By Dan Rivero

I n t r o d u c i n g civil rights pioneer Bob Moses at the Graduate School of Journalism on the evening of Nov. 30, Dean Nicholas Lemann described him as someone who often leads with silence. He was proven right. Invited to headline an event that celebrated the creation of the Andrew Goodman Scholarship for the Coverage of Civil Rights at Columbia’s journalism school, Moses may have been the quietest person in the room—as well as the most persuasive.

The scholarship in Goodman’s name will be awarded annually to a student at the journalism school who is interested in civil rights and social justice reporting.

“Tonight I would like to ask, as a way to honor Andy, that we put ourselves to work,” said Moses, founder of the Algebra Project, which advocates for mathematics literacy in inner-city and rural areas. Moses explained that he had organized the Freedom Summer program of 1964, aimed at getting blacks in the South to register to vote. Goodman, who came from an affluent white family on the New York’s Upper West Side, was inspired by Moses’ example to participate in the program. During Freedom Summer, he and two other civil rights workers were ambushed and murdered in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in a crime that became part of the civil rights movement.

Mississippi, in a crime that became known in honor of Zhang Yimou, director of the award-winning 1991 film Raise the Red Lantern, which won the director’s first foray into directing opera.

The opera, which stars Plácido Domingo and will have its world premiere on Dec. 21, tells the story of Qin Shi Huang, the man credited with unifying China some 2,000 years ago. He also built the Great Wall and created an army of terracotta warriors to guard his tomb.

The red lanterns were hung in honor of Zhang Yimou, director of the award-winning 1991 film Raise the Red Lantern, who is making his first foray into directing opera.

Yimou ascended the red-carpeted steps of Low with two of his collaborators: the Academy Award-winning composer Tan Dun and acclaimed Chinese-American novelist Ha Jin. Dun and Jin co-wrote the opera’s libretto. All three men admitted to having a long-standing fascination with China’s first emperor who, according to Yimou, remains the “most controversial figure in Chinese history.” A great unifier, he was also a brutal dictator who burned books and buried Confucian scholars alive.

At the same time, they expressed the hope that they had created an opera that transcends Chinese history and has a universal appeal. Dun, who received a degree in musicology from Columbia in 1993, explained: “We wanted to take this opportunity to explore whether opera can be reborn at this time. Can we keep the old fans and bring in new ones?”

Simone Dine, James Schamus, and Tan Dun listen to Zhang Yimou (far right) discuss opera’s unique appeal.

Vaclav Havel and Wole Soyinka are two of the world’s most well-known playwrights, but it wasn’t art that led them to share a stage at Columbia University’s Miller Theatre on Wednesday Dec. 6.

As President Bollinger said in his introduction, both men have spent time behind bars in their home countries, imprisoned for their political views. Havel, who is finishing a seven-week artist’s residency at Columbia, spent nearly five years as a political prisoner of the communist regime in his native Czechoslovakia. That was before he became president—first of Czechoslovakia in its death throes and then of the newly formed Czech Republic. Soyinka spent nearly two years in solitary confinement in the 1960s after his plays drew criticism from the Nigerian government.

Coming together on the Miller Theatre stage to help celebrate the opening of Columbia’s newly formed Center for Human Rights Documentation and Research—the largest such archive in the world—the two citizen-artists used the opportunity to advocate for those who are still in bondage around the world.

Soyinka, who 20 years ago became the first African recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, delivered an impassioned speech about the “unfathomable business of human enslavement,” pointing to examples of modern-day slavery in Ghana. He also called for an end to the ethnic warfare in the Darfur region of the Sudan, which he said is rooted in the history of Arab-African slavery.

Havel, who was making his third official appearance on campus as his residency drew to a close, praised Columbia’s new archive, emphasizing that international solidarity around human rights is “possible only when based on good knowledge.”

An infusion of documents from
Where can I swim on campus to work off my holiday excesses?

Dear Alma’s Owl,

To get through this season of overindulgence, I’ve made an early New Year’s resolution: I’m going to start swimming again come January. How easy is that to do on campus?

— Potential Holiday Weight Gain Victim

Dear Holiday Victim,

Your question might have been better directed to a penguin. Owls fly.

Then again, penguins like their water. Fortunately, two beautiful pools remain on campus to work off your holiday excesses—after recent building renovations, someone forgot to remove the tarpaulin from the sky-light. Even at midnight, the pool is quite dark. (Not a problem for me, of course.)

The fourth pool is located uptown on Columbia’s medical campus in 75-year-old Bard Hall. A triumph of art deco style—with wonderful tile work, a gallery, and windows with a view of the George Washington Bridge and the New Jersey Palisades—the Bard pool is one of Columbia’s hidden treasures. Membership (which includes the gym) is at a half-price special as the membership year ends on June 1.

Dodge Physical Fitness Center:

412-385-7000

Teachers College Aquatic Center:

212-678-3307

Bard Athletic Center:

212-304-7000

To whom does Alma Mater turn when she needs guidance? Minerva’s familiar is the wise owl, hidden within the folds of her gown. Questions for the owl should be directed to curecord@columbia.edu. Authors of letters we publish receive a record mug.
Pamuk: Writers Need Free Speech and Space for Daydreaming

Turkish novelist and 2006 Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk will likely daydream his next great work against the backdrop of the falling autumn leaves of Morningside Heights. Nicholas Dirks, vice president for Arts and Sciences, recently announced that Pamuk, who has been visiting Columbia as a fellow with the Committee on Global Thought, will continue to serve as professor during the first semester of each academic year for the next five years.

Dirks delivered this news at the start of a conversation between Pamuk and President Lee C. Bollinger. Sponsored by the Heyman Center for the Humanities, the Nov. 19 event focused on one of Bollinger’s pet topics, the concept of free speech and how it is interpreted throughout the world. Bollinger, a noted scholar of the First Amendment, has authored many articles and books on the subject, including The Tolerant Society and Images of a Free Press.

Free speech is one of Pamuk’s pet topics, too. Not only is it important to him as an author, but last year he found himself accused of the crime of insulting Turkish identity because of having spoken to a Swiss newspaper about Turkey’s failure to come to terms with the massacre of the Armenians during World War I and, more recently, with its treatment of the Kurds. The charges, which could have landed Pamuk in prison for three years, were dropped in January of this year in response to international pressure.

Pamuk said that, despite his recent experience, freedom of speech has gradually been improving in Turkey. He added that as a novelist, he is not interested in engaging in politics per se but in chronicling what happens when various ideologues clash.

Describing his novels as collections of daydreams, Pamuk said he isolates himself for hours on end in an attempt to escape the non-creative side of his life and enter a new state of mind. “Most of the time I’m defending my space,” he told his Columbia audience.

With the holidays approaching, where’s a good place to volunteer?

The homeless shelter for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender youth at Trinity Lutheran Church on 100th St. and Amsterdam. The need for volunteering opportunities in the countries you visit.

— Reverend Janet Blair, Lutheran Campus Ministry

A new generation of Beat writers may take refuge at Columbia once again, as University officials recently announced the creation of an undergraduate creative writing major starting next fall.

Currently, the only undergraduates who can pursue a writing concentration are those in the School of General Studies (GS). Details for the new major are not yet finalized, but the goal is to replace the existing GS program to allow both GS students and Columbia College students to major in creative writing—the latter for the first time, giving them access like never before to School of the Arts faculty.

Ben Marcus, chair of the Writing Division in the School of the Arts, and Alan Ziegler, last year’s chair, are credited with designing the new major. Both the GS and Columbia College Committees on Instruction unanimously approved the proposal for a five-year pilot, with the help of strong support from Marcus Ziegler, Arnold Aronson, Daniel Kleiman and Richard Locke from the School of the Arts.

The new degree program will require 36 credits—more than the current GS major—with five writing workshops and four seminars on literature and literary technique, to be taught by faculty from the School of the Arts, as well as three related courses in other departments.

Happiness consists in realizing it is all a great strange dream.

— Jack Kerouac, Beat writer and former CC student

Senegalese Historian to Head Sipa’s African Institute

Mamadou Diouf sees Columbia University as a prime location for the study of Africa. It’s convenient, he says, for assembling the kinds of people he thinks should be involved in a “global conversation” on the problems Africa faces as well as potential solutions—from UN officials to Wall Street analysts, from Harlem residents to newly arrived immigrants.

Diouf, a historian of colonial and post-colonial Africa with a particular interest in West African societies, will be arriving at Columbia in July to direct the Institute of African Affairs at the School of International and Public Affairs.

President Bollinger has called the hiring of Diouf “an important step toward fulfilling our goal of making Columbia the foremost center for teaching and research, in both theory and practice, on Africa—its history and culture, its politics and economics, its challenges in public health and its extraordinary human potential.”

Commenting on the long search process for the institute director (the position has been vacant for two years), Vice President of Arts and Sciences Nicholas Dirks said, “Mamadou has a broad vision for the future of African studies at Columbia, encompassing a range of policy issues concerning political and economic development on the one hand, and the social and cultural dimensions of recent changes across the African continent on the other.”

A native of the Republic of Senegal with a Ph.D. from the Sorbonne, Diouf is currently a professor in the Department of History at the University of Michigan. At Columbia, he will also become a member of the faculty of the Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures.

Senegalese Historian to Head Sipa’s African Institute

Images of a Free Press

And the Beat Goes On...
Traditions, Young and Old

The annual Tree Lighting Ceremony may have the feeling of an ancient tradition, but in fact it’s just nine years old. This year’s event, held on Dec. 7, drew several hundred Colombians onto Low Plaza to watch President Bollinger switch on the lights for the trees lining College Walk, each of which is covered in thousands of tiny white bulbs. The aromas of hot mulled cider and roasted chestnuts spread across the campus to John Jay Hall. The activities, members of the Blue Key Society, dressed in colonial costume, marched a ceremonial Yule log—now there’s an ancient tradition, but in fact it’s just nine years old. This year’s event, held on Dec. 7, drew several hundred

Slobohm, President Havel

On Dec. 15, the University said a fond “slobohm” (“goodbye”) to its visiting artist, Václav Havel. The former Czech president’s seven-week residency brought a flurry of lectures, interviews, conversations, performances and panelists centered on the theme of human rights. Among the less-reported highlights: two performances at Miller Theatre of Havel’s The Bridge’s Opera, by Columbia and Barnard theatre students; a viewing of Plastic People of the Universe, the Czech rock band behind Havel’s Charter 77; a conversation on literature and citizenship between Columbia’s Arthur Danto and Nobel Prize-winning novelist and visiting fellow Orhan Pamuk; and a panel on theatre and citizenship held at the Public, Playwright and actor Wallace Shawn (below) was one of the panelists.

Citizen-Artists

Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International USA and the Committee of Concerned Scientists were what turned the Columbia libraries into the largest repository of human rights materials in the world. Gregory Mosher, director of the CU Arts Initiative, said that the conversation between Soyinka and Havel was “just the kind of event you dream about when you think about the arts in an academic setting.” While both are formidable artists, the two men are also “profoundly engaged with the important issues of social justice, Moses explained, the audience could pay tribute to what Goodman had hoped to accomplish as a civil-rights activist. Goodman’s brother David spoke at the event about his longstanding relationship with Columbia University and his belief that the school will use the scholarship to nurture reporters interested in journalism that shines a light on issues of inequality.

Bob Moses Talk

Continued from page 1

Celebirty Sightings

Left: Meryl Streep and Alan Alda attended the Opus 118 FiddleFeast (below), held in Low Library on Dec. 7, where Streep was honored for her work with the Harlem School of Music. Alda co-chaired the event. Right: On Nov. 29, hip-hop star and actor Ludacris and actor Emmy Rossum led a discussion on HIV education at SIPA, in honor of World AIDS Day (Dec. 1).

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

Hint: If you were Scrooge, you would almost certainly be confronted with this image. Can you guess what it is? Send answers to curecord@columbia.edu. First to e-mail us the right answer receives a RECORD mug.

ANSWER TO LAST CHALLENGE: Savage’s mural of Athena in Butler Library foyer. WINNER: Ed Hambleton
Columbia faculty pick the most significant events of the last 12 months and report on the trends they’ll be tracking in the coming year.
Charles W. Calomiris, Henry Kaufman professor of financial institutions at Columbia Business School

Picks for 2006:
1. Japan’s increased growth
2. Russia’s decision to play hardball on natural gas with Europe
3. Continuing disengagement with the Basel capital standards (recommended revisions to international standards) as a practical guide to bank regulatory policy
4. Italy’s fiscal policy scandal, which presages continuing problems for euro zone fiscal coordination and, ultimately, risks for the euro.

Trends to watch:
1. A rise in U.S. interest rates could have a dramatic adverse effect on the prices of emerging market bonds, particularly in Latin America.
2. How Turkey’s EU ambitions will play out this year has important economic and global security implications. (It does not seem to be going well.)
3. China is making deep strategic partnerships with resource producers in Africa, Asia and Latin America—what impact will this have on commodities producers?
4. India needs to curtail expenditure growth, but can it find the political will?

GIL EYAL, professor of sociology and the author of a historical study of the Israeli state

Picks for 2006:
1. The unraveling of Iraq.
2. The war in Lebanon, an unforeseen ripple effect of the American occupation of Iraq. Is the dangerous ingredient of Israel pressuring the Lebanese government to control its territory, which ends up being adopted?
3. The victory of the Democrats in the U.S. elections, showing that events in Iraq have finally had a rebound effect—while also increasing the volatility of Middle Eastern politics by presenting the possibility of a quick American withdrawal from Iraq.

RAY FISMAN, professor of finance and economics and director of the Social Enterprise Program at Columbia Business School

Picks for 2006:
1. A wave of anti-capitalist popular sentiment has spread through Latin America and Russia, leading to increased expropriation of private assets by governments. While there have not yet been signs of a trend (Reddy catches on in the U.S.), indigenous companies have had to renegotiate their agreements with the countries involved.
2. Less surprisingly, the economy continues to move to China.

BRUCE C. GREENWALD, Robert Heilbrunn professor of finance and asset management at Columbia Business School

Picks for 2006:
1. The difficulties faced by such juggernaut global companies as Wal-Mart and Dell, which are still being cited by the new left-leaning, and the relative successes of more locally focused business strategies.
2. The continuing growth in overall business profitability, which was driven by increased concentration on efficient operations (rather than the grand visions of the dot-com era)—despite the pressure of global competition.
3. The surprising resilience of relatively small, industry-focused manufacturing operations in Europe (especially Scandinavia and Northern Europe).

ANDREW J. NATHAN, Class of 1919 professor, political science department chair and co-editor of East Asian Papers

Picks for 2006:
China’s human rights situation this year was a puzzling mix of cracking down and liberalizing:
1. There were many arrests of political and religious activists. Internet writers and journalists, yet the procedure for death penalty appeals was improved in a way that could reduce the vast number of executions.
2. China imposed new regulations on information released by foreign news agencies while also announcing other measures to reduce government control over foreign reporters’ travel within China as well as their access to interview subjects.
3. The bizarre handling of the case of blind activist Chen Guangcheng, who filed a lawsuit in his native Shandong province and, as a result, was sentenced to four years in prison. But what was surprising—and to my knowledge, unprecedented—is that a higher court sent the case back to be retried. Yet on second trial the local court imposed the same verdict and sentence. We seem to be witnessing a struggle among various forces over how much treaty law local officials are going to take above the law.

Trend to watch:
China will hold its 17th Party Congress in fall 2007. We are likely to see two new members elected to the top ranking body: both of whom are from the Fifth Generation of Chinese leaders—a first. If things go smoothly, the Fifth Generation will take over power completely at the 18th Party Congress in 2012. This kind of deliberate, orderly succession has become characteristic of the Chinese Communist Party post-Mao. It remains to be seen, however, how long the process will continue—given not only the tendency of organizations to decay but also the huge challenges the party faces in a rapidly changing, turbulent society.

GAVIN SCHMIDT, research scientist at the Center for Climate Systems Research at the Earth Institute

Trend to watch:
The latest assessment from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in spring 2007—the most peer-reviewed document on the science of climate change ever produced—it will very likely enhance the conclusions of the 2001 report as well as the IPCC’s new trend (finally catching on in the U.S.) toward finding an appropriate policy response to climate change.

GARY SICK, adjunct professor of international affairs and senior research scholar at SIPA’s Middle East Institute

Picks for 2006:
1) I was surprised by Hezbollah’s kidnapping of some Israeli soldiers along the Green Line.
2) I was even more surprised by Israel’s massive (but ultimately futile and counter-productive) bombardment of Lebanon for more than 30 days.
3) One important development of little surprise, which was a non-event. The U.S. did not use military force against Iran as many had predicted at the beginning of the year.

Trends to watch:
1) Changes—especially in intelligence performance—at the Pentagon as the neo-conservatives retire and Robert Gates takes over as Secretary of Defense.
2) How Vice President Cheney tries to find himself increasingly isolated within an administration under siege.
3) The emergence (or non-emergence) of serious alternative policy leadership in the Democratic Party as the 2008 campaign begins.

ELKE WEBER, professor of international business at Columbia Business School and co-director of the Center for the Decision Sciences in ISERP

Picks for 2006:
1) Most unexpected China’s growing (albeit gradual) willingness to line up to its responsibilities as a major geopolitical and economic player—for example, with respect to Darfur.
2) The beginnings of coordinated action for taddling global warming. At Columbia’s Global Roundtable on Climate Change are representatives from reinsurance and utilities industries as well as from foreign governments, U.S. state governments and religious communities—all of whom deplore the refusal of the U.S. federal government to take a leadership role on this issue. The outcome of the November elections was in some ways a referendum on perceived lapses in our government’s stewardship of the environment.
3) On the negative side: the polarization between Western/Christian and Islamic political and religious blocs continues to worsen.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION 2006

CHARLES W. CALOMIRIS, Rethinking Bama Regulation: Toll’s Angels Green, by James R. Barth, Gerard Caprio and Ross Levine, a comparative analysis of the attempts by government regulators around the world to protect their banking systems.

GIL EYAL, South African novelist J. M. Coetzee’s Disgrace, based on her series of The Lives of Animals. Coetzee invented a feminist novelist who delivers a lecture on angels in all their complexity. It got me thinking about questions for my sociology course.

RAY FISMAN, Diamonds Are Forever, Won’t Say No, is a bestseller by professional turn-teen James P. Wong, which argues that after the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, the Chinese intelligentsia turned away from its infatuation with democracy and toward conservatism. He traces the rise of non-conservative schools of thought. Little understood in the West, the trend is important to an understanding of Chinese politics today.

ANDREW J. NATHAN, In Cold Blood, the 81 st year of Henry James’ life and the 150 th year of his death. Nathan was the lead-up to the Russian presidential elections of early 2008. Putin defy the constitution to serve beyond two terms, ostensibly in the interests of Russian security and stability, or will he stick with his decision not to run and carve out a post-presidential role for himself? Another possibility is that he will hand-pick a weak successor with the expectation of returning to the presidency in 2012.

CATHARINE N. NEMPOYNSACHY, Ann Whitney Olin professor of Russian literature and Slavic and East European studies at Bard College, and director of the Harriman Institute

Picks for 2006:
1) The recent series of political murders and poisonings in Russia: namely, the brutal shooting of investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya in her own apartment building in Moscow in October and the fatal polonium 210 poisoning of ex-FSB agent and Putin opponent Alexander Litvinenko in London in November. We are again seeing a Russia where those who speak out against the powers that be find themselves at terrible risk and where the Kremlin plays to two different audiences, at home and abroad.

Trend to watch:
The lead-up of the Russian presidential elections of early 2008. Will Putin defy the constitution to serve beyond two terms, ostensibly in the interests of Russian security and stability, or will he stick with his decision not to run and carve out a post-presidential role for himself? Another possibility is that he will hand-pick a weak successor with the expectation of returning to the presidency in 2012.
THE NATION

ELLEN CHAPNIK, dean for Social Justice Initiatives at Columbia Law School

Picks for 2006:
1) The Mayor's Poverty Commission Report, the first time a mayor has addressed poverty head-on.
2) The fact that the commissioner of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) was not fired over last summer's child abuse cases—firing commissioners has never been a solution.

KATRINH CONROY, assistant dean and director of field education at the School of Social Work

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WILLIAM B. EIMICKE, judge and professor of political science at the University of New Mexico

Picks for 2006:
1) The largest blaze in recorded history (Feb. 11–12). In 1969, then-Mayor John Lindsay's sting was knocked out of the sky by the failure to remove snow from the streets of Queens. By contrast, this year's storm was hardly a blip thanks to Mayor Bloomberg's superior management.
2) Lack of progress on the 9/11 site and the city's shameful dispute with victims of the disaster over their health claims and pension benefits.

ANDREW DELBANCO, Julian Clarence Levi professor in the humanities and director of the Humanities Program

Pick for 2006:
The return of the American electorate to a centrist mood—a reputation not only of the current government's foreign policy but also of its recklessness and cavalier attitude toward constitutional liberties at home.

Trends to watch:
1) Will the “Christian right” take a stand against the degradation of the natural environment?
2) Will America’s elite universities re-think the meaning of “diversity” to include more students from low-income families?
3) Will Sacha Baron Cohen’s Bruno movie be funnier than Borat?

ANDREW GELMAN, professor of statistics and political science

Pick for 2006:
The November elections. The Democrats averaged 55 percent of the vote in Congressional races—even more than the Republicans received in 2004.

Trend to watch:
The attitude of people in the United States and elsewhere toward America’s place in the world in the context of a divided national government.

R. GLENN HUBBARD, dean of Columbia Business School and Russell L. Carson professor of finance and economics

Pick for 2006:
1) Continued U.S. current account imbalance.
2) Decreasing competitiveness of U.S. public capital markets.
3) Underlying strength of the U.S. economy (squeezing given housing weaknesses).

MANNING MARABLE, professor of public affairs, history and African American studies and director of the Center for Contemporary Black History at SIPA

Picks for 2006:
1) The aftermath of New York’s_laton protests in Brazil and throughout Latin America.
2) The effort to restore voting rights to about six million former prisoners, 40 percent of whom are African American. This is a civil rights issue that my African Criminal Justice Project at Columbia has developed a grant initiative to address.

ELLEN CHAPNIK: The medical insurer GHI’s letter rejecting the reimbursement claim for a close relative’s lengthy hospitalization was a powerful example of the U.S. health care crisis, which will not be solved until the federal government recognizes that health care is a human right.

KATHRYN CONROY: An inconvenient truth, the documentary film on the Earth’s climate crisis featuring Al Gore. This was in my field except that the subjects of my research, children and bat-eared foxes live on the planet I was truly stunned by the data.

ANDREW DELBANCO: Philip Roth’s The Plot Against America, which I missed when it was first published 15 years ago. It’s a scaring account of love vs. death, written with an intensity achieved and indeed perhaps required by a larger-than-life novel.

WILLIAM B. EIMICKE: Two books I read in 2005 and again in 2006 that continue to affect my thinking: Kishore Mahbuban’s Beyond the Age of Innocence: Rebuilding Trust between America and the World, because it disquises the views of an Asian who knows and loves the United States but who also acutely perceives the blunders we’ve made abroad since 2001, and The End of Poverty by Jeffrey Sachs, a work of strategic planning with the community of nations as his intended client. Sachs’ book is academic enough to cite scholarly reviews but accessible enough to attract Bono, Brian Williams and the UN leadership—as well as the Gates/Buffett money.

ESTER FUCHS: I read Alfred Hisrich’s Exit, Voice, and Loyalty before teaching my Urban Politics class. I was reminded of the differences between government and business when it comes to problem solving. For a business to be successful it need only show a profit to its shareholders. Democracies have quite a different burden when working toward the public interest and can succeed only by engaging an argumentative public.

ANDREW GELMAN: Jonathan Rodden’s book-in-progress showing that all over the world, city dwellers tend to be more liberal than the countryside. When combined with the traditional overrepresentation of rural areas in legislatures, conservatives appear to get systemic long-term political advantages.

R. GLENN HUBBARD: Jagdish Bhagwati’s In Defense of Globalization I also enjoyed Edmund Phelps’ Nobel Prize lecture on entrepreneurial dynamism, which took place in early December.

THE CITY

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Trends to watch:
1) Will we step up the search for solutions to global warming, and if so, will the discussions include racial minorities and other at-risk populations?
2) Will a growing national consensus lead to recognition of the right to counsel in civil proceedings?
3) Will the newly elected Congressional majorities feel emboldened to introduce social justice initiatives and press for withdrawal from Iraq?

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Compiled and edited by Mary-Lee Cox

For the online version, go to: www.columbia.edu/news
Nicholas Christopher, novelist, poet and professor in the Writing Division of the School of the Arts

Picks for 2006:
1) Last Eternity on Earth: a collection of 1/4 of the finest stories by the great Chilean novelist Roberto Bolaño.
2) State Pauperland by Irene Nemirovsky, considered to be the "first novel of the Second World War". The author, a French Jew, lived the first two of her five planned novels before being shipped to Auschwitz, where she and her husband were murdered. Her notebooks survived and six decades later, their contents have been published.
3) The translation of The Awed by Robert Fagles. Despite his obsequiousness to Augustus Caesar, Virgil was a great poet.

Farah Jasmine Griffin, professor of English and coordinator of the African American Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences

Picks for 2006:
1) Spike Lee's compelling documentary, When the Lilies Broke: a Requiem for Four Acts.
2) The 10th International Conference on Marshall's Annual New Generation Reading at NYU, featuring gifted African writers: Uzodima Iwuala, Mohammed Saeed Ali and Uwehn Alpin. All three write about the continent in a way that runs counter to popular representations of Africans as victims of war and rescue by Western colonialists.
3) Toni Morrison's new novel, A Song of Solomon, from the vantage of each of her African American characters. A magnificent drama.
4) Google Docs & Spreadsheets, a superior way to work collaboratively without the confusion of e-mail attachments. An open source software. See my list at www.sreetips.com/software.html.
5) More online sources for international news. My favorites are Global Voices Online and Watching America.

Gordanja Vunjak-Novakovic, professor of biomedical engineering in the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science

Picks for 2006:
1) Emerging evidence that regulatory pathways involved in embryonic stem cell differentiation may be preserved in cells residing in adult organs.
2) Progress in engineering functional replacements for worn-out tissues. We're now considerably closer to creating biological grafts that can re-establish normal tissue function and structure across different species.
3) Progress in bridging the gaps between biological and medical sciences, engineering and clinical practice.

Trends to watch:
1) Developments in computational biology.
2) Advances in bioinformatic tools to analyze the vast amounts of biological data needed to create biologically inspired designs of tissue engineering systems.
3) Novel imaging modalities.

Sources of inspiration 2006
Nicholas Christopher: Angela Gheorghiu singing La Traviata at the Met; an amazing performance of Jacques Offenbach's opera, La Juive, at the Metropolitan Opera; Tom Stoppard's production of The Real Inspector Hound.
Faran Jasmine Griffin: Spike Lee's documentary Against the Dark; the plight of the New Orleans diaspora to see what has happened to the city; Tom Stoppard's production of the Greek tragedy Oedipus.
Annette Insdorf: Bootleg! A Sunday-morning broadcast on WAMC that covers the contemporary filmmaking scene with substance—one of the only TV programs that I watch devoutly. Hosts Peter Bart and Peter Gabber have an intimate knowledge of the film industry.

Mehmet Oz: A recent New York Times Magazine article on micro- obesity, emphasizing that 90 percent of the living organs and bodies? What's ahead?
1) Several new products that try to be iPod killers.
2) The fight by mainstream media to hang on to their audiences.

George Steel, executive director of Miller Theatre:
What's ahead?
1) The great events of the New York City theater season lie ahead, not behind namely The Trojan Project next June and Tom Stoppard's Goshal of Chopin. I'm also looking forward to Robert Carsen's production of Eugene Onegin at the Met and the all-Stravinsky/Balanchine evening at the New York City Ballet.

Caroline Weber, professor of French at Barnard College and the author of a new biography of Marie Antoinette

Picks for 2006:
1) This year's Marie Antoinette renaissance.
2) The increased power and prominence of women in political life. Nancy Pelosi as the first Speaker of the House, Hillary Clinton as America's most formidable female presidential contender to date, and Ségolène Royal as the proposed candidate in the French presidential races.
3) The emergence of Barack Obama as not just a political but a literary sensation—he is also a best-selling author.

Trends to watch:
1) The French and American presidential races.
2) The movement of women's fashion toward something more utilitarian and more empowering.
3) The impact of various U.S. museum shows of French artwork and culture; they will help to dispel lingering anti-French sentiment in this country!