



# CAS

## connections

### NOVEMBER 2008 IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2-3 Revisiting Trade Adjustment Assistance, Gotta Dance, Historians in the Hot Spots, Better Education for Rural Romania
- 4-5 Dancing for Relief, Green Alternative Earns Prestigious Research Grant, What's Happening, The Albanian Connection, Jewish Studies Expands
- 6-7 Art Bears Witness, A Novel Achievement, Reflections on a Green Field, Q & A with Lynne Arneson
- 8 Accomplishments, A Harmonious Pairing

Photo by Carl Seip

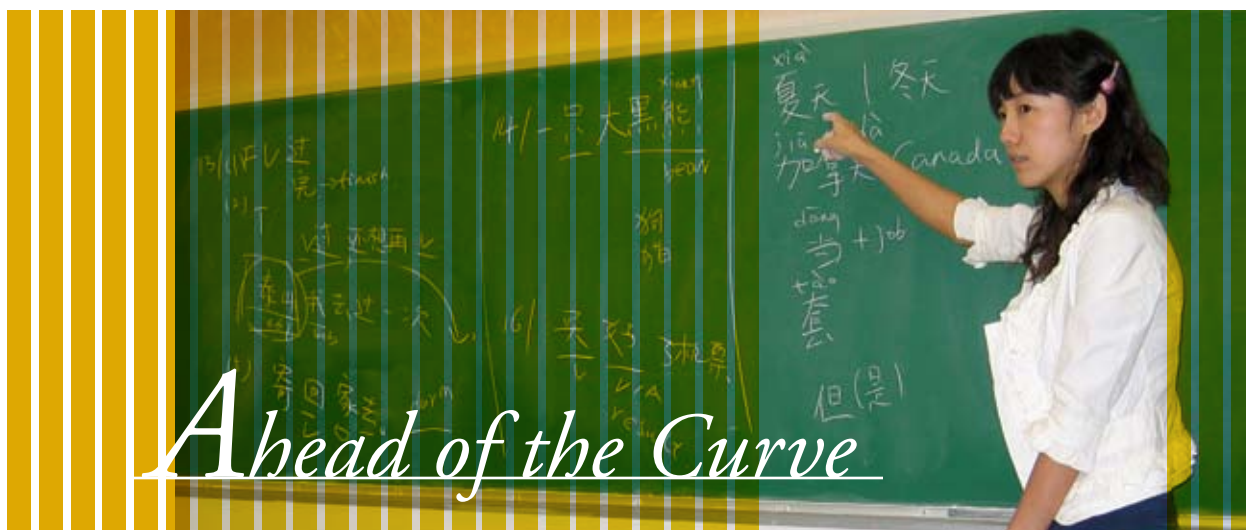


Photo by Heather Kinsman

In 2007, the Modern Language Association (MLA) recommended that U.S. colleges and universities situate foreign language study in “cultural, historical, geographic, and cross-cultural frames within the context of humanistic learning.” This may be news to some, but it has been the mission of the Department of Languages and Foreign Studies (LFS) for decades.

“LFS has always been progressive, always focused on linguistic and cultural competence” says department chair Olga Rojer. “LFS graduates have translanguing and transcultural competence and therefore are able to reflect upon the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture as the MLA advises.”

One of the ways that LFS fosters these competencies is through interdisciplinary degrees. The BA in language and area studies—a joint degree offered by LFS and the School of International Service (SIS)—was created in 1968 in keeping with the philosophy that you cannot truly understand a place if you do not speak the language and understand the culture.

In the late '70s, the department inaugurated a joint degree with the School of Communication (SOC). The BA in foreign language and communication media was, in part, a response to this country's growing Hispanic population, which now exceeds 40 million. “Many SOC students study Spanish because they know they can use it in [national], as well as international, media work,” says Rojer.

Recently, LFS has collaborated with the Kogod School of Business on the BS in business and language and culture studies. Launched in fall 2007, the degree prepares business students for a global marketplace. Jesse Boeding, director of Kogod's undergraduate studies, says, “The business world is a different place today than it was even yesterday. No longer can we operate solely within our small communities.”

Gail Riley, coordinator of foreign language pedagogy and LFS's undergraduate advisor, emphasizes that collaboration is key to the success of these programs. “There's a synergy that happens,” she says. “These degrees are interdisciplinary by design. It is the seamless integration of curricula and the essential connections made between language and other

disciplines that contribute to each program's uniqueness.” Currently, students can pursue these degrees in French, German, Russian, or Spanish; LFS is exploring the possible addition of Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. Says Riley, “As we look at what the future holds in terms of a globalized society, it is inevitable that we need to strengthen our offerings in these languages and cultures.”

Still, LFS has stayed ahead of the curve. The department first offered Arabic in 1994, and Chinese courses have been available for more than 20 years. Since academic year 2002–03, student enrollment in these classes has exploded—by 175 percent for Arabic and 129 percent for Chinese.

To meet the demand, LFS created 400-level topics courses, and added Arabic and Chinese language minors; plans are afoot to create Arabic and Chinese area studies minors. The department also offers courses in Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Swahili, and Turkish.

LFS has also taken foreign language outside of the classroom and into the community. “Students come to Washington for the international atmosphere, and they take languages with the hopes of connecting with the city,” says Rojer. Since 1969, Proyecto Amistad, a cross-cultural community service and language development internship program run by LFS, has connected Spanish-language students with agencies in D.C.'s Hispanic community. And thanks to the efforts of LFS professor Jack Child, AU students now have the opportunity to apply their Spanish skills as volunteers at Walter Reed Medical Center, where they interpret for Spanish-speaking patients and their families.

“As AU strives to become a premier global university, our students realize that nothing is more central to globalization than being proficient in another language and culture,” says Riley. “Our students are making connections and gaining proficiency in other languages so that they can communicate with members of diverse cultures in a meaningful way.”

—Cara Metell

## REINVENTING THE SOCK MARKET



Courtesy of Ellie Gordon

It was 1970, and Ellie Gordon—a 1968 AU graduate in studio art and art history, and a recent MFA in painting from Columbia University—wasn't quite sure what to do next. “At that time, there wasn't as much opportunity for an artist, especially a woman artist,” says Gordon.

But the tide turned for Gordon that summer while vacationing on Cape Cod with her husband and sister and brother-in-law. “There were these artists who were making tie-dyed shirts with appliques on them,” she recalls. “They told us they had gone cross-country and back with the money they made selling these T-shirts. We were really impressed and inspired, and thought that maybe we could do something like that.”

The four of them began brainstorming and they hit on an idea. “Socks, at the time, had a lot of room for improvement. The colors were bad, the fibers weren't natural.”

And so Hot Sox—a very fun, very funky, very rock-and-roll sock company, as Gordon describes it—was born. The venture began as a part-time cottage industry, with the founders working out of their apartments and supplying unique socks to local boutiques. But thanks in large part to their rainbow-striped toe sock, which debuted in the mid-'70s, the business quickly outgrew its home-grown, small-scale production. Hot Sox expanded into a global company, virtually inventing the fashion hosiery market and feeding such fashion behemoths as Gap, Banana Republic, and Ralph Lauren.

Gordon and her partners sold the company last year. Now she is focusing on a new project: E. G. Coaching, her consulting and coaching company. “I basically work with women entrepreneurs—talking to them about business strategy, leadership development, and executive coaching,” she says. “It turns out I'm just as passionate about growing and developing other entrepreneurs as I was about running my own company.”

—Jessica Tabak



## REVISITING TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE



Photo by Jessica Tabak

"In class, we typically talk about the benefits of trade liberalization, but there are going to be winners and losers in the real world," says Jay Palatucci, BA economics '09. "I started to wonder what actually happens when these theories are put into practice."

The senior economics student got his chance to pursue that question, after meeting with economics professor Kara Reynolds last spring. "We were brainstorming about the different topics we were interested in studying, and Dr. Reynolds brought up trade adjustment assistance," Palatucci recalls.

Supported by a summer research grant from the CAS dean's office, he worked on a project with Reynolds to analyze the efficacy of the United States Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA). Launched in the 1970s, this initiative provides income support, job training, and relocation benefits to workers who have lost their jobs to increased international trade.

According to the pair's findings, the program's benefits are surprisingly uncertain. While their data indicated that TAA participants were more likely to find employment sooner than their nonparticipating counterparts, it also showed that they tended to accept a 10 percent-higher pay cut. Reynolds presented their findings in a paper entitled "Does Trade Adjustment Assistance Make a Difference?" at the Department of Economics Brown Bag Seminar Series on October 1.

"We see this research as bringing up a lot of questions," Palatucci says. "If displaced workers from the program end up working at minimum wage, low-skilled jobs, is the program really benefiting them? On the other hand, are they transitioning into new career paths that call for an initial pay cut but place them on a positive income trajectory? We hope that this paper will provide other researchers some questions that they can build upon."

—Jessica Tabak



© Stephanie Berger.

courtesy of David Covington

## Gotta Dance

When it comes to connections, AU students and alumni often find themselves separated not by six degrees but by one. Kelsea Edgerly, BA communication and musical theatre '11, and David Covington, BA arts management and musical theatre '02, discovered that recently.

There was the series of coincidences: Both grew up near Annapolis. Both studied at Stage Workz dance studio in Millersville, Maryland. Both worked with the Talent Machine Company, an Annapolis-based theater group. And both chose to attend AU. Despite their parallel lives and the near misses, though, the two never actually made contact—until last summer.

The setup for their meeting began back in 2005, when Covington was the associate choreographer for the Kennedy Center's production of *A Salute to the 1940s Broadway Musical*. At the helm of the National Symphony Orchestra was maestro Marvin Hamlisch. In 2008, Hamlisch restaged the show's opening scene for *Broadway's Greatest Showstoppers* at New York City's Lincoln Center, featuring the New York Philharmonic. Covington reprised his role as associate choreographer.

Tasked with casting 30 tap dancers for the number, Covington put the word out to dance studios about the auditions. Edgerly, much to her disappointment, was out of town and missed the tryout. She got a second chance, however, when another dancer dropped out of the show. "I was devastated when I couldn't go to the audition," she recalls. "I have to say, I am thankful for the person that dropped out, whoever that was."

Rehearsal was a whirlwind. The dancers had just nine hours to practice in D.C. before being shipped up to New York by bus later that same day. "We only got up on stage [at Lincoln Center] for an hour," Covington remembers. "We got one run-through, and then the second number had to be totally rechoreographed in 10 minutes. It was crazy."

The sold-out show began with a ruse: Masquerading as musicians, the dancers came onstage with violins and began tuning their instruments with the rest of the orchestra. Then, on cue, they abandoned their instruments and broke into dance, surprising and thrilling the audience. The dancers got back on the bus that evening and headed home to D.C.

"Working with Kelsea was an absolute treat," says Covington. He later hired her to work as a mentor at a U.S. Performing Arts (USPA) camp. "She proved to be one of our supermentors—and a fantastic teaching assistant."

Edgerly echoes his sentiments: "I felt really privileged to be able to work with David at Lincoln Center and this summer for USPA. He's a wonderful person to work with, as well as a great teacher. His passion for dance and theatre is really encouraging and contagious."

The two plan to continue working together, sharing their love of dance through performance and teaching.

—Emily Schmidt





## Historians in the Hot Spots

Most Americans are content to consider the war in Iraq from within the safety of their own borders. But Michelle Risinger, BA history and international development '07, is not most people.

After graduation, Risinger, whose undergraduate thesis examined the myths and realities of WWI Red Cross girls, was hired as a historian at the American Red Cross national headquarters, where she had interned as a student. The job offered broad opportunities, from scheduling speakers to writing articles to inaugurating regular visitors' tours of the historic building.

As much as she enjoyed her job, however, she felt pulled to be on the front lines. "The original reason I wanted to work for the Red Cross was because of its work as an international humanitarian organization," she explains. "I realized that I needed to be out there."

Last July, Risinger became an assistant manager at the Red Cross station in Baghdad—a job she calls "simultaneously exhausting and rewarding. You really get to see the difference that your work and your presence make, [which] very few people ever get to experience."

Recently, Risinger has begun blogging about her journey. At "Climb in Back," as she calls the online project, she reflects on her experience with historical insight. "The blog is my attempt at making some analytical sense of life in Iraq," she explains. "It's my way of trying to show people what life is like here, while offering some [insight into] why things happen over here."

For Eric Lohr, finding himself in a war zone was a matter of pure happenstance. The history professor was vacationing with family and friends in the Caucasus Mountains in Georgia when he learned that Russia had invaded Georgia.

Lohr specializes in Russian studies and relations; in fact, he was one of Hillary Clinton's advisors on the region where the conflict occurred. But the cloud of misinformation and vague reports that descended on Georgia in those first days was hard, even for an expert, to see through. "Even though we were watching multiple news sources, we just didn't really know what was going on," he recalls. "Everyone [was] speculating, and there [were] wild rumors spreading all over the place."

He adds, "I guess this is what's typically referred to as the fog of war—this lack of knowledge and the tension it causes."

Now that the fog has lifted—and he and his family are safely back in the United States—Lohr has begun to revisit his experience from a historical perspective. "Knowing history does help to understand these sorts of events," he says. "You can approach them in one of two ways: either as a social scientist looking at the event in isolation, or by unpacking it and putting it in the context of the long history of events between these two nations."

His students have benefited from his experience as well. "It has very much informed the way I teach about the region," he says. "I'm a student of war, and seeing a war firsthand really does change the way one thinks about it."

—Jessica Tabak

### BETTER EDUCATION FOR RURAL ROMANIA

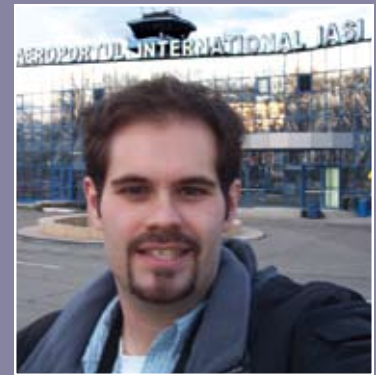


Photo by David Banville

Over the past two decades, Romania's dramatic political and economic changes have made the country more reliant on its education system than ever before.

For Romania's rural schools, which have been particularly underserved and underfunded for many decades, how best to improve educational quality and raise student academic achievement is a multimillion-dollar question.

David Banville believes that strengthening teacher quality is the answer. Currently a Fulbright scholar in Romania, the three-time AU alumnus is exploring the dynamics between teacher quality and increased accessibility to information technology.

"Romania's technology infrastructure is undergoing a huge expansion, with the country working to get high-speed Internet service available in all areas," Banville explains. "I'm looking at how to use that infrastructure to increase rural teachers' opportunities for professional development and collaboration."

Banville's research consists of two phases: The first involves collecting qualitative and quantitative data from teachers at rural schools located a few hours' drive from Bucharest and Iasi (pronounced "yash")—two of the country's largest cities—to learn what would make these educators more inclined to participate in Internet-driven distance learning.

The project's second phase involves working with Romanian policymakers and teacher-development stakeholders to collaborate on a policy supporting improved distance-learning opportunities for rural teachers.

The seeds for Banville's research were planted in 2007. That spring, he visited SETH professor Fred Jacobs, who was in Romania as a senior Fulbright scholar studying the country's postsecondary institutions.

Banville credits his experiences at AU—where he earned a BS in computer information systems ('99), an MS in computer information systems ('01), and a PhD in education ('07)—for paving the road to his current endeavor. "Each degree at AU has been a unique experience, and I've gotten to meet a wide variety of people with such different experiences," he says. "It's given me a well-rounded, all-around sense of what I want to do."

—Jessica Tabak



## GREEN ALTERNATIVE GARNERS PRESTIGIOUS RESEARCH GRANT



Photo by Jessica Tabak

Douglas Fox's polymer research project recently got a little boost. This fall, the chemistry professor received a three-year grant, totaling more than

\$270,000, to explore ways that modified cellulose can be used as a flame retardant. Inorganic salts are currently the most commonly used flame retardant—but it is known to release toxic fumes into the atmosphere. Fox's research seeks ways to adapt cellulose—an abundant organic polymer found in plants—for the same purpose. With manufacturers currently seeking “greener” products, “replacing inorganic salts with an environmentally benign alternative is a step in the right direction,” says Fox.

Awarded by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the grant will fund two new positions for the project: a three-year postdoctoral research associate appointment and a yearly undergraduate summer research assistantship. Bringing a postdoctoral chemist into the AU fold has decided benefits. Says Fox, “It allows you to progress further as a department, and it gives students another master to learn from.”

Undergraduates working on the project will gain a national perspective on technology and research while learning how to work as a member of a scientific research team. The majority of the research will be conducted at NIST headquarters in Gaithersburg, Maryland—allowing summer research assistants the opportunity to work with state-of-the-art equipment while brushing shoulders with some of the nation's premier scientists.

Student researchers will also gain valuable experience working in materials science, a burgeoning field that applies fundamental understanding of material composition to the engineering of new materials.



Photos by Hilary Schwab

Dance and relief work don't generally go together. But Simone Jacobson turned a day of dancing into a new life for people in the flooded villages of Burma.

The cyclone that devastated Burma in May struck close to home for Jacobson. She'd just returned from her first visit to her mother's native country when the storm roared in, leaving 100,000 dead or missing, and affecting as many as two million people. Jacobson's first instinct was to drop everything and return to Southeast Asia to help. But she wasn't a doctor or a relief worker.

What she *did* know how to do was reach people who love to dance. While juggling her first weeks in AU's arts management master's program, Jacobson organized a benefit master class series at Strathmore's CityDance Center. The event raised more than \$2,000 for the Foundation for the People of Burma. The U.S.-based humanitarian organization is helping people recover in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, the world's largest natural disaster since the Asian tsunami in 2004.

Workshops in hip-hop, modern, and Burmese traditional dance were held for local dancers, including many members of Washington's hip-hop dance group Culture Shock and its youth wing, Future Shock, for which Jacobson previously danced and served as director.

Not all the dancers were familiar with the issue. Hip-hop is Joshua Gilmore's life; he sheepishly confessed that he doesn't watch the news.

“I'm not up on current events. My grandma disses me about that. So I was like, ‘Burma, what's that?’ But when I found out it was a dance workshop, then I was interested.”

Jacobson took the opportunity to brief him about Burma—the decades of military rule, the suppressed revolt of the monks last year, and the devastating cyclone—as dancers practiced their moves nearby. Gilmore, who was astounded to hear about Burma's tragedies, said he was glad that his workshop fee would make a difference.

And it would. Around 150 dancers came to the workshop, raising enough money to buy 15 boats to replace those lost by village fishermen, rebuild eight flooded homes, or stock health clinics with needed supplies.

For some dancers, the master's series was an education on a distant country. For Jacobson, it was a demanding and meaningful start to a career in arts management.

And for people in the storm-washed villages of Burma, it will mean homes and boats and medical treatment. They'll get a new life, thanks to a day of dance.

—Sally Acharya, adapted from, “Day of dance brings new life to Burma's cyclone victims,” *American Today* (September 12, 2008)

## What's Happening For a complete calendar of events, visit [www.american.edu/cas/events.cfm](http://www.american.edu/cas/events.cfm).

**Through Dec. 21**  
**Calientamiento Global: An Exhibition Organized by the Association of Ibero-American Cultural Attachés**  
American University Museum  
Exhibit of art works from Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries, cosponsored by the American University Museum. Free

**Through Dec. 21**  
**Jae Ko**  
American University Museum  
*Artforum International* said of this Korean artist: “Jae Ko uses large, tightly bound spools of adding-machine paper that she wraps, folds, and contorts like toffee.” Free

**Through Dec. 21**  
**Onthaasting: About Spare Time and Slower Worlds**  
American University Museum  
Works by contemporary Belgian artists. Free

**Through Dec. 28**  
**Invasion 68: Prague—Photographs by Joseph Koudelka**  
American University Museum  
Exhibit features images of the 1968 Soviet invasion of Prague. Free

**Through Dec. 28**  
**Jack Boul: Then and Now**  
American University Museum  
Former AU professor exhibits his prints, drawings, and paintings. Free

**Through Jan. 18**  
**Dalya Luttwak: Hidden**  
Sylvia Berlin Katzen Sculpture Garden, American University Museum  
Israeli artist's welded metal sculptures expose nature's hidden roots. Free

**Dec. 3**  
**Department of Economics Brown Bag Seminar: Krista Jacobs, International Center for Research on Women**  
Noon–1 p.m. Roper Hall  
Guest speaker is an economist at the International Center for Research on Women. Free

**Dec. 4**  
**Atrium Series: Bringing Music to the People**  
Noon. Battelle-Tompkins Atrium. Free

**Dec. 4**  
**Open Arts Night**  
6–8 p.m. American University Museum  
Visit the museum after hours and enjoy performances by AU students. Free

**Dec. 6**  
**Gallery Talk: Dayla Luttwak**  
3–4 p.m. American University Museum  
Israeli artist talks about her work and current exhibit. Free

**Dec. 6**  
**Winter Dance Informal Showcase**  
2 p.m. Abramson Family Recital Hall, Katzen Arts Center  
AU students perform modern, jazz, ballet, and African dance selections. Free

**Dec. 13**  
**Gallery Talk: Jae Ko**  
4–5 p.m. American University Museum.  
Korean artist talks about her work and current exhibit. Free

**Jan. 22–24**  
**New Works Reading**  
8 p.m. Studio Theatre, Katzen Arts Center  
Continuing series of new theatre pieces presented by the Department of Performing Arts. General admission: \$5. Tickets at [www.american.tix.com](http://www.american.tix.com) or call 202-885-ARTS.

**Jan. 27**  
**Spring Arts Colloquia: Michelle Grabner**  
Noon. Abramson Family Recital Hall, Katzen Arts Center  
Grabner's abstract work features repetition and mathematical ordering. Free

**Jan. 28**  
**Visiting Writers Series: H. G. Carrillo**  
8 p.m. Board Room (sixth floor), Butler Pavilion  
Cuban-born fiction writer is the author of *Loosing My Spanish*. Free





Photo by Anne Bentzel

Image from photos.com

## The Albanian Connection

Albania will always be a part of Artur Elezi, no matter how long his absence. “I was born and grew up in Albania,” says the math professor. “For about two and a half decades, I saw its dark side during its Communist era. But since I came to the United States in 1993, I’ve been interested in two things: helping people of Albanian descent living in the U.S. and improving the quality of higher education institutions in Albania.”

Elezi’s most recent effort to improve Albania’s higher education is the newly forged relationship between AU’s College of Arts and Sciences and the University of Vlora. Last June, university president Tanush Shaska visited AU to sign a memorandum of understanding delineating the institutions’ intentions to work collaboratively.

Presently, this agreement establishes mentor and mentee relationships between AU math faculty and students in the University of Vlora’s fledgling PhD math program—the first in the country. Next year’s goal is to bring these young mathematicians to AU as exchange students. “These are students with strong mathematical backgrounds—many of whom have been teaching the subject at the university level—who have jumped at the chance to be involved in a PhD program,” says Elezi. “Our faculty members will advise them on the type of math

they should focus on based on their interests, and what types of additional background knowledge they might need in order to move in those directions.”

In the long term, Elezi hopes to see the relationship between the two universities continue to grow. On the broadest level, he seeks to explore the benefits of establishing a university-wide, two-way study abroad program with the school. “Vlora is a culturally rich, geographically well-located city, with a lot of very interesting, relevant history,” Elezi explains. “Students from AU with history, political science, and law aspirations could find an exchange experience in Vlora rewarding in many ways.”

Elezi has also brought high-profile academic conferences to Albania, including last spring’s NATO Advanced Study Institute on cryptology and coding theory. Closer to home, he established the Albanian-American Academy in Bethesda, Maryland. A cultural center serving the D.C. area, it offers Americans of Albanian descent—or anyone else who might be interested—a place for immersion in the nation’s language, customs, and heritage.

—Jessica Tabak

### JEWISH STUDIES EXPANDS



Photo by Jessica Tabak

AU’s Jewish Studies Program is expanding. This fall, Tatjana Lichtenstein, a Schusterman Teaching Fellow, joined the faculty. Lichtenstein brings expertise in modern European

Jewish history and culture; her doctoral thesis focused on the Czechoslovak Zionist movement between World Wars I and II. “It seems contradictory, but this cultural movement was not about separation, but integration,” she explains. “It was a testimony to how Jews sought to become a part of the home they already lived in.”

An interdisciplinary program, Jewish Studies pulls courses from many departments. This fall, Lichtenstein offered two courses through the history department: History of Israel and a seminar, Modern Jewish Politics. In the spring, she will teach a course on the history of the Holocaust, and a seminar on Jews and East European Jewish culture.

Lichtenstein’s two-year appointment is funded jointly by CAS, Jewish Studies, and the Jewish Studies Expansion Project, a pilot dedicated to the enhancement of Jewish studies programs at colleges across the country. The project, a Foundation for Jewish Culture initiative supported by the Charles and Lynn Shusterman Family Foundation, received over 50 grant applications in its first year. AU was one of six colleges awarded funding.

Project fellows gain valuable teaching experience and establish mentor relationships that prepare them for tenure-track positions. “A lot of graduate students get out of school and don’t really have any teaching experience, so they’re not as competitive in the job market,” says Pamela Nadell, program director and Lichtenstein’s on-campus mentor. “I am interested in making certain that, wherever she goes next, when she finds a tenure-track job, we will have really helped prepare her.”

—Jessica Tabak

**Jan. 31**  
**Artists’ Reception**  
6–9 p.m. American University Museum  
Free

**Feb. 2**  
**Open Arts Night**  
6–8 p.m. American University Museum  
Visit the museum after hours and enjoy performances by AU students. Free

**Feb. 6**  
**Music Faculty Recital: Teri Lazar**  
8 p.m. Abramson Family Recital Hall, Katzen Arts Center  
Violinist Teri Lazar and guest pianist George Peachey perform Vivaldi, Debussy, Bartók, Ravel, and Barnett. Admission: general \$15, AU community and seniors \$10, students \$5. Tickets at [www.american.tix.com](http://www.american.tix.com) or call 202-885-ARTS.

**Feb. 8**  
**Kids at the Katzen**  
1–3 p.m. American University Museum  
Exhibit-related activities for children age five and up. Materials fee: \$7 (cash only, please). For information, visit [www.american.edu/museum/family](http://www.american.edu/museum/family).

**Feb. 11**  
**Visiting Writers Series: Naomi Shihab Nye**  
8 p.m. Board Room (sixth floor), Butler Pavilion  
Reading by the author of *You and Yours*; *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*; *Fuel*; *Red Suitcase*; and *Hugging the Jukebox*. Free

**Feb. 12–14**  
**Hay Fever**  
Feb. 12–14, 8 p.m.; Feb. 14, 2 p.m.  
Greenberg Theatre  
Noel Coward’s comedy of manners about a family whose theatrical excesses torment a group of unsuspecting visitors. Admission: general \$15, AU community and seniors \$10, students \$5. Tickets at [www.american.tix.com](http://www.american.tix.com) or call 202-885-ARTS.

**Feb. 20-21**  
**Painted Music: The Sound of Art, the Art of Sound**  
8 p.m. Abramson Family Recital Hall and AU Museum, Katzen Arts Center  
Performance by award-winning composer and pianist Jerzy Sapijevski. Admission: general \$15, AU community and seniors \$10, students \$5. Tickets at [www.american.tix.com](http://www.american.tix.com) or call 202-885-ARTS.

**Feb. 24**  
**Spring Arts Colloquium: Jo Smail**  
Noon. Abramson Family Recital Hall, Katzen Arts Center  
Smail is a professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Free

**Feb. 25**  
**Fiction Reading: Jayne Anne Phillips**  
8 p.m. SIS Lounge  
Reading by novelist and short-story writer Jayne Anne Phillips, author of *Lark and Termite*, *Machine Dreams*, *Shelter*, and *MotherKind*. Free

**Feb. 26–28**  
**New Musical: Back There**  
8 p.m. Studio Theatre, Katzen Arts Center  
A revue of original songs by composer Peter Lerman. General admission: \$5. Tickets at [www.american.tix.com](http://www.american.tix.com) or call 202-885-ARTS.

**Feb. 28–March 1**  
**AU Symphony Orchestra**  
Feb. 28, 8 p.m.; March 1, 3 p.m.  
Abramson Family Recital Hall, Katzen Arts Center  
Performing works by Mozart, Brant, and Schumann. Admission: general \$15, AU community and seniors \$10, students \$5. Tickets at [www.american.tix.com](http://www.american.tix.com) or call 202-885-ARTS.



## A NOVEL ACHIEVEMENT



Courtesy of Thaïs Miller

“When I was four years old, I told my parents, ‘I want to be a writer,’” says Thaïs Miller, BA literature ’09. “When I was 13 years old, I decided to start writing novels.”

It’s little wonder, then, that the

20-year-old junior published her first novel last spring. *Our Machinery*, released by Brown Paper Publishing in April, is a darkly comic work that, like all good science fiction, is, at its heart, a social commentary. She’s in the process of revising her next book, tentatively titled *Plasticity*.

Below, Miller shares some thoughts on writing and marketing a novel as an undergraduate:

### How did you get started?

“My freshman year, Professor [Randon] Noble encouraged me to take advantage of National Novel Writing Month, an event that happens each November, to flesh out a series of ideas that I had begun to explore in her creative writing class. So I wrote 2000 words a day for 28 days—and at the end of the month, I had created a typo-ridden, very rough first draft.”

### What happened next?

“The next eight months were spent revising and editing with the help of my AU professors. I got to meet with them, not only one on one, but often at least once a week, to discuss things my characters were going through. I think the most important resources to writers are other writers. Writing is a learning process, and the best way to engage in that process is to talk to writers you respect.”

### Any advice for students looking to get published?

“Start with independent, small presses. They’re the best way to get past the catch-22 of publishing: You can’t get published unless you have an agent, and you can’t get an agent unless you’ve been published. Make sure you aren’t paying to have your work produced, and that you retain the rights to it. And don’t hide the fact that you’ve produced a manuscript at such a young age. Younger writers with insight to our human condition are necessary in this time of need.”



© Josef Koudelka/Magnum Photos  
From the exhibition and book *Invasion 68 Prague*

## Art Bears Witness

When photographer Josef Koudelka first got the call, he didn’t believe it. It was 3 a.m. on August 21, 1968, in Prague, and Soviet troops were invading his city, right outside his window.

One call became several. Koudelka’s incredulity became realization, and his realization became action as—camera in tow—he left his apartment to document the invasion. “It must have been a dangerous situation but I didn’t feel it,” Koudelka recalled in a recent interview in *Aperture* magazine. “I think what happened in that time was much bigger than me, much bigger than all of us. The invasion was tragic, but if it was going to happen, I’m glad I was there to witness and photograph it.”

Selections from the series of images Koudelka captured that day are on display at American University Museum until December 28. Curated by the Aperture Foundation in New York, *Invasion 68: Prague* emphasizes the significance of Koudelka’s photographs as art works that testify to a dark historical event.

“What makes these photos so extraordinary is Koudelka’s vision,” says curator Melissa Harris. “You are moved by these images, of course, because of the powerful subject matter, but also because of Koudelka’s intrinsic sense of composition, balance.”

It is through no small combination of care, determination, and luck that these photos even exist today. Given the strict censorship in effect after the invasion, Koudelka’s negatives were a threat, both to the Soviet government and, by extension, to his own safety. With the help of art historian Anna Farova and

then-Smithsonian-curator Eugene Ostroff, however, Koudelka smuggled the photographs into the United States.

Magnum Photos, the international photographic cooperative, took possession of the images, printing them for the first time and distributing them around the world. To protect Koudelka and his family, they were attributed to an anonymous photographer until 1984.

The seeds for the current exhibit were planted overseas. Last spring, in an interview with Harris, Koudelka revealed his plans to show the photographs in Prague to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the invasion. Harris convinced him to take the show to New York.

*Invasion 68: Prague* opened at Aperture Gallery in early September. American University Museum is the first of various stops across the country. “Koudelka was very specific about having the show travel to university galleries,” says Harris. “He wants students to see this work and for it to foster dialog.”

Perhaps most importantly, Koudelka’s photographs deny their audience the luxury of forgetting. “When I go to Russia, sometimes I meet ex-soldiers who occupied Prague during that period,” he says. “They say: ‘We came to liberate you, we came to help you.’ I say: ‘Listen, I think it was quite different. I saw people being killed.’ They say: ‘No, we never . . . no shooting, no, no.’ So I can show them my Prague 1968 photographs and say: ‘Listen, these are my pictures. I was there.’ And they have to believe me.”

—Jessica Tabak





Photo by Jessica Tabak

## Liberal Arts at American University

# Reflections on a Green Field

I am standing at the edge of a field. It is early spring in central Maryland. I'm looking west across the open expanse, as the light slants away from me. The sun is still behind the hill to the east and a shadow covers everything that is close to me, but at the far edge, rays of late-dawn sun illuminate the trees. This field—and this moment—are a specific point in space and time, which I am witnessing. This event, the present moment, is unique, and uniquely connected to other people, places, and times.

The liberal arts give me the perspective to attempt to understand, and to participate in, the present moment and to make those connections. Through the web of subjects and methods of expression and inquiry, I am free and equipped to explore.

I envision the coming and going of humans across this field over thousands of years—or standing where I now stand. I picture some, like the Susquehannock, staying for generations and learning the seasons of this place—and others crossing this way just once, like the Confederates retreating in long trains from Gettysburg. I can see how humans have been changing the surrounding land, from forest to farm to lawn and street, at an accelerating, if erratic, pace.

I consider the people who move across this landscape now. They have planted hay in this field, while the short grass that covers the adjacent pasture is evidence of grazing cows. Food is produced here, people are

employed, and taxes are paid. Trees reinforce property lines. People drive tractors over the field or walk through it, speaking and listening to each other, and to radios broadcasting in English and Spanish.

The humming of a bee brings my attention to the details of the field. There is wind in the grass. Wings flutter. I observe signs of life on an obvious scale; the scent of earth and pollen remind me of life processes on a smaller scale. The dew and mist are part of the water cycle that ties this place to the Chesapeake Bay, and beyond to distant oceans. I think of this field, transforming the energy from our sun into carefully arranged structures of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and other atoms. Some of these structures will stay here and cycle through life with the seasons; some will be harvested and transported and processed through a chain of organisms, plant to cow to human to bacteria, dispersing across a state or a continent.

It is a pretty field and a pretty moment. I try to capture it somehow, but I am a physicist, not an artist. The memory may come back to me during some other sunrise in some other place. It may help me to explain how I think a liberal arts education can enrich a person's experience of the singular gifts of life.

—Nate Harshman, Assistant Professor  
and Chair, Department of Physics

## Q & A WITH LYNNE ARNESON



Photo by Jeff Watts

There's a new captain at the helm of AU's Premedical and Health Professional Programs. After seven years as a biology department professor, Lynne Arneson took on the role of program coordinator

in May. She shares her thoughts on her job, her students, and the program, below:

*What is the best part of your new position?*  
"Getting to work so closely with our students. Getting into a health profession school can be a very stressful endeavor, and I think that we need a person on campus who helps the students achieve their lifelong goals. I like being that person who will help the students work through this process, and I'm really excited about seeing where they go."

*What's been your biggest surprise so far?*  
"The number of students who just want to stop in and say 'hi' is a wonderful surprise."

*Are you planning anything new for the program?*  
"I am changing the scope and frequency of our seminars. Instead of having one big meeting in the fall and one big meeting in the spring that all the premed students attend, I'm having smaller meetings more frequently that are targeted towards specific groups—like new students, students interested in dental school, and those starting the medical school application process."

*Anything you'd like to add?*  
"Just that I've inherited a great program from Dr. Carson. It's very strong and it has a fantastic reputation. I've heard of non-AU students, who haven't been accepted to medical school, who have inquired, 'What should I do to improve my application?' And these medical schools tell them, 'Go to AU and complete the [premedical] post-baccalaureate program.'"



## A HARMONIOUS PAIRING

Business and music are making sweet sounds together at AU. This fall, the university introduced the bachelor of science in business and music, or BAM—an interdisciplinary degree that already has seven declared majors. The program is offered by the Kogod School of Business in conjunction with the music program in the Department of Performing Arts.

“The basic philosophy behind the BAM is what’s at the heart of all interdisciplinary initiatives,” says Nancy Jo Snider, musician in residence and music program director. “You need to fuse the disciplines in a way that is complementary, substantive, and elegant and teaches to the whole student.”

Inspired, in part, by a student who graduated last year with dual degrees in business and music, the BAM is designed with the future music industry executive in mind. The degree incorporates a substantive music core into a full business degree, with study abroad and industry internship opportunities folded into the curriculum.

The BAM is one of six new programs offered by CAS this fall. The School of Education, Teaching, and Health has added a graduate certificate in nutrition education, as well as an MAT and a graduate certificate in early childhood education. It has also added a health and physical education track to its MAT: Secondary Education, and Graduate Certificate in Teaching.

—Jessica Tabak

## Correction

In the September edition of *CAS Connections*, the photo of Allan Lichtman was incorrectly attributed to Anne Bentzel. The photo was taken by Jeff Watts. We regret the error.



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Courtesy of Vishal Vaidya

# Accomplishments

## PUBLICATIONS AND PRODUCTIONS

**Naomi Baron (language and foreign studies)** wrote the “Linguistics” section for Blackwell’s *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, published in conjunction with the International Communication Association in April.

In July, **Jack Child (language and foreign studies)** published “Miniature Messages: The Semiotics and Politics of Latin American Postage Stamps” (Duke, 2008).

**Consuelo Hernández (language and foreign studies)** published “Realidad virtual,” *Alora. La Bien Cercada. Revista Políglota Internacional de Poesía y Dibujo* (December, 2007); “En el fondo de la valija” and “Volver a la niñez,” *Hostra Hispanic Review* (Spring, 2008); and “Los músicos de Jazz,” *Revista La Urraka, Edición Internacional: Poesía Del Mundo* no. 16 (August, 2008).

**Kiho Kim (environmental science)** coauthored a report, *Tackling Marine Debris in the 21st Century* (National Academy of Sciences, 2008). The report was covered in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, and the *Associated Press*.

**Eric Lohr (history)** and **Tazreena Sajjad (PhD international relations)** published “Human Rights and Human Insecurity: The Contributions of U.S. Counterterrorism,” *Journal of Human Rights* (January–March, 2008).

The composition *Phreximus* by **Paul A. Oehlers (performing arts)** was included in a 50th-anniversary recording for the Experimental Music Studios, University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign. His film score for *Most High* received a Grand Jury Prize at the 2008 Atlanta Film Festival.

As a contributor to a feature on U.S. military bases abroad, **David Vine (anthropology)** published “Homesick for Camp Justice,” *Mother Jones* online edition (August 22, 2008).

**Andrew Yarrow (history)** published an op-ed, “Making Tax Day Less Painful,” *Washington Times* (March 26, 2008).

## SPEAKER’S CORNER

In April, **Jack Child (language and foreign studies)** lectured on the Inter-American system and on Antarctica at the Inter-America Defense College in D.C. He spoke, in May, to a Spanish class at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School about the 1982 Falklands-Malvinas War.

In May, **Consuelo Hernández (language and foreign studies)** delivered tributes to Octavio Paz at the Library of Congress and at New York University’s King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center. In July, she gave a poetry reading at the embassy of Uruguay and spoke at a conference on El Salvadoran poet Mayamerica Cortez at D.C.’s Martin Luther King Public Library.

In July, **Teresa Larkin (physics)** presented two lectures—“Learning the ‘Write’ Way in the Physics Classroom and Laboratory” and “Writing: An Active Learning Tool in Physics

and Engineering Education”—at the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) meeting in Alberta, Canada.

In April, **Eric Lohr (history)** presented “Russian and Ottoman Subjecthood Boundaries: Population Policy vs. Citizenship in Kars, Batum, and Ardahan Provinces, 1877–1917” at Columbia University’s conference “Empire, Conquest and Faith: The Russian and Ottoman Interaction, 1650–1920.”

**Brian Yates (psychology)** presented “Measuring and Improving Cost-effectiveness and Cost-benefit in Psychological Services” at the second biannual meeting of the Romanian National Psychological Association in Timisoara, Romania.

## IN THE MEDIA

In April, **Naomi Baron (language and foreign studies)** spoke about telephone area codes as social signifiers in an interview with the *Oregonian* (April 20, 2008). The *Boston Globe* also interviewed her about the Pew Internet and American Life report, “Teens and Texting” (June 16, 2008).

The Voice of America interviewed **Consuelo Hernández (language and foreign studies)** about implications of the burgeoning population of Latin Americans and Hispanics in the United States (September 12, 2008).

*USA Today* quoted **Alan Kraut (history)** in “Ellis Island Strives to Tell More Complete Immigration Story,” an article about a new exhibit center that will focus on the island’s history between 1954 and 1982 (September 23, 2008).

In May, Iran’s Fars News Agency interviewed **Peter Kuznick (history)** about the threat posed by Israel’s nuclear capability and why American leaders perceive Iran, not Israel, as potentially more dangerous to the region.

The *Washington Post* published a letter to the editor, “Bring on the Meters,” by **Aaron Pacitti (economics)** (October 20, 2007).

**Brad Schiller (economics)** was quoted in a CNNMoney.com story about John McCain’s and Barack Obama’s different plans to increase workers’ wages (August 1, 2008).

A book by **Charles S. J. White (professor emeritus, philosophy and religion)**, *The Garden of Loneliness: A Translation of Jaysbankar Prasad’s ‘Ānsū (Tears),’* was reviewed in the *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* (Spring 2008).

## APPOINTMENTS AND HONORS

In October, **Kyle Dargan (literature)** won the 2008 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for *Bouquet of Hungers*, a collection of his poems.

In November, **Naomi Baron (language and foreign studies)** won the 2008 Duke of Edinburgh English-Speaking Union English Language Book Award for *Always On* (Oxford, 2008).