTS

Major Investment in Clinical Science

WHO GAVE IT: National Institutes of Health (NIH)

HOW MUCH: $54 million

WHO GOT IT: Columbia University Medical Center

WHAT FOR: To improve medical care by developing new approaches to reaching underserved populations.

Columbia is one of 12 initial academic participants.

HOW IT WILL BE USED: To establish an Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research.

Aid for Africa

WHO GAVE IT: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Global Development Program

HOW MUCH: $15 million

WHAT FOR: To advance scientific research and efforts to end poverty, disease and hunger in Africa.

HOW IT WILL BE USED: To help ramp up the Earth Institute’s efforts dedicated to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Fostering Science Careers

WHO GAVE IT: Aker Foundation

HOW MUCH: $4 million

WHO GOT IT: Columbia University/Barnard College

WHAT FOR: To provide research experience for students interested in pursuing a career in science.

Columbia/Barnard is one of 10 initial program partners.

HOW IT WILL BE USED: To fund a science research program for undergraduates from Columbia/Barnard as well as other colleges and universities, to be held every summer for four years.

Another Boost for Diversity

WHO GAVE IT: Howard Hughes Medical Institute

HOW MUCH: $2 million

WHO GOT IT: Diversity Council for Professional Schools, chaired by Jean Howard

WHAT FOR: To encourage the creation of a more inclusive faculty at Columbia’s professional schools.

HOW IT WILL BE USED: To fund 10 short-term visits by potential candidates for hire, three semester-long visiting faculty positions and 10 research fellowships per year for three years.

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The Record welcomes your input for news items, calendar entries, and staff profiles. You can submit your suggestions at www.columbia.edu/cu/record/news/new-content.html.
IN SEARCH OF JUSTICE

Václav Havel became one of the transformational figures of our time for his victorious David-and-Goliath battle against communism. His example has special meaning for filmmaker Milena Kaneva, who recalls growing up in her native Bulgaria dreaming of living in a democracy and feeling inspired by Havel’s courage and creativity.

What Kaneva didn’t realize was that she would one day earn the admiration of her childhood hero for her own work in promoting human rights. That moment arrived earlier this year when Havel himself presented her with a special human rights award at the One World Film Festival in Prague for her documentary drama Total Denial: Doe v. UNOCAL.

Now Kaneva will be linked with Havel again, as Columbia Law School has partnered with the CU Arts Initiative in sponsoring a screening and discussion of her film as part of the “Havel at Columbia” residency.

The film, which was also featured at this year’s Human Rights Watch Film Festival at Lincoln Center, tells the story of human rights activist Ka Hsaw Wa and the historic lawsuit he helped a group of Burmese villagers bring all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 2004, under our country’s Alien Tort Claims Act. The villagers claimed that human rights abuses were committed by the Burmese army when two multinational energy companies, California-based UNOCAL and the French-owned TOTAL (hence the “T otal” of the film’s title), built a natural gas pipeline through the Burmese jungle. The villagers provided compelling evidence that the army burned their homes, forced them into slave labor, and even raped and killed their relatives. In this globalized version of A Civil Action, Ka Hsaw Wa and the “John Doe” plaintiffs, whose identities remained confidential in order to protect them from reprisals in Burma, claimed that UNOCAL knew about and tolerated these offenses.

While the event is open to the entire University community, Kaneva said, “It’s very important to me to have the film screened in front of law students, who will one day be the defenders of the values it presents.”

Jupiter-Like Planet Makes a Hot and Cold Sensation

Call it an out-of-this-world thermometer.

An international team of scientists working on NASA’s Spitzer Space Telescope has made the first measurements of the day and night temperatures of a planet 40 light years away from Earth. The team, which included Columbia astronomer Kristen Menou, used infrared data from Spitzer to reveal that a gaseous Jupiter-like planet (Upsilon Andromeda b) circling very close to its sun (Upsilon Andromeda) is always as hot as fire on one side and potentially as cold as ice on the other.

Menou, whose research at Columbia focuses on how wind affects planetary temperature, is interpreting data from the Spitzer telescope showing the extraterrestrial planet’s “phase curve” (plotting of the amount of light emitted by the planet as it orbits its sun). Menou believes the telescope’s findings offer hope that it can be used to study the diversity of a whole new class of planets.

Blue Goes Green

Anti-pollutant agents infiltrated Low Plaza on Oct. 25. They were there to take part in Campus Sustainability Day, part of the nationwide effort to celebrate the work being done by college communities across the country to advance sustainability. Columbia marked the occasion with a five-hour-long event, which also signaled the official launch of the Office of Environmental Stewardship under Nilda Mesa, a former Washington environmental official.

Participants visited information tables for tips on reducing energy and water consumption, while case studies showing how various campuses have achieved their environmental objectives were projected on a jumbo TV screen situated on College Walk. Meanwhile, Columbia’s sustainability efforts are extending beyond its campus into greater New York. Mayor Michael Bloomberg recently announced that the Earth Institute will advise his new Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability, and that he’d asked SIPA’s Ester Fuchs to serve on his Sustainability Advisory Board.

The Beginnings of Global Trade

Those who were avid viewers of the recent PBS series To the Ends of the Earth, based on the best-selling sea trilogy by William Golding, may be in the mood for another salty tale of high jinx on the high seas—a tale brought to us via a doctoral thesis by Emily Erickson, GSAS’06, which recently took the form of an article in the Journal of Sociology, co-authored with Columbia sociologist Peter Bearman, director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy.

Erickson and Bearman plumbed a treasure-trove of data from the 4,572 voyages commissioned by the East India Company between 1601 and 1833, totaling over 280,000 port-to-port journeys. They discovered that many of the sea captains in command of these trips took advantage of the company’s resources to engage in illicit trading for their own personal gain—smuggling goods such as liquor and guns and trading them for commodities like tea and spices.

While this finding in and of itself might seem unremarkable, Erickson and Bearman went the further step of showing that the personal trading undertaken by these rogue sea captains marked an important step in the formation of a global free market. They credit the enterprising seamen for having driven the changes that led to the Industrial Revolution, giving individual entrepreneurs the opportunity to accumulate wealth.

The pair of sociologists were able to reach these conclusions using social network analysis. As they wrote in their journal article: “By focusing on the micro level, we are able to observe the development of complex multilateral exchange circuits that give rise to densely integrated network components.”

Next, perhaps they should pitch a new PBS series: The Ends of the Earth. The Beginnings of Global Trade.
Gregory Mosher knows the meaning of “You’re only as good as your last performance.” He has followed this directive religiously during his 30-year involvement with the theater world, where he now has nearly 200 academic productions to his name. His many telepods boasts nearly every major theater award, including two Tonys, and he can dine out on stories of having directed and produced the works of countless theater greats, from Samuel Beckett and Tennessee Williams to Mike Nichols and David Mamet.

At Columbia, Mosher is performing in a new role both for him and for the University— that of arts coordinator. Nearly three years ago, President Bollinger invited him to campus to jumpstart a new arts initiative. Thanks to Mosher’s efforts, Columbia students can now visit major museums for free, take guided tours of the city’s trendiest galleries, and learn about the latest arts events on and off campus through an online portal, cuarts.com.

In addition, Mosher has been arranging residencies on campus for legends like Mike Nichols, who produced a play at Columbia, and this year the campus is hosting playwright and director David Mamet. Mosher’s efforts, Columbia students can now visit major museums for free, take guided tours of the city’s trendiest galleries, and learn about the latest arts events on and off campus through an online portal, cuarts.com.

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The Amazing Race: Election 2006

Lincoln Mitchell, professor of international affairs: Tacitus's election was the beginning of the end of the Bush era. Smart Republican operatives, in addition to trying to determine who to blame for their defeat, are already looking towards 2008. It is in this context that Bush's resignation makes the most sense. The Bush team is looking for a pro-war candidate who can win in 2008. Their best hope is Senator John McCain. McCain has worked to create a pro-war anti-Ramírez niche in the Senate. It is therefore easier for McCain to campaign as a more thoughtful pro-war candidate.

Sharyn Lee O'Halloran, George Ramírez professor of international and public affairs: The election results should be viewed as a referendum on the Republican Party, not as an endorsement of the Democratic platform. We should anticipate a pause in the Republicans' push to pass a conserva-

tive agenda—bans on gay marriage, stem cell research and abor-

tion rights all faced defeat. From now, to entice a broad-based electoral coalition, Democrats will need to address issues of national security, income disparity, economic competitiveness, workforce displacement and environmental degradation—macro trends that are all exacerbated by globalization.

Dorian T. Warren, assistant professor of political science: In terms of African American politics, I didn't expect Harold Ford, Jr., to win in Tennessee, though I thought he should have been very close. Black Republicans running in Maryland (Steele for U.S. Senate) and Ohio (Blackwell for governor) lost, just as I'd anticipated—though Steele was able to get a larger share of the African American vote than most pundits predicted (about 25 percent, according to exit polls). Dole Paul made history in Massachusetts as the only second black governor to be elected since Reconstruction.
**EVENT HIGHLIGHTS NOVEMBER 13-24**

**MONDAY**

**November 13**

*Egalitarian Campaign's 2006 Symposium*
Two-day event on strategies for closing achievement gaps. Sponsored by the Campaign for Educational Equity. Teachers College, Cowen Center. 610-993-9360.

**Tuesday**

**November 14**

*CBS Screenings* 1-2 p.m. Columbia’s Favorite Things. 6:00-9:00 p.m. American Film Institute, Room 1234. kbf10@columbia.edu.

*Town Hall Meeting* 6:30-8:00 p.m. Lenox Gymnasium, Dodge Fitness Center.

*Women’s Basketball vs. Bucknell* 6:00-9:00 p.m. Lenox Gymnasium, Dodge Fitness Center.

*Wecan’t Live Without it* Series with Karen Bussard, horn/clarinet, and theater. 6:00-8:00 p.m. Miller Theatre. Tickets: $5. 212-854-1779.

**Wednesday**

**November 15**

*Report on Sandern Foundation* With Mexican women activists Andrea De La Barerra Montpellier, Mirian Ruiz Mendez and Verónica Barerra Montpellier, in residence at Columbia until December as part of the Human Rights Advocates Program. 12:30-1:30 p.m. School of Social Work (1255 Amsterdam Avenue at 121st St.), Room 033. jy2223@cumc.columbia.edu.

*Photography Exhibition* Featuring Peggy Jared Kaplan’s portraits of Russian artists who were sent to persecution under the Soviet regime. 6:00-8:00 p.m. Faculty House. 212-854-4145.

**Thursday**

**November 16**

*Ball Lecture* 7:00-8:30 p.m. Center for Biomedical Engineering, in Carriage House Tisch. Tickets: $5. 1130 Amsterdam Avenue Extension, Schermerhorn Extension, 5th Floor. 917-302-1609.

*Hedgeman Foundation’s 25th Anniversary Gala* 6:30-9:00 p.m. International Affairs Bldg., Room 1219. jf2102@cumc.columbia.edu.

**Friday**

**November 17**

*School of Science* 1-2 p.m. Schapiro Building. 5th Floor. kl2020@columbia.edu.

*Edgar Allan Poe* 7:00-10:00 p.m. Miller Theater. 212-302-7799.

**Saturday**

**November 18**

*Men’s Basketball vs. IUP* 7:00-8:00 p.m. Levien Gymnasium, Dodge Fitness Center.

**Sunday**

**November 19**

*Women’s Basketball vs. Old Dominion* 7:00-8:00 p.m. Levien Gymnasium, Dodge Fitness Center.

**Monopoly**

Tales from Ovid: Starting the 2007 M.A. Teaching class. 3:00 p.m. Theatre of Riverside Church. mo1224@columbia.edu.

**Around Town**

**Where can Václav Havel’s dog get presidential treatment in New York?**

I’m from Poland, the country right next door to Havel’s. We don’t spoil our presidential treatment in New York?

— Maria Meade (dog: Phyllis), Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology

**Editor’s Pick**

**OPUS 118 CONCERT**

Look for Opus 118 to come to Low Library on December 7th for their annual FiddleFest benefit dinner. Opus 118 Harlem School of Music, a private, non-profit organization, was established in 1991 by violin teacher Roberta Guaspari to save music programs in three East Harlem public elementary schools. Meryl Streep, who played the role of Guaspari in the 1995 movie “Music of the Heart,” will be honored at the event. For more info, call 212-831-4455.

**Go online!**


**The Record welcomes your input for news items, calendar entries, and staff profiles. You can submit your suggestions at:**

BREAK TIME

Giving Thanks in the City

By Erich Erving

 Tradition has it that the Pilgrims held the first Thanksgiving feast to cele- brate the fruits of their harvest and to thank the Indians for teaching them how to plant corn. We couldn’t cook a Thanksgiving dinner if our lives depended on it, having failed many times in the culinary skills let alone the fine art of roasting a turkey.

But the good news is, plenty of the city’s restaurants are offering pies-thanksgiving meals for the holiday. Here are some of my top choices (a couple are outside the Heights, but we do get Thanksgiving off)

KITCHENETTE
1272 Amsterdam Ave. between 122nd and 123rd St.

As close as you can get to dining in your grandmother’s kitchen, circa 1935, Kitchenette receives high marks for serving up comfort food in large portions. For Thanksgiving, you can enjoy a full turkey meal with all the fixings, served between 5:00 and 9:00 p.m., $48 per person.

PICNIC MARKET AND CAFÉ
2665 Broadway between 101st and 102nd Sts.

Some may know Picnic from Café Science, but you may not have heard that this organic market will be offering both dine-in and take-out Thanksgiving meals. The food is mostly French, which means delicious if not entirely traditional. For details, go to www.picnicmarket.com.

YE WAVERLY INN
15 Danie Street (at Waverly Place)

As one of the oldest places to eat in Manhattan, Ye Waverly Inn seems an appropriate setting for Thanksgiving: roaring fires, cozy rooms, plenty of Revolutionary charm. But will it be open in time for the holiday? The inn closed about a year ago, but rumor has it that it might reopen mid-November. Keep calling for updates: 212-243-7900.

CHUMLEYS
865 Broadway (at Barrow Street in the West Village)

A one-time Village speakeasy and literary hangout, Chumleys may not feel like much of an escape from Columbia—but its patrons have include several of my classmates. I’d say she has a pretty good shot at getting approved.

A: What is your role with CU Arts Initiative?

Q. I work mostly on the campus level. Typically, I meet with 3-4 students and student representatives per week. I constantly try to find ways to connect students to the arts, and to each other through the arts.

A. Upper Manhattan, where you work with a lot of high school students, is filled with museums. How do you introduce students to arts institutions in their own neighborhoods?

Q. We formed a Havel Student Advisory Committee earlier this semester, and they provided terrific feedback. For example, we organized a series of chamber concerts in one of the community centers on campus. We then used this feedback for future events.

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Brown-Nevers hopes to build on these successes by tackling online registration next. She also plans to hold more meetings with the office’s stakeholders—Columbia students—to solicit their feedback. She recently visited the University of Minnesota, ranked high in customer-service delivery, to learn about their techniques. Another model that she likes was developed by Wells Fargo for its online banking and customer services. She particularly envies the quick turnaround time at the company’s call center.

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