Members of the Class of 2013 learn to surf on overcast shores south of Santa Barbara. It was one of more than a dozen multi-day Orientation Adventure trips first-year students had to choose from to explore the state and forge friendships with their fellow Sagehens during the week before fall classes began. With trips ranging from ocean kayaking to mountain backpacking, O.A. has become a Pomona tradition, one that requires months of planning back on campus. (See related story on page 9.)

— Photo by Stacy O'Hara
The Book in the Xbox
BY ADAM ROGERS '92

Video games aren’t just for blowing stuff up any more.

Hector Impala, P.V.
BY ANDREW MITCHELL '89

A graphic novelist’s take on Hollywood and the number 47.

The Other Side of the Baseball Card
BY DAVID ROETH '00

The trials and triumphs of a cardboard scribe.

The Curator of Cool
BY AUGUSTIN GURZA

Professor Mark Allen and L.A.’s quirkiest art space.

Indispensable Playthings
BY GLEN WHIPPA

Some toys are just too important ever to let go.

A Place in the Sun
BY MARK KENDALL

Preserving the memory of L.A.’s segregated beaches.

Man Overboard
BY VALERIE TAKAHAMA

Getting obsessed with the world’s great ships.
H 
a 

The Chemistry of Play

I find myself going around these days trying to translate my own internal 
states and urges into the underlying language of brain chemistry. It’s an amusing, 
sometimes enlightening, occasionally liberating game. 

For instance, there are all the varied emotional states we associate with 
happiness. That Zen meditation contentment that comes from a calm 
spritzing of mortosmos...the sense of fulfillment and pride that comes when 
dopamine bonds to certain receptors inside the brain. The exhilaration 
and sense of boundless energy that are the signs of a serotonin high. 

Don’t forget the burst of pleasure that comes from those famous opiates of the 
human chemistry set, the endorphins. If the brain is designed to encourage 
these brain chemicals as a range of supersized carrots. 

But if you love your job, what’s the difference between work and play? 

The answer, I suppose, depends on whether you like your job. If you 
don’t, one result is likely to be boredom, which may be related to a drop in 
Dopamine. Or worse, this may be where another chemical enters the picture. 

When the rabid baby animals know that juvenile play is a kind of rehearsal for things 
that our multi-screened TV news broadcasts 

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that our multi-screened TV news broadcasts...
Debating the Alma Mater

Al hominem/Personal attacks against stu-
dents/That doesn’t sound like sound jour-
nalism/In the Letterbox section of the latest ed-
ition of PC M, an alum has published a letter pub-
lished that states: “If he does speak for his gen-
tration ofention of

ism to me.

expressing his feelings about an interview I

on my character, and I am offended.

situation:

attacking that person.

reduced to an angry rant.

m y generation on the matter, or how I convey

reality was.

m y words to President Oxtoby as well.

m ittee didn’t ask Lee’s question, or perhaps

m y generation on the matter, or how I convey

reality was.

requested to print letters to the editor. Moreover, the

writer got the wrong name for

Loucks is lying but—

PC M—Cyrus Winston ’10

Student Life

— Lee Harris ’55

Director of Alumni Relations, 1980-1988

As a four-year member of the Glee Club dur-
ing Pomona years, I admit that I must be
more attached to the Pomona College songs than
many of you. I’ve been pleased to learn
from the magazine plus contact with some
of my former classmates that I am cer-
tainly not alone.

Thank you for continuing to print letters from
alumni as well as so many other interesting
articles. I hope that “Committee on Pomona
College Magazine” continues its valuable
service.

—Constance Barnett ’57

San Francisco, Calif.

Although I don’t keep up with my former profes-
sors at Pomona, I do think they contributed in
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Memories

An intro philosophy course with Fred made me ditch economics immediately. As others have noted, he saw to it that his students unset- tled, mystified, doubting themselves and then inherited “wisdom.” I learned to think, finally, thanks to a lawyer, very eye-browed guy that loved to tell stories while shaking the loose watch on his wrist. I do not know anyone who has bridged the gap between the conceptual and actual worlds as well as Fred.

Fred Sontag, the highly respected, keen-eyed philosophy professor with the curious commitment to the Kappa Delta fraternity (a local fraternity with a deservedly proud repu- tation for being the bad guys), had a profound effect upon my life at a critical moment. I had decided, after some soul-searching, not to compete for the Rhodes Scholarship that he and Dr. Edward Wassmiller had been guiding me toward since I was in their classes in college. I always had an army commitment and I figured I might as well go on with my life. He wouldn’t accept that. He took the time to con- vince me that in 30 years nobody would be watching on his wrist. I do not know anyone who could be transcended by faith, resulting in unconditional love for the Lord and other peo- ple. He was my living example of Paul’s how to be a saint while mantoring total intellectual integrity.

FRED SONTAG, 86

Fred mentioned his son Roger and made a huge impression on me. “You have to believe in yourself.” We visited the campus and expected the usual take-the-gang-out-to-dinner night, but Roger surprised us and said we were expected to stay at Pomona as a loving friend. His follow-up and encouragement, faith and love to all.

Memories

A few other professors who impressed me.

—Helen and Dick MacDowell—

—Jim McCauley 58

I was his favorite professor. He showed me that there were limits to verbal reasoning that could be transcended by faith, resulting in unconditional love for the Lord and other peo- ple. He was my living example of Paul’s how to be a saint while mantoring total intellectual

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Over the summer, Cecilia Conrad became vice president and dean of Pomona College, the 13th person to be appointed to the academic deanship in Pomona’s 122-year history. Here, in a nutshell—or rather, seven nutshells—is the essence of her story.

**Spotlight / Cecilia Conrad**

**HOW TO BECOME DEAN OF POMONA COLLEGE**

Over the summer, Cecilia Conrad became vice president and dean of Pomona College, the 13th person to be appointed to the academic deanship in Pomona’s 122-year history. Here, in a nutshell—or rather, seven nutshells—is the essence of her story.

**1. Do well in math while also developing an interest in public policy.** As a teen, closely follow news about the creation of new international monetary agreements. Ponder questions like whether it’s worth it to send men to the moon while there’s so much poverty here on Earth. Grow accustomed to your parents enlisting you to help integrate various programs and activities. Attend your first school with a semblance of desegregation—for your senior year of high school.

**2. Set off for Wellesley,** already intent on majoring in economics. Take advantage of a series of summer internships and fellowships ranging from systems analysis of courts to forecasting telephone demand to educating returning veterans about trade-school rip-offs. Get your first exposure to Washington—and like it. Expect that you’ll eventually go on to work in the policy arena for a government agency or NGO.

**3. Grow up in the ’60s in racially divided Dallas as the only child of politically-active parents.** Be the rebel at your strict parochial school. In the third grade, run an unauthorized lunchtime raffle that nets you a tidy $1 profit. Get kicked out for it. Attend segregated public schools using worn textbooks handed down from the white schools. Celebrate as your surgeon-father becomes the first Black person elected to the Dallas school board.

**4. Go west for grad school at Stanford,** where you get your first taste of teaching. Enjoy the immediate payoff when a student “gets” something. Take particular delight in challenging students’ preconceived notions about such issues as free trade. Decide to stay in academia—just for a while. Out of school, take your first job at a large research university. Quickly realize you want an atmosphere tilted more toward teaching. Land at Barnard College in New York, focusing your research on the impact of race and gender on economic status.

**5. Accept the position of associate dean for the challenge,** to give back—and for a pay bump that coincides with your son heading off to college. Work with faculty to secure grants and research funding. Carry on your scholarly work by editing books and journals. When your three-year term ends, leap at the opportunity to serve as interim dean at neighboring Scripps College—a chance to try something new without having to pack up and move.

**6. Receive the call from Pomona about applying for the dean’s job here.** Agonize a bit because you’ve become attached to both schools. Realize tightening budgets make your economics background and interest in resource allocation particularly useful for Pomona. Take the job. Get to work. Then get an added bonus as you learn your son is starting grad school this fall at MIT. His field of study: economics.

—Mark Kendall

**7. Get lured into applying to Pomona by the persistent Professor Hans Palmer, after serving with him on a committee for the AP economics test.** Succeed in Claremont’s small-town charms and the appeal of good schools for your son and take a job as associate professor of economics in 1995. Take on a slew of roles beyond the College, from the economics board of Black Enterprise magazine to policy research for Washington think tanks to president of the National Economics Association. Find your classes at Pomona are in demand. Get named California’s Carnegie Professor of the Year for 2002.
Pink Bunnies Vs. Flaming Owls

Intramural sports, at their quirky, small-college core, are not about winning or losing. They are about coming up with a really cool name for your team. Something that sticks out in the face like an errant dodgeball. The Flaming Owls of Death, The Mad Scientists, The Pink Fluffy Bunnies?

“...A good team name is original, often uses a play on words and should tick at least a humorous smirk from those who hear the name,” says Byrons Commers ’11, who has played intramural soccer, beach volleyball and softball.

Leave the bland, market-driven monikers for the big leagues. At Pomona, IM team names run from the saucy (Sets on the Beach for beach volleyball) to the cryptic (Yompalomp for beach volleyball). We will probably never know why on the Beach for beach volleyball) to the monikers for the big leagues. At Pomona, softball.

Pro team names rarely reach beyond three syllables, but at Pomona, length seems no issue, not with tags like cryptic (Yompalomp for beach volleyball). We will probably never know why.

But if over-thinking can be a danger on the playing field, could it also be a hindrance in deciding what to label your crew? On this fall’s roster, an inner-tube water polo team simply calls itself Insert Clever Name Here.

Sports Update / Spring 2009

Baseball
(37-7 Overall, 19-3 SCAC Championship)
Breaking a school record with 19 SCAC wins, the team won the conference championship. Drew Hedman ’09, Zachary Mandelblatt ’09, Nick Frederick ’11, David Colvin PI ’11, James Drew Hedman ’09, Zachary Mandelblatt ’09, Nick Frederick ’11, David Colvin PI ’11, James

The team won the SCAC regular season title to the wildcard bid to the NCAA tournament. Siobhan Fincke ’10 was named SCAC Player of the Year for the third consecutive year. Becca Lange ’09 was named to the all-SCAC first team. Oliva Muesse ’10 and Nicole Holstedt ’12 were named to the second team. Defending NCAA singles champion Fincke was again selected to represent the team in the singles national tournament, where she was again named NCAA singles all-American. Fincke and Hueses advanced to the doubles finals.

Women’s Water Polo
(22-9 Overall, 7-2 SCAC National)

The team won the SCAC regular season title to the wildcard bid to the NCAA tournament. Siobhan Fincke ’10 was named SCAC Player of the Year for the third consecutive year. Becca Lange ’09 was named to the all-SCAC first team. Oliva Muesse ’10 and Nicole Holstedt ’12 were named to the second team. Defending NCAA singles champion Fincke was again selected to represent the team in the singles national tournament, where she was again named NCAA singles all-American. Fincke and Hueses advanced to the doubles finals.

Women’s Tennis
(14-7 Overall, 3-1 SCAC Championship)

The team won the SCAC regular season title to the wildcard bid to the NCAA tournament. Siobhan Fincke ’10 was named SCAC Player of the Year for the third consecutive year. Becca Lange ’09 was named to the all-SCAC first team. Oliva Muesse ’10 and Nicole Holstedt ’12 were named to the second team. Defending NCAA singles champion Fincke was again selected to represent the team in the singles national tournament, where she was again named NCAA singles all-American. Fincke and Hueses advanced to the doubles finals.

Women’s Track and Field
(6-1 dual meet record; fourth place in SCAC)

Con Corkey ’09, Claire McGroder ’10, Traci Lopez PI ’12, Maddie Keesee PI ’09, Rose Haag ’10, Nicole Fein PI ’12 and Elle Chestnut ’10 were named to the all-SCAC team. McGroder was SCAC champion in the 400 meters.

Men’s Track
and Field
(4-3 overall, 4-3 SCAC)

The team had three SCAC champions: Anders Orabo ’12, Colin Flynn PI ’12 and Jack Lewis ’12. In addition to those stellar freshmen, Cameron Knitto PI ’11, Michael Grier ’11 and Tommy Dixon ’09 were named to the all-SCAC first team.

Golf
(sixth place in SCAC)
The team finished the season ranked in the top 50 in the nation, and John Hasse ’12 was named to the all-SCAC first team.

Women’s Lacrosse
(4-5)
The team had impressive wins over Dallas, Oberlin, Birmingham-Southern and Occidental. Martha March ’12 was the leading scorer in the western region and the leading freshman

getting picked in the 50th and final round of the major League Baseball draft: Drew had picked up almost as many honors as home runs this spring. He was named to the all-SCAC team and named SCAC Player of the Year and announced as Hitter of the Year by the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association. And when the Sagehens’ season was over, Hedman was selected by the Boston Red Sox in the 50th round of Major League Baseball’s first-year draft. Hedman, who plays first base and outfield, started his minor-league career as the single—A Lowell (Mass.) Spinners in June.

Looking back at his Sagehen baseball days: Favorite moment was either my sophomore year when we won our league for the first time in a while or this season when we fly up to Oregon for regionals, really seeing the team come together was something I will never forget.

What he hopes to accomplish in baseball: Just to get better every day as a player. I want people to say, “Hey, this guy was picked in the 50th round and he made it to the Show.”

—Interview by John Gary of the Loop Sports

Getting picked in the 50th and final round of the Major League Baseball draft: Draft day was pretty stressful; really I obviously had to wait until the 50th round. Everything I heard was for sure I would be taken on the second day, but that didn’t happen. I had to wait until the third day. It was a stressful process but I was happy to hear my name called and especially by a franchise like the Red Sox.

Describing his first minor-league game: It was great. At night, there were 5,000 people here. My first at-bat, I got fat in the ribs. I was jogging down to first thinking, “Wow, welcome to professional baseball, Drew.”...

I remember coming into the clubhouse, seeing all the guys who played here who are in the majors, and realizing that you are now on the same path that they once were—just truly amazing to realize that.

The team won the conference championship, defeating Redlands 10-5 in the finals. Sarah Woods ’10 was named tournament honorable mention. Cameron Taylor ’09 was named to the all-SCAC first team, Woods and Tamera Pena PI ’11 were named to the second team. M cG roder was SCAC champion in the

The team won the season-ending Collegiate III championship, defeating Redlands 10-5 in the finals. Sarah Woods ’10 was named to the all-SCAC first team, Woods and Tamera Pena PI ’11 were named to the second team. M cG roder was SCAC champion in the
Reaching Out / The Draper Center

Community Partners

A range of outreach initiatives at Pomona College have sprouted under one roof this fall as part of a new center committed to building and strengthening partnerships between the College and the community, thanks to a significant gift from Ranney Draper ’60, his wife, Priscilla Draper, and the Draper Family Foundation.

The Draper Center for Community Partnerships, dedicated in October, is the centerpiece of a new initiative to enhance student learning, faculty teaching and research at Pomona, as well as the quality of life in surrounding communities, through an integrated and collaborative program of community partnerships. The center will bring together numerous existing programs that connect Pomona College with local communities and create new ones.

Existing programs include the Pomona Academy for Youth Success (PAYS), a free summer college preparation program for local high school students; Pomona Partners, in which college volunteers provide weekly after-school activities at nearby Fremont Middle School; Young Audiences, a partnership between Fremont Middle School, Pomona College’s Department of Theatre and Dance; and the Pomona Unified School District; and the College Bound Saturday School program, a math and writing-intensive program helping area students prepare for college, as well as episodic volunteer opportunities. Each year these programs provide skills training and tutoring for hundreds of local students.

Nearly in its 15th year, the Pomona Partners program sends college volunteers to tutor middle school students on a range of subjects. Volunteer coordinators also facilitate weekly sessions and activities, including campus visits and a mock majors fair.

“The level of interaction between the volunteers and the students, and the dedication put forth by the coordinators to plan out an activity each week definitely helped encourage my participation,” says Bryan Coreas ’11, who was a student volunteer coordinator during the 2008-09 school year. “I really had not expected such an enthusiastic group of kids. It seemed as if the volunteers gained energy from them and vice versa.”

Now an active Pomona Partners volunteer, Coreas says he may not have even applied to Pomona College if not for another Draper educational outreach program, the Pomona Academy for Youth Success (PAYS) program. PAYS is an annual summer program that provides guidance and college-bound high school students from Los Angeles County and the Inland Empire.

Selected students are invited to Pomona for four weeks during the summer to participate in a comprehensive academic curricular that includes math and critical inquiry courses as well as a variety of elective.

Coreas was accepted into PAYS, known formerly as the Summer Scholars Enrichment Program, when he was a fresh- man at Bassett High School in the nearby city of La Puente. He says he participated in the program for three years before deciding to apply to Pomona.

“I always knew that I would go to college, but it was never really clear where or how to get there,” Coreas says. “In a way, the program gave me more certainty in the steps I had taken and in the steps that I would take as I continued on this path to college.”

The Draper gift, the amount of which is not being released, will provide a significant endowment supporting the Center’s operations as its staff works to cultivate a stronger culture of social responsibility and community engagement on campus. These efforts will be guided, in part, by a new advisory board made up of community leaders, faculty, staff, trustees and students.

“This generous gift ensures that we will be able to build on the successful programs we provide to children and teens in our area and will allow us to build new bridges to the community; providing our students with more opportunities to share their knowledge and build leadership skills,” says Pomona College President David Ottsoby.

Raney Draper, who has been a member of the Pomona College Board of Trustees since 1984, earned his bachelor’s degree in history at Pomona in 1960. Since then, he has had a long career in California real estate. Residents of Orange County, Ranney and Priscilla Draper have for the past decade devoted a great deal of time and resources to supporting community-building educational programs in their own community and at Pomona, founding a number of the College’s existing outreach initiatives and helping to sustain and build a dynamic program with their ongoing support.

“I believe great colleges like Pomona have a responsibility to be engaged in the wider community, to make a difference in the lives of the people who live there,” Ranney Draper says. “I’m excited to be involved with this new center because that’s exactly what it represents—the college and the community recommitting themselves to work as partners to improve people’s lives.”

—Related story on page 48

Film Screening / John Krasinski

Campus Visit Gets Star Out of The Office

Last fall at the Pomona College memorial service for Professor David Foster Wallace, a familiar face—for those who watch NBC Thursday evenings—showed up to share his thoughts. John Krasinski, who portrays nice-guy Jim Halpert on The Office, has been captivated by Wallace’s transformative ideas and prose since his college days. He began writing the adaptation of Wallace’s short story collection Brief Interviews with Hideous Men early in his career and just recently completed the journey to bring this “arduous” work to the big screen.

This September, Krasinski returned to campus to participate in a semi-secret L.A.-area premiere of the film, which he also directed and produced. English Department Chair Kevin Dernier had hatched the idea for the screening in light of Krasinski’s kind words at the memorial, and it came together after Professor Kathleen Fitzpatrick recently appeared with Krasinski at a Wallace-related event.

Brief Interviews, the book, is a series of short vignettes that delve into the psyches of several men, particularly in respect to their relationships with women. The film remains true to the original work with much of the dialogue unchanged, though Krasinski does add the character of Sara, a graduate student conducting the interviews, which helps to weave together a narrative of the disparate stories.

After the screening, Krasinski said he sees the movie as an “opening” to Wallace’s books: “I hope more people get into his writing. If this is your gateway drug, take it and pick up as many books as you can.”

During a Q&A session, he recalled the telephone conversation in which Wallace offered his blessing on the project. “It was not only incredible [to receive his blessing], it was essential to me,” said Krasinski, who bought the rights to Brief Interviews with his paycheck from the pilot of The Office. “To know that someone’s on the path of something that you believe is so deeply and to know that the guy leading the way for you is telling you that you’re doing the right thing is pretty mind-exploiting.”

—Laura Tiffany

Pomona students and faculty work with talented local students in the Pomona Academy for Youth Success (PAYS).
Looking Forward

Leadership / The Changing of the Chairs

Interview by Mary Marvin / Photos by Jeanine Hill

Paul Efron ’76 recently was elected chair of the Pomona College Board of Trustees, succeeding Stewart Smith ’68, who held the post for nine years. Smith will chair the comprehensive fundraising campaign the College is scheduled to launch in fall 2010. The pair talked to PCM’s Mary Marvin about issues facing the College.

PCM: Paul, you’ve had a close association for many years with Pomona, as a student, parent, board member and chair. How would you describe where the College stands today?

Efron: This is not a static sort of endeavor. Pomona continues to grow and evolve. We’re blessed with outstanding faculty and students, by our sun-drenched, very diverse, Asia-facing location, and by being part of The Claremont Colleges. I believe there was at the end of the 2008 fiscal year. There have been some difficult adjustments that were necessary for the long-term well-being of the College. Our goals are to make sure that the budget is the right size relative to our resources and to grow and our endowment over time, which we’ve been doing for decades. We’re also going to have to revisit our investment policies to assure they’re appropriate.

PCM: The reason we are focused on the budget right now is not because we have an immediate crisis, but because we recognize that the returns we’ve had over the last 10 years may not be there in the future, and that it’s prudent to take action in advance so we don’t get into problems down the road.

Efron: PCM: What about the long-term picture?

Efron: We have a strategic plan with important academic and financial goals that we’re sticking to. Realistically, though, some of the longer-term plans may be delayed while we focus on more immediate priorities.

Smith: It’s a matter of timing. Everything in the strategic plan is still a valid aspiration for the College. I have stepped down as board chair, but will be chairing the upcoming comprehensive campaign. I’m very aware of the difficulties we’re taking on right now in this environment, but the needs expressed in the Strategic Plan are just as real as when the plan was approved and more so in many areas that are impacted by the budgetary issues. It’s our job to bring those needs to the attention of the Pomona community to see how they can help.

PCM: What are your goals for the campaign, and why is it important to the College?

Efron: The campaign is a tremendously important initiative for Pomona College. Not only do we have pressing needs for long-standing programs such as financial aid, especially given the current economic environment, but also goals for other areas, most notably in the arts. We believe that we have to constantly improve our programs if we are to remain a leading liberal arts college.

Smith: Campaigns at Pomona have always been about more than funding the needs of the moment. Since its founding, perhaps the College’s most distinguishing characteristic has been an exceptional capacity for continual self-renewal and regeneration, thanks to the willingness of many generations to do all that was necessary to push the College toward the very highest of aspirations. The upcoming campaign, which resulted from two years of strategic planning among trustees, faculty, alumni, students, staff and administrators, will seek financial support for initiatives directed at improving teaching and learning, accessibility for talented students from all walks of life, faculty scholarship, and broad and meaningful student experiences.

PCM: Sustainability has become an important issue, especially for the students. It was also the focus of the last faculty/trustee retreat. In light of the financial problems, is it still an important goal?

Efron: Notwithstanding the budgetary problems, I think it’s an issue that we will continue to view as a very high priority. There is a dual aspect to sustainability at Pomona. The first is that it’s incumbent for us, as an institution, to think about our own use of resources in the most efficient manner. It also is vital to the students and an important aspect to their learning experience to understand problems like greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental issues.

Smith: As with many issues, this is probably a case where we won’t be able to move as quickly or as far in the near term as we would like. But we have committees and task forces addressing this issue, and a president who puts it at the very highest of his priorities, so this is going to happen. It’s just a question of how it will be financed.

Efron: It is inconceivable to me that we would build a building without thinking about how we would minimize the energy footprint. Even though there may be some up-front costs to doing that, we think it’s the right thing to do.

PCM: The new residence halls are not only good examples of sustainability but also student involvement in the planning. Have students become more involved in the life of the College?

Smith: Notwithstanding the budgetary problems, I think it’s an issue that we will continue to view as a very high priority. There is a dual aspect to sustainability at Pomona. The first is that it’s incumbent for us, as an institution, to think about our own use of resources in the most efficient manner. It also is vital to the students and an important aspect to their learning experience to understand problems like greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental issues.

Efron: Another example is our annual student/trustee retreat where we cover a number of issues. It’s very valuable for the trustees to get an opportunity to hear what students think about a number of important issues.

Smith: The meetings with students can be extremely informative when we go about making decisions. It isn’t that we try to implement every student’s suggestion; it’s more nuanced than that. At our last retreat, it was pointed out that the college experienced a number of issues. It was also the focus of the last faculty/trustee retreat. In light of the financial problems, is it still an important goal?

PCM: One of the benefits of the small size of Pomona is that the board does have these opportunities to interact with the students and the faculty. The faculty/trustee retreat, which is held every two to three years, is another tremendously valuable opportunity for trustees to hear about these concerns.

Smith: The board has tried over the years to create ways where it can stay in touch with the inner world of Pomona College. This is a working board and trustees are selected based to a large part on their willingness to be actively involved, which is what helps us stay close to the Pomona community. The overall objective is to provide an outstanding academic experience for every student. As board members, we focus on the strategic allocation of resources to make that happen, and we also seek to assure that the best governance processes and the most talented administrators are in place to oversee the day-to-day college activities. And then our role is to get out of the way. 
The clack clack clack sound, insistent and machine-like, stopped Don Daglow ’74 cold. He’d just walked through the front doors of Mudd-Blaisdell dormitory, headed for his room. But he’d never heard a noise like this one, coming from a door he’d never noticed. So he did what any self-respecting English major with a playwriting concentration would do: He went to check it out.

That’s how, on November 5, 1971, Daglow stepped into the headquarters of the newly founded Pomona College Computer Science Study Group, and the sound turned out to be coming from a typewriter-like teletype printer. It was one of two, tied into a Digital Equipment Corporation PDP-10— a mainframe computer housed at Pitzer, the only time-sharing computer at The Claremont Colleges.
Daglow doesn’t remember which group member was staffing the desk that day, but he remembers the first thing he saw: games. “I think they showed me horse racing,” he says. “But then they showed me Eliza.” It was an early bit of software that pretended to be a therapist. “You look at Eliza as a playing major and you go, ‘Oh my God,’” Daglow says. “I was absolutely hooked.” Over the next few months, Daglow wrote the first computer baseball game, an improvement on Eliza and an enhanced early text game based on Star Trek (already a proto-geek touchstone.).

Rack then, mainframes were more the province of Boolean search algorithms and early algorithms advice. So why think of the primitive terminals as a vehicle for storytelling? “When I walked in and looked at it, that was the first thing that came to mind,” Daglow says. “It didn’t have pictures. It was printing text, and I’m a writer.”

Daglow went on to make a career in videogame design—today he has a venerable resume that includes a Technology & Engineering Emmy Award for Neverwinter Nights. And at every stage, Daglow’s challenge was to combine what he knew about theatre into a medium better at executing bright colors and explosions.

Most games have a story, or at least what you might call a premise. Even chess is supposed to be a battle between two armies, each equipped with plentiful cannon-fodder infantry and more powerful elite troops. Typically, though, that veneer makes no difference to actual gameplay. As John Carmack, one of the founders of Id Software and a creator of the ultraviolent first-person shooter Doom, famously put it: “Story in a game is like a story in a porn movie. It’s expected to be there, but it’s not that important.”

But in the past few years, with the advent of massively powerful, game-mediated console systems—video games have changed from exercises in guiding bits of colored light at other bits of colored light into a fully realized vehicle for narrative. Forward-thinking artists are working out the grammar and boundaries of a new kind of storytelling, capable of conveying emotion, meaning and subject. Today’s game-makers are gifting birth to a new form of narrative for anyone with the hardware to play along.

THE XBOX 360 IS Microsoft’s top-of-the-line gaming console. It looks more like a desktop computer than a video game system from the old days, has a cooling fan that roars like a power adaptor. The controllers—nobody calls them joysticks anymore—are about the size of a fresh pretzel. They’re meant to be held in both hands, and have two triggers for each index finger, mushroom-shaped multidirectional levers for the thumbs, a directional pad for the left thumb, four buttons for the right thumb and three more switches in between. They are daunting, is what I’m saying.

I tend to be what the industry calls a “casual gamer,” which means I play quick puzzle games, the descendants of Tetris. (It also means I am old.) Today’s marquee games aren’t aimed at gamers like me. Halo, Games of War and other titles on the Xbox are movie-like adventures designed to take dozens of hours to play from beginning to end, and to use every single button on that controller. They are supposed to be experiences, as life changing as a great novel or as emotionally fulfilling as a blockbuster summer movie. At upwards of $50 a pop, they’d better be.

Video games didn’t start out that way. Well into the 1980s, when an Apple IIe with a monochrome monitor was the height of home technology, the most popular games were computer text adventures very much like the ones Daglow first started noodling with. For geeks of a certain age, the opening line of Zork—“You are standing in an open field west of a white house with a boarded front door”—has as much emotional resonance as “Call me Ishmael” or “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away” (just to pull two classics at random).

“They told stories in the traditional way, with words,” says Ian Bogost, a games theorist at the Georgia Institute of Technology. In Zork and many of the text games that followed, the nominal object was to explore a world and gather treasure, but that wasn’t the underlying game mechanic. “It was less about narrative and storytelling and more about puzzling and problem solving,” says Bogost.

DAGLOW DELVED INTO designing games professional for Mattel’s Intellivision console system during this time, and he was eager to break past storytelling limitations. At Mattel he designed the first game to use the concept of camera angles, a baseball title that mimicked TV broadcasts. “I was absolutely thinking, ‘How do we apply the principles of theatre, so that someone interacting with a machine has the same sense of surprise and willing suspension of disbelief?’” he says.

Part of the answer came to him when he was working on the beloved multiplayer game Neverwinter Nights for AOL in 1999. He’d let the players do it for him. “We would treat the worlds as challenges that inspire stories, not as repositories of stories. We had to suggest characters rather than draw them.”

Daglow had hit upon a property called “emergence.” In any one of the various massively multiplayer online role playing games—SIMORPHs—like World of Warcraft, or even the online world Second Life, people explore different identities and activities collaboratively with fellow players. More than 11.5 million people play WoW—a huge cast. Maybe that quantity of people interacting, combined with better graphics, really can create a self-weaving tapestry of story. Researchers have been arguing as much since multiplayer universes were little more than Dungeons and Dragons-based chat rooms.

Still, many of today’s most popular games tend to have premises rather than stories. They’re exquisitely-rendered automobile races, kung fu battles or gunfights that’ll give you a rush of excitement and adrenaline followed by relief upon the achievement of an objective. Not that there’s anything wrong with that. But some games—popular ones, to be sure—aspire to more. Beanstalk makes a pass at commenting on the futility of Ayn Randian objectivism. Far Cry 2 is full of political intrigue.

“I WAS ABSOLUTELY THINKING, "HOW DO WE APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF THEATRE, SO THAT SOMEONE INTERACTING WITH A MACHINE HAS THE SAME SENSE OF SUSPENSION AND WILLING SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF?"”

PHOTO BY ROBERT DURELL

PHOTO BY ROBERT DURELL

Photo by Robert Duell

“We’ve spent the last 20 years making the colored bits look better,” says Bogost. “For the last five years, we’ve been in this crisis. How do we make meaningful games, games that do more than titillate adolescent fantasy? One answer is, we need better story.”

THE NEWEST GAME in the works at Pandemic, a Los Angeles-based game maker, is called Saboteur. It’s set during World War II, which is a cliché so tapped out that newer games generally make the Nazis into Nazi zombies, just to change things up. But Josh Resnick ’89, Pandemic’s CEO, promises this one will be different. “You have a personal revenge story,” he says. “We’ve found in our focus groups and testing that people really want to keep playing this game. They want to find out what happens to the character.”

At Pomona, Resnick studied international relations and business, and went on to get an MBA. But he’d been a gamer since high school, beneficiary of the world that Daglow helped create. So when Resnick got out of grad school he got himself hired at Activision, a heavy-hitter in the games world, and then spun off Pandemic, which, to be honest, is better known for action than narrative. One title, Mercenaries, was more “about the experience of being able to go anywhere, do anything and blow everything up,” Resnick says. That’s not a knock; it’s true for the bulk of the industry. You race a car, or kill vampires or play a sport. Sometimes you do it against the computer. Sometimes you do it with friends, or with strangers over the Internet.

But for Saboteur, the company wanted broader appeal. “We spent an enormous amount of money and resources and thought developing that character and coming up with a compelling story,” Resnick says. “In the past, you’d look at your beats. Which one of you designers has taken a writing class? Сейчас. NOW PEOPLE ARE HIRING professional talent."

Eventually the control interface will disappear altogether. Nintendo’s Wii console system is highly intuitive, dumping most of the buttons on its controller for a sensitivity to acceleration and motion. And at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles last June, Microsoft unveiled a controller called Natal, essentially a camera that captures the motions of a player and transduces them into a game. In other words, there’s no controller at all. Just you.

The software itself will get smarter, too. Researchers at MIT are experimenting with artificially intelligent bots, characters within a game, that learn to behave the way their real-world counterparts would. And a couple of tech-minded artists at UC Santa Cruz built their own “drama engine” that changes the story and dialogue depending on what the player does—and far from being a typical shoot-'em-up, their game Parade is about a marital spat.

What most people who think about videogames agree on is that their universe is still inchoate. It can take years—decades—for new art forms to find their true voices. The tools and techniques for conveying emotion and narrative in games are improving, and the possibilities engross Daglow, something of an industry guru these days. He developed games for every generation of console hardware, and for most of that time, he and his teams knew that nothing they created was going to look like real life. The best they could do was mimic the kind of camera moves you might see on TV. But the latest hardware has enough computational oomph to produce images of near cinematic perfection—which gives you the ability to make other elements, like character or conflict, more sophisticated. Daglow calls it, with only a little humility, Daglow’s Law: Storytelling expands first to fill the technological bandwidth of a medium, and then the emotional bandwidth. (You also have to have the cash. In 1988, his Stormfront Studios developed its first game for $70,000. When the company folded in 2008, it worked on two games with a total budget of $20 million.)

Obviously, 30 years has radically remade the videogame industry, but Daglow is back to designing a new game. The audience of players is hungrier, savvier and little by little they’ve been trained to expect more from their games than beautifully exploiting zombie heads. “I’m trying to create a new genre,” Daglow says. “If it succeeds, people will view it as very different and innovative. And if we’re wrong, then we’ll be hearing crickets when we go live. But so be it. That’s the chance we take.”

In the past, you’d look at your team and... say, ‘We need some story beats. Which one of you designers has taken a writing class?’

Now people are hiring professional talent.

Josh Resnick ’89

BOGS TO OR A NTELY, a chile is s chop pened ou t or tap ped ou t th at new er g am es g enerally m ake the N azis into N azi z ombies, j ust to c hange thin gs up. B u t Josh Resnick ’89, Pan d em ic’ s C EO , p rom ises this one w ill be d iff erent. “Y ou h ave a p ersonal r evenge s tory,” h e says. “We’ve foun d in o ur fo c u s g roups and te stin g that p eople reall y want to k eep pl aying th is g am e. Th e y w ant to f ind out w hat h appens to th e c haracter.”

T he so ftw are itsel f wi ll get sm art er, to o. R e s e archers at M IT are e xperi m entin g with a rtific ially in telligent bots, c harac ters w ithin a game, that le arn to b eh av e th e w ay th e ir re al- w orld counterparts w ould. A nd a cou ple of te ch-m in ded a rtists at UC San t a C r uz built th e ir ow n “d rama en gine” th at ch anc es th e s tory and d ia lo gue d e p ending on w hat th e pl ayer does— and f ar f rom b eing a ty pica l shoot-’em-up, th e ir ga me Pa rade is a b out a mar ital spat.

W hat m o st p e ople w ho th ink ab out vid eog am es agre e on is th at th e ir u ni vers e is st ill in c ho a t e. It ca n take y e ars— d ec ades— for n ew a rt fo rms to f ind th e ir tr u e v oices. Th e to ols and t echniques fo r c onvey in g em otion a nd n arra tive in g am es are i mproving, a nd th e po ssibiliti es e ngros Dag low, so m e thin g of an in d ustry g uru th ese d a y s. H e d evel op ed ga mes fo r ev ery g ene ration o f con so le h ardwa re, a nd fo r m ost of th at tim e, h e a nd h is t eams k new th at n othin g th e y c rea te d wa s g o in g to lo ok lik e re al l if e. Th e be st th ey c ould do wa s mim ice, th e k in d o f cam era m o v e s you m ight see on TV. B ut th e la st h ardwa re has e nough c om p utational oom ph to p rodu c e im ages o f ne ar cin em atic perf ection—w hich g iv es y ou th e abil ity to m ake oth er e le ments, lik e c harac ter or co nflict, mo re sp hic ified. Da glo w c alls it, w ith o nly a l itt le hu m ility, Da glo w ’s L aw : S torytellin g ex p an ds f irst to fill th e tec hnolog i cal b an dw id th of a me dium, a nd th en th e em otional b an dw id th. (Y ou also hav e to h ave th e c a sh. In 1988, his S t o m fr ont St udios d e vel op ed its fi rst ga me f or $70,000. W hen th e com pany f ol ded in 2008, it w orke d on tw o ga mes w ith a to tal b udget of $20 m illion.)

O bvi ously, 30 y e a rs has r adica lly r em ade th e vid e ogame in dustry, b ut Da glo w is b ac k to d esig in g a n ew g am e. Th e au di en ce of pl ayers is hungrier, sa vvier a n d l ittle b y l ittle th ey’v e b een trai ned to e xpect m ore fro m th e ir ga m es th an b e a utiful ly e xpl oitin g z ombie he ad s. “I’ m tri ying to c re ate a new g en re,” Da glo w says. “If it s uc c eeds, p eople wi ll vi ew it as ver y di f ferent a nd inнов ative. A nd if w e’ re wr ong, th en w e’ll b e h earin g crickets w hen w e go l ive. B ut so b e it. Tha t’s th e ch an ce w e tak e.”
YOU CAUGHT ME IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING.

THE PARKING VALET GIG IS GOOD FOR ME. MY TIPS GO MOSTLY UNTAXED AND EVERY FIVE MINUTES, I'M DRIVING ANOTHER DREAM CAR. BUT YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO KEEP A GUY AT MY AGE, WITH MY SKILLS, IN THIS JOB. THERE'S ANOTHER ANGLE.

THE SHORT VERSION IS IF YOU'RE A WRITER ON THE OUTSIDE, FOR A FEE I'LL GET YOUR SCRIPT IN FRONT OF THE EYES OF A PLAYER. I PUT YOUR SCREENPLAY ON THE PASSENGER SEAT OF A MEGA-PRODUCER'S PORSCHE 911 GTZ. HE THINKS HE DISCOVERED YOU AND YOU'RE OFF.

I JUMP YOU PAST SECRETARIES, SLUSHPILES, ASSISTANTS ... EVEN AGENTS.

I'M A SCRIPT TRAFFICKER.

20 MINUTES AGO I GOT A CALL FROM A WOMAN AT THE AMBER GRIN, A HANGOUT FOR FILM SCRIBES. GOOD COFFEE. FREE WI-FI.

WE'RE TIGHT, RIGHT? YOU WON'T TALK?

SHE HAD A STORY TO MOVE. ONLY WHEN I GOT THERE...

IT'S A GAG, THIS GUY PAID ME $47 BUCKS TO CALL YOU DOWN HERE. YOUR FRIEND SAID YOU'D GET THE JOKE.

I KNOW, I DIDN'T GET IT EITHER.

THIS WORKS SO WELL THAT ONE OF THE BIGGEST DEALERS IN HOLLYWOOD IS OFF THE RADAR. ME. IT'S HOW I LIKE IT.

I TALK TOO MUCH, WHAT I WANTED WAS TO TELL YOU A STORY.
You may have noticed something lately, the unusual frequency of the number ‘47’ in movies and TV shows. It’s not you.

A bunch of high-achieving nerds from a school you never heard of are slipping the number into this stuff. Everyone knows USC, UCLA, and NYU for their directors while Pomona College quietly turns out top writers and producers... all strangely obsessed with their school’s lucky number.

None of this would register with me if not for Rance Vellum. There’s always one guy who takes a thing too far. He got wind of the number’s game and wanted in. Rance has pushed the same bcal* for years, each rewrite rife with ‘47’ references. I refuse to place a bad script but he won’t give up.

Most hacks quit eventually and get a law degree or MBA, not Rance, and the 47 bucks? It’s him, a ruse to get me away from the Fin. Nice try.

I roar into the parking lot and spot him, Vellum, script in hand and a sad excuse for a valet disguise.

Is that supposed to be me? And he thinks he can place his own script?

Hey.

* Buddy Cop - Action Comedy
WHAT'S This All About?

The mysterious No. 47, that great Sagishen secret, has Hollywood in its hold. From art films to sci-fi to Will Ferrell vehicles, Pomona’s enduring in-joke has slipped past countless millions of movie-goers and tube-watchers in recent years. Fans tally the references online. On TV’s Lost, 47 people survive the plane crash. In The 40-Year-Old Virgin, Steve Carell keeps a collection of 47 G.I. Joes. This summer’s blockbuster reboot of Star Trek alludes to 47 Klingon vessels being destroyed. There is even a much-viewed YouTube spoof of Jim Carrey’s The Number 23, substituting—yes, you guessed it—the No. 47.

If Menosky has moved on, how come our secret number keeps landing bit parts time and again? Is our 47 tradition at risk of overexposure? There’s no getting a straight answer out of Tinseltown on this sort of stuff, so—in the playful spirit of this issue—we turned to graphic novelist Andrew Mitchell and Hector Impala, for his creative take on the mystery.

ABOUT the Artist

Much like his creation, Hector Impala, Andrew Mitchell ’89 is a multi-tasker. He lives dual lives as writer-illustrator and stock broker in Orange County, Calif. Along with his Hector Impala, P.V. graphic novel, Mitchell has created cartoons and illustrations for children’s books and video games. His own how-to art book for kids, Draw 50 Magical Creatures, will be published this fall by Random House. He is president of the Cartoonists of Orange County and, once again like Hector Impala, he has a thing for classic cars.
writing baseball cards for a living sounds like a childhood fantasy, but for david roth ‘00, the work of a cardboard scribe turned out to be more—and less—than he ever expected....

of course, my knuckleball didn’t flutter. the shed made a hollow, pained sound; the ball dropped to the ground. here was final confirmation that, whatever it might hold, my then-unimaginable future would not involve me appearing on a baseball card. it turns out, though, that i was wrong about that. i’ve spent roughly half my working life in what i call—when i’m trying to impress people at parties—"the baseball card business." even by the low standards of the mid-1980s, the trading cards that sat in leaning towers all over my childhood bedroom were ugly things. vaguely out of focus photos caught up-the-nose angles of mustachioed shortstops; perm ed relief pitchers squinted sourly into the lens wearing surly "don’t touch my truck" facial expressions. the card backs were nearly as unattractive—filled with dense stats in tiny type and maybe a factoid of the "mark enjoys sleeping and hunting" variety. and i loved them—albeit with a callous way teenagers do, upon entering high school.

still, i dropped my all-consuming card collecting habit, in that merely hollow dream of becoming a dentist. but i like to imagine that an 11-year-old version of myself might appreciate that info. given topps’ current baroque phase, in which "historical" products hit shelves alongside the old standbys, the assignments are increasingly unpredictable. over the last year i’ve written the expected baseball and basketball cards, but i’ve also written cards—that is, trading cards that one would theoretically trade—to the karate kid or by revealing portland trail blazers 7 footer greg oden’s child-ood dream of becoming a dentist. but i like to imagine that an 11-year-old version of myself might appreciate that info.

everywhere for the taking and plenty of free gum. the topps office was not like that—in its harsh fluorescent lights and dim cubicles and coffee-breathed grumbling and thousand little power struggles, it was like any other office. the long-timers assured me that it was better than topps’ previous HQ. my childhood wonderland, it turned out, had actually been a dank, drizzly old building under the brooklyn-queens expressway.

i was laid off, eventually, but caught on right away as a freelance-card writer for bruce herman, topps’ head writer. i’ve been writing cards ever since. each card is short—I seldom write even 75 words—but admirably open-ended. not so open-ended that everything sails through—the card i wrote for nuggets forward renaldo baldman that began with the words "a screaming comes across the sky" was edited, cruelly—but open-ended enough to keep me interested. i’m fortunate that silly sports arena amuse me as much as they do. i’m not really adding anything to the discourse by noting that former rockies pitcher mike esposito’s dad performed the theme to the karate kid or by revealing portland trail blazers 7 footer greg oden’s child-ood dream of becoming a dentist. but i like to imagine that an 11-year-old version of myself might appreciate that info.

topp’s gig than i ever had before and more than i likely ever will until a job is invented in which the central duties are eating sandwiches and napping. i had accumulated those thousands of largely worthless topps baseball cards, after all, as well as a comparable number of similarly worthless) pieces of writing and editing credits. and there was also my brain, which was awash in useless sports flotsam. i interviewed, got the job, and spent two years at topps’ headquarters in lower manhattan, editing sometimes writing, the backs of trading cards.

even 75 words— but admirably open-ended. not so open-ended by revealing portland trail blazers 7 footer greg oden’s child-ood dream of becoming a dentist. but i like to imagine that an 11-year-old version of myself might appreciate that info.

topp and its competitors increasingly deploy to motivate a notably more bottom line-oriented consumer base than the one of which i was a member two decades ago. my topps assignments comprise just a small part of my cobbled-together freelance income, but in their oddball randomness—from one assignment to the next, i could find myself writing cards for either albert pujols or abraham lincoln, magic johnson or lyndon johnson—the job offers an experience as close to that old pack-ripping thrill as i’ve come in my working life. sure, i wish my editors would cool it with the "heaven of spaceflight" cards sometimes, but i still feel lucky that—in defiance of genetics and despite that flutter-free knuckleball—I somehow made it onto a trading card after all. 
The midnight gathering at Mark Allen’s little storefront gallery has the air of a clandestine ritual. Billed simply as a “farewell to analog tv,” the event is meant to ceremonially mark this night of June 12, when broadcast television stations switch to digital signals. Yes, the public is invited and the proceedings are visible to passersby on busy Alvarado Street in L.A.’s Echo Park neighborhood. But only those present seem to grasp the portent of the impending switch.

Three dozen true believers stand before a glowing totem of television sets piled high on the floor in front of them, tuned to different channels, mostly in black and white. It is a monument to the doomed medium, a tower of tubes that has survived the junkyard of time, and includes a white model from JC Penney, a beat-up Samsung and a space-age JVC Videosphere emitting a hazy image inside a red plastic globe, not unlike the picture inside the Wicked Witch’s crystal ball from The Wizard of Oz.

After a fittingly quirky lecture on television and its 19th century mechanical predecessor, the moment of The Big Switch approaches. People huddle closer to the mound of monitors, staring at the hypnotic collage of basketball highlights, Mexican soccer, celebrity gossip, an episode of Everybody Loves Raymond and a spot by the ubiquitous, bearded pitchman Billy Mays, who was to die two weeks later. Shortly before midnight, the screens flicker and turn to snow, like the old days when tubes went inexplicably on the blink. But instead of banging on the sets to get an image back, the audience erupts in cheer.

“Young!’ announces Allen, a big smile on his face. And so ends a quintessential Machine Project event, featuring elements near and dear to the gallery’s founder and visionary-in-chief who, in his professor role, teaches digital arts at Pomona College. There is the atmosphere of a happening. The pop-culture enthusiasm for science and...
3 2

phrases with an interrogatory tone, adds to his youthful aura. Boyishly handsome at 39, with a slight frame, narrow shoulders and the Frames book shelves installed in the basement ready to be lifted on pulleys through a portal in the floor to ground level (as soon as Allen is satisfied with the lifting mechanism). Founded in 2003 and funded on a shoestring, the nonprofit gallery has emerged as one of the leading alternative art spaces in Southern California. And with it, Allen has risen to prominence in the local art scene.

Shortly after the TV event, L.A.’s Hammer Museum announced that Allen had been commissioned as guest artist for a one-year term as part of an ongoing drive to create a more engaging, artist-driven experience for visitors to the Westwood facility. And last November, Allen drew national attention when he and his merry crew, now a collective of some three dozen artists, invaded LACMA for a one-day event called “A Machine Project’s Field Guide to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.” The crazy quilt of installations, performances and workshops, including an hourly death metal guitar performance, ruffled some stuffy curatorial feathers but ultimately won the day by more than tripled the museum’s normal daily attendance to about 6,000.

“It was magical,” says Charlotte Cotton, the county museum’s photograph curator who commissioned the Machine Project event. “And it changed those 6,000 people’s relationship with LACMA on really profound levels…. That’s what it could feel like if your traditional city museum was your town square.”

SMACK DAB AT THE CENTER of that square is Allen, still bovishly handsome at 39, with a slight frame, narrow shoulders and fine features. His habit of raising his voice at the end of phrases with an interrogatory tone, adds to his youthful aura. But when he’s in his element, mingling with his audience after an event, Allen conveys a confidence that makes him seem larger than life, taller than he is. Hanging in his pockets, he greets his guests and smiles, always listening for the next new idea.

Allen is more cheerful than curious, more trend illuminator than trend setter. He sees himself as a medium for a movement that has bubbled up from the culture on its own. It’s an arts movement that values relationships over objects to be collected and catalogued, social interaction over solitary contemplation, audience participation over curatorial dictates, and the trial-and-error of artistic experimentation over the dogma of experts.

If Allen is getting more attention from museums and the media, he says it’s simply because he’s shining a spotlight on what’s already happening, a sort of Ed Sullivan of the alternative art world, to borrow an analogy from the era of analog TV. “Any time something [like Machine] gets more attention, it’s because it’s reflecting what the culture is doing,” Allen explains. “The needs of the culture kind of drive the creation of these things as much as these things drive the culture. So if I didn’t show up and start doing these things, somebody else would have to assume the role of the kinds of needs or interests people have.”

On some days, his guests are making communal jam with their own fruit or sampling homemade corn whiskey from a still made out of household plumbing supplies. On others, they are volunteering to be buried alive just to see what it feels like. They’ve heard lectures on the mating habits of sea slugs, participated in a special-recognition sing-along and watched a psychedelic light show at midnight on the Fourth of July. This spring, they spent a month romping through a forest created inside the gallery, with a moonlight poetry reading, a Bigfoot lecture and a double feature of vampire movies.

Allen is likely to find a few of his former Pomona students in the audience these days. Their presence is a sign that he’s fulfilling an unofficial mission as a professor. On campus, he sees himself as a bridge between his students and the L.A. scene, which “sometimes I think feels very far away for them.”

Taking her first digital arts class with Allen this fall, Nicola Parisi ‘12 enjoyed it when he showed the students a presentation of Machine Project exhibitions. His work in L.A. “makes him seem more like a person and not just a professor,” Parisi says. Allen brings spark to the classroom. “He definitely knows how to communicate and captivate an audience,” she says. “He has the energy of a 5-year-old and not in a bad way, a good way—he’s very expressive.”

ALLEN, THE SON OF SCIENTISTS, can talk for hours, explaining his work with a pedagogic patience. In the morning, he sat for an interview at the cozy coffeehouse next door to Machine, though he’d just eaten his own pancakes and avoided the java. He seems taken aback by one comment: Considering the wacky and wild goings-on at his gallery, he must have been a mischievous kid, the kind with that dangerous mix of imagination, resourcefulness and guts.

“Oh, I wouldn’t say I was particularly mischievous,” he says. “I was a pretty quiet kid. Read a lot of books.”

But Dad begs to differ.

“Oh, what a wacko,” sufficed retired chemistry professor Christopher W. Allen when informed of his son’s self-assessment, an affectionate rebuke sounding like two old army buddies disputing recollections.

Christopher W. Allen when informed of his son’s self-assessment, an affectionate rebuke sounding like two old army buddies disputing recollections. “The things of childhood that have carried over and that you see in the gallery is that he’s just interested in a huge variety of things,” says the elder Allen. “He was curious about everything, and he was not afraid to try new things and go into totally new enterprises.”

Almost to prove the point, Allen twice has invited his father to give talks at Machine, one on how to make more electrons and another on the nature of polymer materials, titled Polyester: You Wear It, You Love It, But Do You Know It? Without any other reference to kinship, he called the lecture: “The first in our Machine Project visiting parent/scholar series.”

His mother’s interest in homemade crafts (she recently learned how to dye yarn) has also carried over to Machine, which has offered workshops on sewing and soldering. Elizabeth Allen, a retired geneticist, recalls that her son’s artistic streak emerged in high school. The teen took to painting his skateboards and sneakers, then took the initiative to mount his first art show at a local youth center. He’d make things out of cardboard and Masonite, using bones, sticks, blocks and old parts of cameras. He melted wax on a hot plate in the cellar and turned old dress dreads into “monsters with fish and moons and things,” painting the sides of the drawers and mounting wooden cut-out figures on the bottom. Mrs. Allen still keeps one of these drawer dories to store her knitting paraphernalia, noting that “for some strange reason, it has part of a telephone.”

“Oh, that’s in case the fish need to make a phone call,” her son explains, dryly.

AS MUCH AS ALLEN’s home environment nurtured his creativity and curiosity, it would take time and several changes of scenery to inspire his artistic vision. Allen earned his...
undergraduate arts degree from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, another small town upstate New York. The training in painting, drawing, print-making was traditional—a skill-set that would become superfluous to his practice. Machine has exhibited paintings only twice, and they weren’t his.

Allen began to find his artistic path in 1993 with his move to Houston, an urban, multi-cultural Texas town about as close to the Mexican border as his hometown was to Canada. In terms of social ecology, it was as far from snowy Vermont as gritty Echo Park is from, well, Claremont.

With his freshly minted magna cum laude degree, he arrived for a fellowship with Core, the national visual arts program of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He soon met other artists who helped him bust out of his conventional college framework and set him on the unpredictable, experimental track that would define his career.

Two of those associates, Sean Thornton and Chris Ballou of Arena Productions, organized one show in the back of a moving van which they drove around the city’s five wards, allowing residents to trade their own art for anything on the truck. Two others, Jeff Elrod and Mark Flood of Art of This Century, founded their gallery in a faux-wood-paneled storefront that used to be a driving school, sleeping in the back and doing shows in the front.

“Previous to that, I had really thought of art as something that took place in commercial art galleries,” recalls Allen. “So meeting them was kind of influential with my early thinking about the sites in which cultural practice takes place. That was interesting to me, that you could sort of transform any space into an art space by putting art in it.”

“Illegal” is one of Allen’s favorite words. He uses it literally to describe people, places or things that pique his curiosity, or that don’t.

INTERESTING: Video games. Anybody who can explain how things work. Carnivorous plants, like those he’s cultivating for his gallery. Join us for Show-and-Tell as Sapphens share the childhood toys and games they couldn’t bear to let go of.

INTERESTING is “Video games. Anyone who can explain how things work. Carnivores, like those he’s cultivating for his gallery.”

Machine, a hip hangout in working-class Echo Park. When he moved in five years ago, the Latino neighborhood was in the grips of gentrification, led by artists, musicians and film people. But Allen admits that the gallery has failed to attract native neighborhood residents in great numbers, especially Latinos.

“The narrative of independent art spaces is always connected to gentrification, and there’s a lot of anxieties about these things,” he says. “I don’t think that we do as good a job reaching all the different kinds of communities as we could. I try to be welcoming, but sometimes I’m not successful.”

Allen moved to this location precisely because he wanted to be part of a community, accessible to the general public. He wanted to surface, to speak, from his days with an underground (literally) arts collective called C-level, which included fellow graduates from CalArts where he had earned an M.F.A. in 1999. The group’s subterranean Chinatown hangout was as hidden as a speakeasy, up side streets and down alleyways, so only those in-the-know could feasibly find it.

For Machine, he wanted a location that was “more permeable to the outside world, where people could just wander in and just check stuff out.” Echo Park filled the bill.

“It’s a fairly pedestrian y, neighborhood y part of the city, and it’s central in a certain kind of way,” says Allen, who constantly, compulsively qualifies his statements. “It’s almost an intersection, to a certain degree.”

Allen often walks the 20 minutes from his small Silver Lake apartment where he lives with his girlfriend, artist Emily Joyce. He is at the gallery by 10 a.m. one recent morning, following a recreational day at Disneyland (his first) with Machine staff. He is fighting a cold and looks tired, the faint rings under his eyes betraying the fact that “my creative energy is spread very thin.”

In the corner of the empty gallery, a forlorn platter of left over hors d’oeuvres is still out, remnants of the prior weekend’s event. The show, created by Brody Condon, was a dramatic reenactment of people who filmed themselves freaking out on drugs and posted their hallucinatory rantings on YouTube. Lighting for the two-person play (one actor stands still and speaks while the other mimics the psychotropic action) consisted of Home Depot-style work lights strung in a row across the gallery ceiling. During breaks, people stood in the entryway where a suspended bucket protected them from water dripping from an air conditioning unit overhead.

“You know, ‘we’re not very slick,’” Allen admits, rolling his eyes. “I’ve been here for 10 years and it’s still like, 10 minutes before the show nothing’s working and something’s plugged in some disastrous way. I don’t know, it never seem s to go anywhere.”

Yet, there’s a method to Machine’s carefree informality, what Allen calls “showing the seams” as opposed to staging a spectacle. He wants the gallery to serve as a model for students and aspiring artists. So he makes it look easy: You just get a space, chill some beer and invite your friends to do shows.

“Being a good teacher is really about allowing people to see what’s really exciting about something in the world,” he says. “And so, when I teach my students, I’m just trying to convey to them an enthusiasm or a deeper appreciation for something. And I think that’s very much my role at the gallery. Like, I’m just trying to convey to people who come, ‘Here’s someone I’m really excited about who I think is really important and interesting. And I think you’re really going to love it too.’”
THE MONOPOLIST
Michael George ’94

When Michael George ’94 came to Pomona College as a freshman, he brought his fledgling collection of Monopoly games to Wig Hall. Today, with more than 100 versions in his possession, George’s hobby has mushroomed to the point where housing them in a dorm room wouldn’t be an option.

“They take up a whole wall in my basement,” says George, who lives in Washington, D.C., where he does budgetary work for the government. “They’re like my babies.”

George began collecting Monopoly following a high school summer spent playing the board game with friends. One pal had returned from Europe with British, French and Italian Monopoly editions and the group began playing those games together, jumping from one board to the next, setting up exchange rates between the various Monopoly currencies.

While studying abroad during his junior year at Pomona, George began collecting in earnest, though he limits himself to versions featuring properties with specific street and city names. (That rules out the movie and TV show editions.) And he’s still on the prowl. George and his partner went on a safari in Tanzania this summer. Along with his camera and sunscreen, he brought along a picture of a bygone Tanzanian edition of Monopoly. No one had ever seen it.

“How do you find these things? It’s serendipity,” George says. “Just when you give up, it comes out of nowhere.”

SAY IT AGAIN, SAM
Samantha Brenner ’02

Long before high-tech games became part of almost every child’s “education,” Samantha Brenner ’02 was hiding under the covers at night, playing the game “Say It” on her old-school, tomato-red Texas Instruments-brand Speak & Spell.

“I’d be playing with it for hours,” Brenner says. “Thinking back, my parents were very understanding because I don’t remember being too concerned about being caught. That game was pretty loud!”

This was right around the time that E.T. (and Steven Spielberg) worked some magic on his friend Elliot’s Speak & Spell so he could phone home. Brenner doesn’t remember making any special modifications on her toy, which was the first consumer product to sport a single-chip speech synthesizer. Mostly, she just used it to learn to form words, play Hangman and while away the hours as the only child—older siblings had moved out—in her family’s New York City apartment.

“It definitely signaled my love of reading and writing at an early age,” says Brenner, a politics major now working as an independent consultant with nonprofits in New York. Brenner recently rediscovered her Speak & Spell when her parents asked her to sort through her belongings in their storage locker. It still lights up and emits a few beeps. But the buttons don’t work and the letters are garbled when they appear on screen.

“It definitely teaches to do with it, but there’s no way I can let it go,” Brenner says. “Maybe somebody can point me to an electronics repair shop. I’d love to hear ‘Say It’ again.”
Growing up in small-town Vermont, Will Voigt ’98 shot hoops at home under quirky conditions. In a setting long on snow and short on pavement, Voigt’s dad chose a century-old barn as the place for a backboard after the boy showed an interest in basketball. The barn’s uneven floorboards made dribbling difficult, so Voigt focused on his shot, which required extra arch because the hoop was hung four inches higher than regulation. The fact that the barn was used to shelter neighbors’ vehicles from the elements only added to the challenge. “Sometimes you had to make some leaping saves to make sure the ball didn’t ricochet off the rim to hit a car,” says Voigt.

But Voigt spent countless hours under that basket, firing off free-throws with freezing-cold hands, never losing his interest in the game.

Post-Pomona, Voigt worked a series of basketball coaching jobs from Texas to Norway and back to Vermont in 2006 to become the first coach for the newly launched Frost Heaves in the American Basketball Association. And whenever he went home to the tiny town of Cabot to visit his folks, Voigt found that old hoop was still up in their barn, becoming such a fixture that a bird had built its nest at the back of the rim. “There are probably not a lot of other places where as a kid you would learn to shoot baskets in a 19th-century barn,” says Voigt, who moved to California this fall to coach the Bakersfield Jam in the NBA Development League.

ALISON ROSE JEFFERSON ’80 is trying to preserve the memory of L.A.’s segregated beaches, and of one beach in particular...

In California’s fabled coast, Alison Rose Jefferson ’80 fights the erosion of memory, working to preserve a beach story that doesn’t fit the sunny Jan-and-Dean mythology.

She is not the first historian to encounter the saga behind a once-segregated section of Santa Monica State Beach. But Jefferson has dug the deepest to bring out the history of a stretch of sand that for decades was one of the few L.A.-area beaches where Black people could gather with little risk of trouble.

Under the de facto segregation that ruled in this region from the 1920s to the 1950s, even a day at the beach required a degree of caution and calculation if you were Black. Choose the wrong spot and you risked humiliation at best. “People are pretty much struck by the fact that they just don’t know this history,” says Jefferson. Except for the people who lived through it, who Jefferson says are apt to reply “We knew about this history; you just didn’t know about this history.”

The important thing to Jefferson is that you learn about it now. Though she starts her conversation in the safe realm of dates, places and family names—all delivered with speed and enthusiasm that only a historian could muster—it doesn’t take much prodding to bring out the deeper motivation behind her work. “I’m coming at this because I’m interested...”
in it and I’m passionate about it,” says Jefferson, who began a doctoral program in the Santa Monica city archives in 2007.

“Why would I do this if I was not passionate about it? There are easier ways to make a living,” she says.

She handles this story as she would an old-timer’s fraying family photo album, something she has practice with from gathering tales for her research. The reality of societal discrimination can’t be blotted out the countless fond personal memories of a gathering spot where the region’s Black community found a place in the sun. “The pain was they couldn’t go everywhere that they wanted to go,” says Jefferson. “But people endure. They were going to come and enjoy what California had to offer—just as everybody else was going to visit my beach, but she had always wondered why she didn’t have any Black friends that lived along the coast. That question stayed with her, too.

Answers would be a long time coming. After mapping out beach clubs, Jefferson ran with that. She went on to do marketing and P.R. work in the music industry, and then for a business improvement district in downtown Los Angeles. “Mother in touch with historic preservation issues—she had always been interested in history—and in 2003, she entered the masters program in historic preservation at USC.

For a class taught by the eminent California historian Kevin Starr, Jefferson offered possible paper topics that included Riverside’s famous wartime Mission Inn hotel and African-American vacation spots in Southern California. Starr, she recalls, quickly scotched that first topic, saying it was “too diverse.” “But those vacation spots, people don’t really know anything about that. Why don’t you write about that?”

The feedback on her paper was positive, and she recalls Starr telling her, “You might have a little more here that you can do something with.” Jefferson ran with that. She went on to do research on Phillips Chapel, the old Black church with a well-preserved pink stucco that still overlooks Santa Monica’s beach. That work drew the attention of civic leaders, who didn’t know this side of their city’s past. Jefferson soon found herself giving highly attended talks for such groups as the Santa Monica Conservancy. Jefferson keeps turning up more to explore, and she plans to continue taking her work beyond scholarly circles, perhaps with an exhibition or a book.

On Santa Monica’s beach, high visibility already has been achieved. Last year, dignitaries gathered and the city unveiled a plaque marking the Ink Well as “a place a celebration and pain.” Jefferson plans to retrieve a copy of the old law from city hall and flush out the story of what happened beyond the choppy and often racially-charged newspaper accounts of 1922.

Uncovering the details of how cities such as Santa Monica (and Manhattan Beach and elsewhere) used their power to disenfranchise Blacks was shocking even for a trained historian such as Jefferson, who describes it as “a moment of ‘yes, this is something that people need to know about.’” The effects of these past efforts to thwart Black entrepreneurship and property rights still reach into the present, says Jefferson, noting the long-term impact on issues such as the location of L.A.’s Black population.

Jefferson goes at her research with perseverance and a thorough methodology, and says Kenneth Breisch, director of the project, has been a key part of the program in historic preservation at USC’s architectural school. Her work is particularly challenging,

Breich notes, because the history of the leisure spots is much more ephemeral than, say, the work of documenting a historic building.

“She’s tended to bring attention to the areas of our past that are sometimes controversial or difficult but that need to be recognized and remembered,” says Breisch, former president of the Santa Monica Conservancy.

With limited written documentation to draw information from, Jefferson says her beach research has been a “journey of networking,” as she turns to collect oral histories and stories about the beach from members of longtime L.A. and Santa Monica families. One older woman remembered that stretch of Santa Monica as a place to meet L.A. Bohemian men told of heading there in his youth to be by himself and clear his head.

Now, though, the remaining personal recollections of the beach are dying off with the generation that nurtured its protec- tion. “Some of their children know something about it,” she says. “But some of them don’t—many of them don’t.”

JEFFERSON’S OWN MEMORIES, at least indirectly, got her started on this project. Growing up in Los Angeles, she had always heard stories from her mom’s family about the days when a Black-owned resort beckoned from Lake Elsinore. Those stories stayed with her. During her youth in the ’60s and ’70s, Jefferson would visit the local beach, but she had always wondered why she didn’t have any Black friends that lived along the coast.

The feedback on her paper was positive, and she recalls Starr telling her, “You might have a little more here that you can do something with.” Jefferson ran with that. She went on to do research on Phillips Chapel, the old Black church with a well-preserved pink stucco that still overlooks Santa Monica’s beach. That work drew the attention of civic leaders, who didn’t know this side of their city’s past. Jefferson soon found herself giving highly attended talks for such groups as the Santa Monica Conservancy. Jefferson keeps turning up more to explore, and she plans to continue taking her work beyond scholarly circles, perhaps with an exhibition or a book.

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EVER SINCE HIS FIRST VOYAGE AT THE AGE OF 4, NELSON ARNSTEIN ’75 HAS BEEN OBSESSED WITH THE WORLD’S GREAT OCEAN LINERS.

Pricey Lalique porcelain figurines in the gift shop crash and shatter. Crew members clutch the brass railings. Ashen-faced passengers scramble to their cabins.

Not Nelson Arnstein ’75. He’s exhilarated as he stalks along the dangerously slick deck recording the storm on video. Arnstein is an ocean liner buff, first class.

Since he made his first transatlantic crossing on the RMS Queen Mary at age 4, he has felt most at home when he’s at sea. He’s traversed the Atlantic on various ocean liners nearly 20 times, including this “magnificently rough” crossing aboard the Rotterdam a decade ago.

More recently, he took part in an historic farewell journey aboard Queen Elizabeth 2, which is destined to become a floating hotel and museum. QE2 made a rare tandem transatlantic crossing last fall with her fleet mate, Queen Mary 2, before going out of service as the fastest and longest-running ocean liner in the Cunard Line’s 168-year history.

Arnstein flew to England for the trip, boarded QE2 in Southampton and had a clear view of QE2 steaming all the way across the ocean. In New York, he switched ships and sailed eastward on QE2.

Back in Southampton he engaged in his own private farewell ritual.

“When I step on the ship or off the ship, if I really love it, I’ll go— ,” he says, and kisses his fingers, and touches the plating.

“I’ve been doing that since I was a kid. It’s crazy, I know.” Arnstein doesn’t leave the craziness behind when he steps off the gangplank.

A physician who runs the department of nuclear medicine at a Kaiser Permanente medical center near Los Angeles, he spends hours of his spare time—and tens of thousands of dollars—researching and collecting ocean liner memorabilia, everything from teak deck chairs from the Queen Mary to a rare vintage travel poster for the SS Titanic. He owns a wall sconce from the Mauretania, a porthole from the wreck of the Republic, a lifeboat compass from the SS United States. “It was like walking into a museum,” says Bob Soliday, a friend and fellow ocean liner aficionado, about his first visit to Arnstein’s home.

“He’s the Energizer bunny,” says friend Robert Strolka. “Nelson offers you an adventure.”

Leading an impromptu tour on a recent fall evening, Arnstein passes through the gift shops he calls his “candy store,” then tops up and down stairwells and down long passages. Ignoring a “Crew Members Only” sign on a door, he enters a storage room with linen and folded tables: “This used to be the third-class dining room.”

In a deserted part of the ship, he pulls on a door that opens into a small, darkened room, the memorial sanctuary of the four “Imperial Chalipians” who gave away their own lifejackets to save others after a U. S. Army troopship was torpedoed off Greenland during World War II. Arnstein spends a few moments in the low light of the sanctuary studying the display in complete silence.

Mostly, though, he’s in full tour-guide mode on the Queen Mary. Ask him anything about ocean liners, and Arnstein seems to have the answer.

He can tick off the details of the first 19th-century crossings, right down to the number of wooden buoys and the famous passengers, which included Charles Dickens, who called his cabin in Cunard’s original paddle steamer Britannia “an utterly preposterous box.”

And don’t get him started on his favorite ship, the SS Normandie. “The Queen Mary had warmth, but Normandie had style. … People who sailed in her were probably dressed in the ultimate in Parisian fashion.”

He traces the seed of his grand obsession to his family history. His mother, who was born in England, first traveled to America in 1949 in convoy, witnessing the bombing of the Empire of British by the German Luftwaffe. Arnstein’s parents later made annual crossings when he and his siblings were growing up.

He doesn’t remember his first crossing in the Queen Mary, but the journey is part of family lore, too. “We were in the Churchill Suite. The three of us, my mom, my brother and I would rotate beds so that we could say we slept in the same bed that Winston Churchill slept in.”

Like other ocean liner buffs, Arnstein admits he’s drawn to times past and the aura of privilege and high style the great ships embody. Although he’s taken plenty of cruise vacations, he prefers ocean liners with their white gloved servers who offer bouillon from Art Deco silver and teak trolleys to cruise ships with their rock-climbing walls and wave machines.

But it’s something more than snob appeal, even something more than the doctor’s own prescription and cure for the pressures he faces treating patients with life-threatening diseases. He feels it in his bones as a vessel cuts through wave after wave on the endless, open sea. “The motion—I love the motion. The vibration. The salt air,” Arnstein says. “You’re on an enormous living thing in a way. A ship is alive. They’re born, they live, they get old and they die. Just like we do. That’s not my own saying, but I think it is true.”

Arnstein moved to Long Beach in 2002, and he takes full advantage of his proximity to the Queen Mary. “He’s the Energizer bunny,” says friend Robert Strolka. “Nelson offers you an adventure.”

PHOTOS BY IRIS SCHNEDER, PRO PHOTOGRAPHY NETWORK

On the storm-lashed North Atlantic, the bow of Holland America Line’s SS Rotterdam slices through one pearl-white wave after another, the ship rising and falling in a stomach-churning roller coaster of motion.
Raising Steaks: The Life and Times of American Beef

By Betty Fussell ’48

ROMANTIC IMAGERY SURPRISED ME.

TRACING THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN STEAK HOUSES THAT SPURGE UP NEAR THE SAUCER STHOUSES OF NEW YORK WHERE COWS WERE TURNED INTO BEEF, FUSSELL WRITES THAT THESE EATORIES ARE ABOUT THE JOYS OF CARNIVAL EXCESS.

—Elaine Regus
The following is an edited excerpt from a classroom discussion in the course in Asian Traditions taught by Professor Sam Yamashita during spring 2009.

YAMASHITA: Last week we continued our discussion of the intellectual and political changes that took place in this extended period that runs from Song into the Ming Dynasty. In addition to economic and technological changes, I talked about interesting intellectual changes that resulted in something modern scholars call Neo-Confucianism. Today, let’s talk about Neo-Confucianism and whether you think the ruling elite shared a discourse, and what you’ve found in your reading to support your point of view.

KELLY: All these writers had a stake in the potential of individuals and faith in their ability to create an ideal society based on morality and collective responsibility. When they developed this new Confucianist dialogue in response to Buddhism and Daoism, there was an idea that humans are innately good and full of spiritual cultivation that might disqualify them.

YAMASHITA: Did anyone argue against the idea of a shared discourse?

ELIOT: I didn’t feel that there were a lot of shared ideas. I was looking at Wang Anshi, and it seemed his primary concern was the welfare of the people. In his writing, he supported the service exemption law and the benefits he listed were meeting the material and emotional needs of the state and strengthening military power. Instead of arguing for the benefits of the people, he was arguing for the state.

YAMASHITA: Wang Anshi did write some poetry where he expresses some concerns for the people, the hungry and the homeless, but it was not included in your reading. That might lead you to change your thoughts. What would be something that would make you think that someone is not a Neo-Confucian? Mr. Chang has suggested it might be a preponderant interest in the state as opposed to the individual.

JAMES: It would seem to me from the reading that Neo-Confucianism was more secular than spiritual, that what would disqualify one from being a Neo-Confucian would have to do with an obsession with spiritual beliefs and less dealing with the state and the secular.

YAMASHITA: Because Neo-Confucianism was very much for the state, in the welfare of the people, you’re saying if someone was obsessed with spiritual cultivation that might disqualify them?

CHRISTOPHER: I would say they would be disqualified by advocating withdrawal from any social or political institutions.

YAMASHITA: In concrete terms what would we look for?

CHRISTOPHER: If someone spent weekends away at a monastery and wasn’t attentive to family.

YAMASHITA: Let me play the devil’s advocate. We’ve all recognized to some degree that there are Confucian and Legalist elements [in what you read]. What if we consider leaving out Legalist elements and have a discourse that is highly Confucian—maybe even eliminate Legalist elements. Would that work?

COSIMO: I think it would not work quite as well to get rid of the Legalist tradi- tions because it seems to somewhat ground Confucianism as far as the state is concerned. A lot of Confucian morality has to do with family relationships and filial relations and I feel like the Legalist additions to it allows it to apply more to state relations.

YAMASHITA: But remember that some of us believe that what is most important is the person as opposed to law, and so couldn’t we just choose good Confucians, people who were still versed in Confucian philosophy and practice and trust them with making sure that Confucianism is grounded and having them execute the policies of the state?

COSIMO: I suppose it’s theoretically possible. I’m not sure if it was done in practice.

YAMASHITA: Anyone want to argue strongly that one could have a state that was run exclusively on Confucian principles?

CHRISTOPHER: I saw them grappling with that problem in their discussions about the examination system. They saw that forcing people to know all the Confucian classics did not necessarily create good people; it created people who were good at memorizing books. A lot of them advocated creating a more personal examination system that involved conversing with people and learning whether they had good moral sensibilities.

CALUM: The only way you could stick to Confucian ideas is if you had an incredible cult of personality but you would still have to have a law component because that cult might be powerful enough around the capital but to make that cult be feared you would have to have a legal element that would be effective, 1,000 miles away.

YAMASHITA: So you think it’s possible if one is careful. What if we were to shift to the other side of the equation and eliminate Confucianism and have a state run solely according to Legalist principles, focusing on law and punishment?

LESLIE: With states that are larger and have more people I feel it would be better to rule more with the law than Confucian ideals, if you have a small town where everyone knows everyone else you have a sense for how people are and what morals they abide by. In a large state you can’t know what people believe and how they act and in order to control that and create civility it would be more important to have laws that can keep people in check.

IAN: I don’t think it’s possible to have an entirely Legalist state. Gambling systems don’t provide morality or choices and creates an atmosphere where people were out for themselves. I could see a legal system combined with Buddhism and Daoism.

YAMASHITA: That’s an argument for combining Legalism with Confucianism or maybe Buddhism or Daoism. In point of fact, most individuals who passed the civil service exams were familiar with Legalism, they knew the Chinese classics but they were also familiar with Daoism and to some extent with Buddhism, and we see this best in their private writings, poetry and essays, in their paintings and their inscriptions. The elite was pretty well versed in all these things. Legalism and Confucianism were main elements in their public lives and Daoism was central in their private lives, some combination of these three religions and philosophies mattered. So it’s an interesting case that, whether by accident or design, this elite was trained internally and externally, trained as private individuals but also public persons as well.
Grief, it has been said, can take many forms. Some mourners retreat into seclusion; others take up activities to occupy their time and thoughts. Last fall, in the weeks following the tragic death of famed novelist and Pomona Creative Writing Professor David Foster Wallace, Professor Kathleen Fitzpatrick developed a compelling urge to delve into the complete works of her friend and colleague—and wanted students to take part in it, too. “I felt there were probably a lot of students at Pomona who had hoped to work with [Wallace] during their time here,” says Fitzpatrick, professor of English and media studies. “I wanted to bring the community together to work through the material, and therefore work through the legacy that he left behind.”

Last semester, Fitzpatrick and her class of 30 sifted through an immense literary catalog of texts that spanned from Wallace’s full-bodied readings as an Amherst College undergraduate to his later New Yorker contributions. “I thought it was important for us to contribute something to the material and to him.” The wiki included an author biography, a complete bibliography, a breakdown of themes Wallace explores in his writing, and also had the class create a wiki (http://wallace.amherst.edu/wiki/), based on the readings and discussions. “I viewed the course as this collective experience,” she says, “and thought it was important for us to contribute something as well.”

The elective course brought together students from a cross-section of campuses, class years and fields of study. (Wallace’s sci- ence-savvy tangents attracted more than a few math majors.) “Because his ideas are so universal, the class came to be about more than just the writing,” says Lauren Rosenfield ’11, a Wallace neophyte who was quickly captivated by the course and its discussions. “We were talking about bigger concepts of life and meaning and relationships.”

Julius Taranto ’12, who entered the class well-versed in most of Wallace’s writings, nevertheless gleaned much from the discussions and was struck by his classmates’ passionate yet pretension-free tone. “People were thinking seriously about the material, but nobody was trying to flaunt their background in literary criticism,” he says. “It was interesting and productive without being stepped in jargon.”

Utilizing online avenues to explore Wallace’s work, Fitzpatrick set up a blog in which students discussed the writing, and also had the class create a wiki (http://wallace.amherst.edu/wiki/), based on the readings and discussions. “I viewed the course as this collective experience,” she says, “and thought it was important for us to contribute something to the material and to him.” The wiki included an author biography, a complete bibliography and a breakdown of themes Wallace explores in his writing.

Pursuing such topics as loneliness and self-loathing was an inherently delicate proposal given the circumstances of Wallace’s passing. Fitzpatrick laments the fact that authors’ suicides so often result in literary scholars mining their works for warning signs. “It’s a mistake to read it that way,” she says, “because writing was no small part of what kept David alive.”

And while Fitzpatrick concedes that the humble Wallace would have hated the thought of a class dedicated to his work, she has no regrets about the course, calling it one of the best teaching experiences of her career. “I wasn’t sure how equipped I was to handle the task, but I was energized by the focus and enthusiasm of my students, their genuine reflection on the choices we made as young Americans.”

Susan J. McWilliams, assistant professor of politics
• “She inspires all kinds of creative thought and urges students to engage and challenge the theories of seemingly inac- cessible philosophers and political figures. I’ve never felt closer to Abraham Lincoln or more annoyed with Ralph Waldo Emerson in my life. In her class, she encourages genuine reflection on the choices we make as young Americans.”

• “Susan McWilliams is brilliant and vibrant… she is able to impart a deep respect for history and politics in even the most apolitical of students.”

—Jaden Connor-Simones ’08
Sometimes we do things—or don’t do things—that we can’t easily explain. This summer I’ve been mulling over how I sat on, without publishing or publicizing, a remarkable photograph for two decades—a picture I took 20 years ago that is an alternate viewpoint of an iconic image that captivated much of the world.

I only shared my photo with a handful of friends until I agreed to its publication this summer in The New York Times online, generating media buzz and strong emotions.

How did the picture stay under wraps for so long? This is the first time that I have recounted the full story.

I took the photo on June 5, 1989, as a reporter for The Associated Press covering the Tiananmen Square protests and military crackdown on protesters in Beijing. It’s a shot of the man who had the famous confrontation with the line of Chinese army tanks, a different angle of the well-known image that we’ve all seen of Man vs. Tank. That photo—actually photos, since the same scene was captured by four different photographers from essentially the same location atop the Beijing Hotel—has become a symbol around the world of democracy movements, people power and photojournalism itself.

I was standing at the front of the Beijing Hotel around lunchtime when I heard shots emanating from the direction of the square a couple of hundred meters to the west. People were running fast toward the hotel. I could hear the grinding motors of tanks not far down the road and more shots coming from that direction. I raised my Nikon F-801 SLR camera and squeezed off a single shot of a column of tanks I could see approaching from the right, then I ducked down a side street and into an entrance to the Beijing Hotel where I was staying.

I made my way up to Room 1131 and took another picture or two from the balcony. I remember being obsessed with the thought that authorities would break into my room to seize my film, just as an agent from the Gonganju (Public Security Bureau) and some uniformed police had done in the lobby of the Beijing Hotel on a previous night, confiscating a two-hour videotape—two hours!—of events I had taken over the last days leading up to the crackdown. I quickly hid my camera and film in an air vent in the ceiling of the bathroom as I had been doing for a few days. I later learned that other photographers had also hidden film in their hotel rooms—in a toilet tank, for instance.

Later that day I took my equipment and film to AP’s Beijing bureau where, on a chaotic news day, the film was developed and a photo editor selected one or two frames from my rolls to send out on the wire. Earlier that day the bureau had transmitted AP’s striking bird’s-eye view of the man stopping the tank, and as reaction to that photo and the day’s events swirled around us, the rest of my negatives were returned to me.

It was only some time after I returned to my home in Tokyo, in mid-July, that I printed out select copies of the photos, and even later—a month! Six months! Longer!—that I printed out full-size, 8-by-10-inch copies of certain frames. At some point—I honestly cannot remember when—I realized that one of my photos had captured a different angle of that signature confrontation, well before the tanks reached the defiant man.

I remember being mesmerized but at the same time disappointed, thinking it wasn’t as dramatic as the famous photos already known to the rest of the world. Even though there was terror and confusion expressed in the faces of people fleeing, the bicyclist who seems jarringly nonchalant—did I just catch him at dawn hard on a pedal? Or was he a member of the security apparatus and knew he didn’t have to worry about getting arrested? I probably thought to myself those 19 or 20 years ago that the world had already seen the better view of this incident and of this man, and that I had missed the moment. I packed the photos away and carried them with me through a series of moves over the years—from Japan to France to New York City to Michigan to San Francisco to Virginia.

Last year I spent six months at Ohio State University on a Kiplinger Fellowship studying digital media recording, editing and presentation techniques. There I’d started a multimedia made-for-online documentary on Chinese youth, using images I took covering the protests in 1989 and some I took at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

But I was finding it difficult placing my project with a new organization’s Website. On June 4, The New York Times’ new photography blog called Lens published the previously known photos of the Man vs. Tank, along with the stories of the four photographers who took them. A news photographer friend who knew of my picture emailed me, asking, “Shouldn’t you be among them too?”

I contacted The Times, showed them the photo and was bowed over by the response. They were “speechless” and keen on being the first to carry the picture: “You’ll forever be known as the Fifth Photographer.” I was told—I hope much more convincing!—“I need you!”

The photo was published online (http://bit.ly/5B5k) and viewer reaction was swift, voluminous and, for me, overwhelmingly flattering. Comments said the photo was “unbelievable,” “breathtaking” and “dripping with emotion.” Several said they felt goose bumps or had tears in their eyes when they saw it.

Many offered their own interpretations, stating for instance that the photo “paints a picture of an even steeper measure of resolve within the man confronting the tank,” or “Is Proof positive, if it has ever been needed, that the study of all history, everywhere must be free, open to new information and new perspectives as new facts come to light.” One reader expressed thanks for “a great service to history,” and another said, “Without a doubt I am moved to be a better person.”

That’s heady stuff. In 28 years of journalism, I’ve never gotten such emotional responses to anything I’ve written. I was bowled over by the positive feedback, and also by how the media and networking of today accelerated reaction in ways that didn’t exist when the photo was taken. Friends emailed appreciation. Dozens of sites across the blogosphere linked to the photo, which also got me written into Wikipedia’s “Tank Man” entry. Strangers who liked the picture friended me on Facebook.

All this has led me to reassess what the photo tells us. I saw that the still-unidentified man clearly premeditated his stand well before the tanks were upon him; he didn’t dart out for the confrontation moments before he seemed to be clearing a path for them to do so. He seems to be standing at a moment with his head up. Or was he a member of the security apparatus and knew he didn’t have to worry about getting arrested? I probably thought to myself those 19 or 20 years ago that the world had already seen the better view of this incident and
A Time to Nominate

No Sagehen can forget that quote from the College gates: “They only are loyal to the college who departing bear their added riches in trust for mankind.” There are both old and young alumni who are living examples of this Pomona tradition. Please take a moment to nominate a deserving individual for either the Inspirational Young Alumni Award (for graduates of the past 10 years) or the recently established Blaisdell Distinguished Alumni Award. Both awards are designed to highlight alumni for their high achievement in their professions or community service. And for that friend who just can’t stop talking about and doing things for Pomona, specifically, we invite you to nominate them for the Alumni Distinguished Service Award, bestowed annually to an alumna or alumnus in recognition of that person’s selfless commitment and ongoing volunteer service to Pomona College. To nominate someone or for more information and a list of past winners, please visit http://www.pomona.edu/Adv/Alumni/association/awards/home.shtml. Nominations may also be mailed to: Alumni Office, Seaver House, 305 N. College Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711.

Travel-Study / Alumni Trips for 2010

Sail the Dalmatian Coast
With Professor of Sociology Jill Grigsby
May 23–June 3, 2010
Sail along the coasts of Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and Greece aboard a 44-passenger sailing vessel, visiting Dubrovnik, Hvar, Kotor, Trieste, Thaka, Delphi and Athens. Professor Grigsby will be sharing her knowledge of local demographic history and cultural heritage. Prices start at $7,990 based on double occupancy.

Walking Tour of Southern France
With Professor of History Ken Wolf
April 26–May 8, 2010
Trek from Albi through Foix, Montsegur, Puylaurens, Corbières and Fitou concluding in the famous walled city of Carcassonne. Each day will include walking and sumptuous meals featuring local cuisine. Professor Wolf will be joined by Peter Watson, who has led other walking tours for the College over the years. Cost is $6,885 per person based on double occupancy.

Future Travel-Study Programs
• Alaska Cruise
• Family Safari in Africa
• Galapagos Islands Cruise

For additional information, contact the Alumni Office at (909) 621-8110.
When a country cat moves to the city and has problems adapting, who can an anxious owner turn to? After struggling to ease Bleaky’s transition to apartment life, his owners asked for help from Animal Planet’s *Housecat Housecall*, a weekly series that focuses on feline behavior.

Karen Sueda ’97 is one of two mentors who work with host Katrina Warren on problems ranging from aggressive grooming to bosses. “So much of what’s on TV is about dogs, so it’s nice to have a show about cat behavior and to send the message there is something you can do about it,” says Sueda, a veterinary behavioral specialist in L.A. Bleaky’s restless behavior improved when the owners followed Sueda’s suggestion to bring the outdoors inside by showing him fish and bird videos made just for cats. They even projected the images on their apartment walls, giving Bleaky an opportunity to do some virtual bird stalking.

“A lot of the treatment we recommend is making the behavior you don’t like difficult and reinforcing good behavior with something the cat likes, like treats or catnip or brushing,” says Sueda.

Sueda’s love for animals started when she was growing up in Hawaii. “I was one of those kids who loved to spend time in the yard watching birds and lizards,” she says. “I’ve always been interested in animals and how their behavior impacts people.”

Veterinary behaviorists are the equivalent of human psychiatrists, says Sueda. Their specialty is prompted in part by our changing relationships with pets. “Owners see their pets as best friends or members of the family, rather than just as animals.”

Sueda has her own cat, a tuxedo named Tyler, who she refers to as “my boy.” While he doesn’t have any major behavioral problems, he does have a few quirks. “He likes to tear up toilet paper,” she says. Her solution is simple: “I try to keep the door to the bathroom closed.”

First steps for any behavioral problem: Treat problems early, such as the first time your cat uses the carpet instead of the litter box or playfully bites your hand. Don’t wait until the behavior is out of control. Check with your vet to make sure there isn’t an underlying medical problem.

Not using the litter box: Put a litter box inside the house (a surprising oversight by some owners, says Sueda). Most cats prefer an uncovered box with unscented, clumping litter and no liner. Location is another important consideration. Like people, cats want someplace convenient, quiet and close, which means you need a box on each floor of the house, especially when you have older cats, who may have difficulty navigating the stairs.

Play biting: Start early to prevent this before it becomes a problem. Don’t use your hands or feet when playing with a kitten. To give your kitten pouncing practice, use toys or feathers attached to a wand. If your cat has started biting, stop play every time teeth touch skin. Make the bad behavior difficult, but also make sure to promote good play. Bring out cat toys and spend time with your pet. Like dogs, cats need plenty of exercise and mental stimulation.

Scratching furniture & rugs: Ask your vet how to clip your cat’s nails. Get a scratching post and place it next to the corner of the couch or wherever your cat has been scratching. Rub catnip on the post and reward your cat with treats and attention when he uses it. Double-sided tape and products like feline facial pheromone spray (which encourages cheek rubbing instead of scratching) are good deterrents.

Introducing a new cat: The introduction should be gradual. Isolate the new cat in its own room, set up with a litter box, food, water, scratching post and bed. Start feeding the other cat on the opposite side of the closed door. Next, set up a gate so the two cats can see one another, and then proceed to supervised visits. Providing a slower transition will also reduce the stress of adapting to a new environment.

—Mary Marvin

For more information, check out www.housecatthousecall.com.

Expert Advice / Karen Sueda ’97

Cat Calls

When a country cat moves to the city and has problems adapting, who can an anxious owner turn to? After struggling to ease Bleaky’s transition to apartment life, his owners asked for help from Animal Planet’s *Housecat Housecall*, a weekly series that focuses on feline behavior.

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Alumni Association / New Members

Welcome to the Alumni Board

The Pomona College Alumni Association has elected four new board members who will represent alumni in communicating with the College and help guide the strategic vision for alumni events and programs. The new members, who began their three-year tenures on July 1, are:

Sandy Hall Briggs '64 P '93
Lives in: San Francisco. Family: Spouse Peter Briggs '64 has been active with the Alumni Association and served as president in 1978. Briggs’ daughter Samantha and son-in-law David Mannecke are both members of the Class of 1993.

Education: A Spanish major at Pomona, Briggs earned M.A. in teaching, in Spanish and education, at Johns Hopkins University, M.A. in English, emphasis on teaching English as a second language (ESL), at San Francisco State, and M.A. in linguistics from Stanford University. Career: In 2005, she became an English language teaching consultant after a teaching career that began in 1964. She was the ESL department chair and then district coordinator for the ESL program in San Mateo, Cali., where she taught for 29 years. Briggs has been author or co-author on a number of Spanish-and English-language teaching books. Alumni involvement: Briggs has served as an alumni admissions volunteer, on the Alumni Council 1989-91, Executive Council 1991-95 and as president in 1992. Community involvement: She served on the board of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, including stints on the executive committee and as president. She also served on the College Board Committee for the English Language Proficiency Test and the College Board ESL Advisory Panel for the new SAT.

Linda Wight Mazur '81
Lives in: Los Angeles (Valley Village) Family: She is currently chief cook and bottle washer for the Mazur family—husband Stephen and children David, 9, and Laura, 8. Education: A double major in music and mathematics and economics at Pomona College. In addition to fulfilling his most difficult PAC 6 requirement with the AYSO Region 58 snack bar, Jeff helped recruit the Class of 2003 at Pomona as an admissions interviewer and has volunteered as a career advisor with the Alumni Association since 2006. Alumni involvement: Mazur has served on the College Board Committee for the English Language Proficiency Test and the College Board ESL Advisory Panel for the new SAT.

Jeff Parks '02
Hometown: Born and raised in Renton, Wash., famous for its Boeing 737 plant, Parks currently lives in Menlo Park, Calif. Family: Parks previously was an executive with Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., working on investments in large leveraged technology sector buyouts. Alumni involvement: He helped recruit the Class of 2013 at Pomona as an alumni admissions interviewer and has volunteered as a career advisor with the Alumni Association since 2009. Career: As a student, Parks enjoys tennis, travel, great food and friends.

Elspeth Hilton ’08
Lives in: Seattle. Education: Hilton majored in psychology and is working toward her masters in public affairs. She served as sophomore class president and ASPC president during her senior year. She played on the tennis team all four years at Pomona and was co-captain her senior year. Career: As a student, Hilton worked at the Claremont Community Foundation. Since graduation she has worked as a marketing and operations coordinator for MedExchange, an online community for physicians and as an administrative assistant with the software firm Twisted Pair Solutions. Alumni involvement: Hilton has served as an Alumni Association volunteer planning events in commuters and negotiating agreements for the film and television industry. Community involvement: In 1998-99 she served as president of the Beverly Hills Bar Association and in 2006 she chaired the 72nd Annual “Conference of Delegates” at the annual meeting of the State Bar of California. Mazur is treasurer of the Oakwood School Parent Organization, governor of the Valley Community Clinic, at-large director of the Conference of California Bar Associations and purchasing manager for the AYSO Region 58 snack bar. Hobbies: “Hobbies? Not lately!”

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Class Notes only available in print
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Cryptic Crossword / by Lynne Willows Zold ’67 and Tony Zold ’66

Fun and Games  Answers on Page 56

Directions:
Cryptic puzzles have two parts—a simple definition and a “cryptic” clue such as an anagram, a homophone, two definitions, a word with added or deleted letters, or an answer hidden in the clue or in the initial capitals. (Example—“Clue: “Tree got mixed up in mess.” Period.” Answer—“Semester” [Definition: “Period”; Cryptic clue: anagram, signaled by “mixed up,” combining “tree” and “mess.”])

Across
1. Basel locally for a toy. (4)
2. People, animal biases Potter’s head off. (5)
3. It’s cold enough up there to freeze water. (5)
4. Some places have a top pilot. (3)
5. Playful animal bites Potter’s head off. (3)
6. Baw l loudly for a toy. (4)
7. H orses compete on Hollyw ood Drive. (8)
8. Don’t put jew elry on slobbering, messy guy. (4)
9. At leisure and doesn’t require effort. (3)
10. Share an audition for a famous singer/actress. (4)
11. H old off the children’s gam e. (8)
12. A lbee som etim es captured insects. (4)
13. Eros juggled som e fish eggs. (4)
14. Chest holds a gam e in which 4th through 23rd drops out. (5)
15. Some places have a top pilot. (3)
16. Talbots rem oved little children’s clerical garb. (3)
17. Horserace at leisure and doesn’t require effort. (3)
18. A lbee som etim es captured insects. (4)
19. Stunt w as frantic but French cut it short. (5)
20. Share an audition for a famous singer/actress. (4)
21. Talbots rem oved little children’s clerical garb. (3)
22. Big boy’s toy zoom s around a track. (8)
23. Baw l loudly for a toy. (4)
24. Eros juggled som e fish eggs. (4)
25.头脑风暴/ Mind G am es /
26. Eros juggled som e fish eggs. (4)
27. Talbots rem oved little children’s clerical garb. (3)
28. Talbots rem oved little children’s clerical garb. (3)
29. It’s cold enough up there to freeze water. (5)
30. It’s cold enough up there to freeze water. (5)

Down
1. Ride a velocipede. (4)
2. Some places have a top pilot. (3)
3. Cotton read a book in the shade. (5)
4. H orses compete on Hollyw ood Drive. (8)
5. Share an audition for a famous singer/actress. (4)
6. Baw l loudly for a toy. (4)
7. H old off the children’s gam e. (8)
8. Share an audition for a famous singer/actress. (4)
9. Share an audition for a famous singer/actress. (4)
10. Share an audition for a famous singer/actress. (4)
11. Share an audition for a famous singer/actress. (4)
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YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED SOMETHING LATELY, THE UNUSUAL FREQUENCY OF THE NUMBER "47" IN MOVIES AND TV SHOWS. IT'S NOT YOU.

A BUNCH OF HIGH-ACHIEVING NERDS FROM A SCHOOL YOU NEVER HEARD OF ARE SLIPPING THE NUMBER INTO THIS STUFF. EVERYONE KNOWS USC, UCLA, AND NYU FOR THEIR DIRECTORS WHILE POMONA COLLEGE QUIETLY TURNS OUT TOP WRITERS AND PRODUCERS... ALL STRANGELY OBSESSED WITH THEIR SCHOOL'S LUCKY NUMBER.