

American University's
Contributions
to the
Community

News Highlights



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

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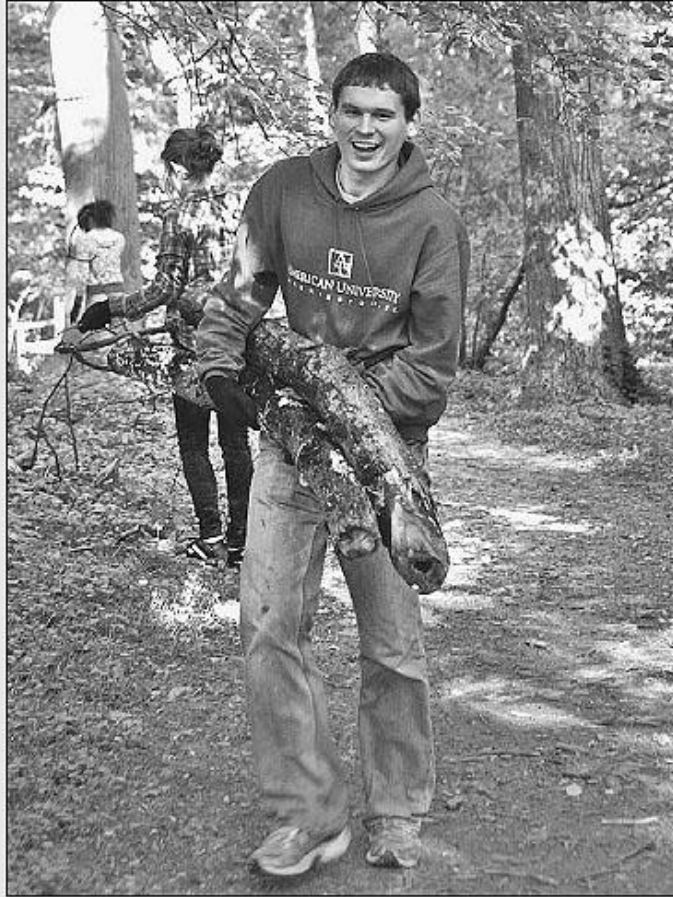
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AU Students Doing Good in the Community

THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

PRUNING THE PARK



Bill Petros/The Current

American University freshman Tyler Sadonis participated in Saturday's Spring Valley Park cleanup along with a number of residents and a few other students. Volunteers pulled down invasive vines, cleared dead branches and picked up trash.

The Washington Post

AU Students Teach English to Spanish Speaking Workers on Campus

By Daniel de Vise
March 23, 2010

In Honduras, Ana Carolina Ebanks was a public defender. But when she immigrated to the United States six years ago, the career did not come with her. Today, she has a job on the campus of **American University**, a short walk from its law school. She works in the student dining hall, making burritos.

"You know, when you come to this country, it's impossible," she said. "You can't work in your career. It's frustrating. I'm frustrated."

But now Ebanks has help in her bid to resume her law career. Through a program called Community Learners Advancing in Spanish and English, or CLASE, AU students are teaching English to the workers who clean their dorm rooms and cook their meals. Students meet the employees where they work, or in dorm lounges and conference rooms, to eat, drink and conjugate.

AU students began tutoring workers several years ago in a modest, student-run initiative on a campus known for embracing public service. The sporadic effort was revived in the 2008-09 academic year and given a formal name. In the fall, a pair of sophomores took it over and made it permanent under the university's Latino and American Student Organization. This year, the endeavor expanded from a few dozen participants to 100, with roughly equal numbers of tutors and workers.

The students hope to do more than teach English. They aim to bridge the gap in language, culture and socioeconomic status that separates students from workers. In a sense, CLASE is about class.

"Some of them have worked here for 20 years, and they've never spoken to an AU student. They're completely invisible," said Julia Young, 19, an international studies major from Dayton, Ohio, who leads the tutoring program with classmate Melissa Mahfouz, 20.

Breaking down walls

Ebanks has trouble recounting her trajectory from lawyer to cook without tears. She came to the United States in 2004 more educated than many Americans. She picked up some English on the street and from TV but was unable to find time for formal study.



American University student Melissa Mahfouz, left, helps Ana Carolina Ebanks, who works in the student dining hall, learn English. (Photos By Dayna Smith For The Washington Post)

Until recently, she worked from 5 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily in the bakery at a Whole Foods store near the AU campus and from 3 to 10 p.m. in the campus dining hall, commuting from Montgomery Village.

"People ask you about your experience," she said. "What can you do? What can you say? 'I work for a bakery. I work in housecleaning.'"

One day last fall, a student approached her in the food line and asked whether she wanted to learn English, the language of success for U.S. immigrants. She said yes.

"Contributed. Contribut-ED. ED," Mahfouz, a sophomore from Stafford, said as she worked with Ebanks at a dry-erase board on a recent morning. "Recuerde," she said. Remember.

The tutors, flush with youthful idealism, hope to transform the relationship between 11,000 mostly white, privileged AU students and the mostly Spanish-speaking, unassimilated workers who clean and cook for them, a hierarchy reflected in many workplaces and on many college campuses.

Students at AU often behave as if the workers don't exist, Young said. When they are noticed, they are sometimes scorned. Recently, some students complained about workers eating in residence hall lounges.

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"We need to relate to them, and we need to understand where they're coming from," Young said.

Building confidence

The first few tutoring sessions can be awkward. Some of the workers have never tried to speak English in public, and most are uncomfortable sitting down as equals with the students they serve.

Every session starts with a meal -- one the worker has not prepared. "That is fundamental to starting the relationship," said Paul Hodum, a senior from Long Island, N.Y. "It breaks the disconnect between the worker and the student."

Over time, the pairs can become friends. "Melissa and I have been invited to weddings and parties and baptisms," Young said. Some workers have children the same age as their tutors.

Through the work, the tutors and the tutored gain confidence. Students strike up conversations with workers, and workers "are less intimidated by the students" than before they knew some of them by name, Mahfouz said.

One cafeteria worker, a 25-year-old Rockville woman, said she is on her third student tutor and growing more comfortable speaking English on campus. "Before, I could understand; I couldn't speak very well," she said. Now, she said, "I talk with many students."

The woman, a recent Salvadoran immigrant, spoke on condition of anonymity. Although emboldened by their tutoring, many workers are embarrassed about being tutored.

Looking to expand

Last year, the program caught the eye of a District nonprofit group, Students Serve. The organization, founded by Angela Perkey, a 2008 graduate of the College of William and Mary, "gives money to college students so they can make a difference in communities," she said.

Perkey liked that the AU students had found a group in need right under their noses. "These students are working with literally the people who are cleaning their bathrooms," she said.

She also said she appreciated that the lessons fit the workers' schedules. Immigrants often postpone formal English study because institutional classes are offered during work hours or at places they cannot easily reach, she said.

Perkey's organization gave CLASE its first grant: \$300, enough to buy textbooks and reading glasses. "That's all the money we need," Young said. "We're used to zero." The tutors have submitted a budget request to AU for \$15,000 in operating funds for next year.

Young said the money would fund formal training for tutors and pay for more instructional materials, reading glasses and group gatherings.

By then, Ebanks said, she hopes to be taking classes at the AU law school toward the master's degree that could allow her to practice in the United States. First, she must pass the school's English proficiency test at the end of the month. If she fails, she will miss the application deadline for the fall term, and law will have to wait another year.

"You do what you have to do," she said. "There's no choice. You have to work."

As their hour-long tutoring session draws to a close, Ebanks and Mahfouz kiss on the cheek: "Ciao, Carolina. Le vaya bien." Then it is back to making burritos.

THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

May 12, 2010

AU students donate lunches to homeless

The Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place got a surprise end-of-semester gift from American University students last month.

Two students, freshman Brian Yannantuono and junior Aileen George, organized a drive to donate box lunches to the homeless-services provider. Students gave 250 lunches over the course of one week, according to a release from the university.

The donations were a way for students to use dining-hall dollars that otherwise might have gone to waste when the semester ended. The students persuaded the university's food service provider, Bon Appetit, to use meal-plan balances for the box lunches.

August 16, 2010

Delegate Norton to Urge Freshman to Help D.C. Get its Rights

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., issued the following press release

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) will be the keynote speaker today at **American University's Freshman Service Experience** opening ceremony at 4 00 p.m. in the university's Woods-Brown Amphitheater. Norton said she is especially fond of this year's theme, "A Passion for D.C.," because she will not only focus her remarks on volunteering in D.C. as a way to become a part of the city, but also on students helping residents get their full rights as American citizens. The Congresswoman said that American University deserves credit for instilling community service in their students from the time they come to campus.

"I relish the opportunity to welcome young people to D.C., a city that is full of fun and not just full of government," said Norton. "It is a city that is, among other things, a big-time college town. There is a lot to do here and students can help our city get things done."

Norton is a strong proponent of volunteerism, including organizations such as AmeriCorps, which has more than 3,800 people volunteering in 66 national service projects across the District of Columbia. She supported the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act passed by Congress last year.

The Freshman Service Experience is a four-day volunteer program built on community service, academic achievement, leadership development, and orientation to the university and to Washington, D.C. Now in its 20th year, the program has involved nearly 9,000 students and contributed more than 200,000 volunteer hours to about 50 non-profits throughout the city.

THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

AU freshmen connect to D.C. seniors via service

By **LAURA L. THORNTON**

Current Correspondent

Anthony Catanzaro could have spent another week of summer vacation at home on Long Island before moving into a dormitory at American University to begin his freshman year of college.

Instead, Catanzaro reported to school a week early to participate in the university's 21st annual

Freshman Service Experience, a four-day event that engages the university's newest students with their new community. He joined more than 600 other American University freshmen — over half of the incoming class.

"I thought it would be a really great way to meet people ... and learn about the city," said Catanzaro, who spent last week volunteering at the Washington Home and Community Hospices

in Tenleytown.

American University freshmen volunteered at more than 50 sites across D.C. and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs last week, said

sophomore Megan Elkin, the team leader for the two-dozen students who volunteered at the Washington Home. Sites included schools, farms and retirement homes.

The students anticipated logging 14,000 hours of community service during

the week, said Aaron Grushkin, a freshman from Durango, Colo., who volunteered at Friendship Terrace, a Tenleytown retirement community.

Grushkin and 10 other students spent last week helping residents of Friendship Terrace to de-clutter their apartments and clean out their closets. They also painted patio furniture and vacuumed hallways.

On Thursday after lunch, students and Friendship Terrace resi-



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Bill Petros/The Current

American University freshmen volunteered throughout the region last week to kick off their first year of college. Above, students Megan Elkin and Anthony Catanzaro visit with Washington Home resident Jan Simko. Left, Haley Lynn and Hana Le assist resident Jim Bermingham in making a cast of his hand.

dents played bingo together, chatting between rounds and enjoying cakes and lemonade served by the students.

"It's been a really cool experience," said Grushkin, who enjoyed listening to residents share their stories about living in Washington.

"I'm not familiar with D.C.," he said, "and the program seemed like

a fun way to do some ... work and see D.C."

For Frank Short, president of the residents association at Friendship Terrace, the students' presence "livens up the place very much."

"Many residents have commented on how much they've enjoyed having them here," Short

said, "and we're happy to have them back."

At the Washington Home, student volunteers performed a variety of tasks, including cleaning up flood-damaged rooms, delivering phone books to residents' rooms and providing company for the residents, several of whom are over

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SERVICE

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100 years old.

"It's been really nice having them here," said communications director Mollie Haines.

"There's a lot of energy ... around young people," she said. "When young people are here, it creates a special tone. ... It's party time. ... I wish we could bottle the vibrancy of youth."

Haines added that because the Washington Home is a long-term-care facility, it is also a home, and volunteers are

always welcome to help with maintenance and landscaping projects, "because our surroundings impact how we feel."

But the "people projects" — "anything that gives people a way to connect," Haines said — are also important. Early in the week, student volunteers helped residents make plaster casts of their hands — an interactive, hands-on activity that helps residents stay intimately connected with other people.

"As we age ... our world shrinks, and any connection with people outside that world is a lovely benefit," Haines said.

For the students, "the main thing is that

we're engaging in the community," said Elkin, who hails from Wisconsin and is considering majoring in law and society.

"Community service isn't just picking up garbage from the street," Elkin added. "Serving is great, but the main thing we want is to engage."

During their lunch breaks, students explored the neighborhoods in which they were volunteering, eating at local establishments and learning how to navigate the Metrorail system.

It's been a "great way to explore the city without the pressure" of schoolwork and exams, said Catanzaro.



Bill Petros/The Current

Students Megan Elkin, Andrew Presnal and Anthony Catanzaro visit Jan Simko.

AU Green Roof Built With McLean Gardens Neighbors

September 8, 2010



WASHINGTON DC (WUSA) -- A new environmentally-friendly "green" roof will get the finishing touches Wednesday on the campus of **American University**, enhancing the school's already strong eco-friendly reputation.

More than 50 volunteers from AU, its alumni, staff, and neighbors from McLean Gardens community of Northwest Washington spent several days installing the roof on the Kogod School of Business. Volunteers put low-maintenance plants on the roof to top it off. The school has dubbed it a modern "old-fashioned barn raising" as the community is actively involved.

"Green roofs are designed to manage storm water on site," according to Chris O'Brien, **American University's Director of Sustainability**. "We filter storm water, and slow it down so it doesn't turn into dirty water" which could pollute the Anacostia or Potomac Rivers, as well as the Chesapeake Bay.

The school promised to allow easy access to the roof for students, faculty, and staff hoping to learn more about the environmentally friendly design. "Our approach to this project is we wanted it to be educational because we are a university," said O'Brien.

According to American University, it has the highest density of green roofs on a college campus in the District with at least five of them. O'Brien said "We're proud to be a campus in this city, and we're doing our part to be green." Washington itself has the second highest number of green roofs in the country, trailing only Chicago.

Besides being environmentally friendly, the green roof will help American University's bottom line. The school says it will improve energy efficiency, which will cut down on electric bills. It will also save AU on a new "impervious surface fee" by DC Water. The charge is levied for storm water runoff. O'Brien says when customers manage their storm water, they can avoid the fee.

[Click to watch video](#)



College Students on Break Fix Others' Lives

By Betty Klinck,
November 29, 2010

This winter, thousands of college students nationwide will cut their sleigh riding and hot chocolate sipping short to travel around the country and the world on service trips.

About 72,000 students went on "alternative" break trips in 2009, most of them spring break. But of 1,430 winter, spring, summer and weekend alternative breaks, about 140 were during winter break, says Samantha Giacobozzi, programs director for Break Away, an alternative-break resource that represents more than 140 participating colleges.

Many students seek winter trips because the break is longer and more conducive to longer experiences and international trips, Giacobozzi says.

"All of our trips are international this winter," says Shoshanna Sumka, who coordinates alternative breaks at **American University in Washington, D.C.**

Matthew Barnes, an American University comparative politics master's student, is leading a trip to Colombia this winter. He says that after his alternative break last spring to Colombia, where students worked with non-governmental organizations to construct a humanitarian zone and lived with a displaced family, he chose to return during winter because the longer break would allow students to accomplish more.

Winter trips can allow students to more easily use their experiences as a catalyst for community service and civic engagement back home during spring semester, says Melody Porter, associate director of the Office of Community Engagement and Scholarship at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

"Personally, I'm a huge fan of winter trips. Our winter break is incredibly long," says William and Mary senior Brian Focarino, who is leading this winter's Haiti trip, where students will work on several projects in Port-au-Prince, from planting trees to caring for kids at a children's hospital to distributing health kits in tent communities.

"We have five weeks off, so I think winter trips are preferable, especially for international trips," he adds.

As with any international trip, student leaders and faculty supervisors must be aware of the country's safety conditions on the ground, and Porter says that she and the students have been keeping updated on the cholera crisis in Haiti before their January trip.

Both the U.S. State Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain travel warnings for Haiti, but Porter says students are being trained to recognize and respond to cholera symptoms.

Focarino says students have formed many community and grass-roots service efforts on campus and in the community as a result of alternative break trips, and that he hopes this winter's Haiti trip "empowers students to be agents for change" even after they leave Haiti.

The University of Maryland in College Park requires all student trip leaders to organize a local service activity to "make sure they are continuing with service and thinking about how they can contribute locally," says Elizabeth Doerr, coordinator of Community Service-Learning Immersions.

Last summer's trip to Ecuador led to the formation of "Bilingual Backpacks," a student initiative to send school supplies and bilingual books to the underprivileged students of Arturo Quesada School in Ayalama, Ecuador, where the group volunteered last summer, Doerr says.

Alternative breaks are meant to cultivate "a society of active citizens, of people who make community a life priority," Giacobozzi says. "We see alternative breaks as being a catalyst for pushing students to become activist citizens."

Five universities, including William and Mary, University of Maryland and American, plan to provide this type of long-term, meaningful service as part of the four-year Haiti Compact, a commitment to devote well-informed, non-damaging and long-lasting aid to Haiti, which is still recovering from last January's earthquake, after which most unskilled volunteers were discouraged from traveling there, Giacobozzi says.

Focarino says that includes not taking potential jobs away from Haitians with their service.

"Alternative breaks can really get a young person into doing this (service) and then when they go back home, they seek out similar experience near campus," says Maureen Curley, president of Campus Compact, a national coalition of more than 1,100 colleges dedicated to community service and civic engagement.

"Episodic volunteering is a way that you can introduce a student to the power of service," she says.



The US Armed Forces Wheelchair Basketball Game

By Rachel Levitin
April 3, 2011

Billy Demby travels to Walter Reed Medical Center to coach their wheelchair basketball team two times a week for two hours at a time. Demby, a Vietnam veteran and bilateral amputee himself, coached the All-Marine wheelchair basketball team to win gold in the 2010 Inaugural Warrior Games before starting with Walter Reed a couple years back.

The 2011 Walter Reed wheelchair basketball team is one of many participating in the Wounded Warrior Project. The Wounded Warrior Project is a non-profit organization founded in 2002 dedicated to honoring and empowering wounded warriors. Walter Reed's team is also one of three teams who have participated in the U.S. Armed Forces Wheelchair Basketball Game two times since the game's inaugural event last year.

This year's U.S. Armed Forces Wheelchair Basketball Game was played Thursday, March 31 at American University's Bender Arena and Demby's Walter Reed players took the court against the National Rehabilitation Hospital Ambassadors.

A couple years ago, Demby got a call from the head of Disabled Sports USA and was asked to come on-board as the Walter Reed wheelchair basketball coach. "It's been a great experience," Demby said of his time with Walter Reed. "For me, it's giving something back."

Before joining Walter Reed as the wheelchair basketball coach, Demby taught skiing for Disabled Sports USA. Demby has taught over 100 veterans and their family members to ski. The skiing lessons combined with a constantly rotating roster of Walter Reed Wheelchair Basketball players has taught Demby a valuable lesson — how to have patience. "Many of these guys who leave here, if they don't participate will go home and stay home. Their lives sort of come an end in the sense that they're just hanging at home," Demby said.

"Getting them out in the public, teaching them how to ski, teaching them how to play basketball ... it helps the rehabilitation [so] they go on to bigger and better things."

Demby's greatest challenge while practicing with the Walter Reed squad is due to the unfortunate side effect of memory loss and brain trauma experienced by the veteran players.

"Because they have multiple disabilities and a lot of brain trauma, they forget [things]. So whatever I teach today, I may have to teach tomorrow and the next day and the next day, so it gets repetitious a lot." That's when Demby turns to patience. "What we do is [...] no matter what I teach, I go back and teach the basics."



For example, one time Demby's team got a new player. The guy came in for the first time and had lost two legs and a hand. Demby thought to himself, "How the hell am I gonna teach him wheelchair basketball?" Demby stuck to the basics and, as he likes to tell the story, that player got right into the game and just started pushing. "[That] inspires me, which also inspires [the players]."

Kenneth "Maze" Marshall is a former U.S. Paralympic Gold Medalist and veteran who spoke on behalf of his fellow veterans before Thursday night's game. Maze is part of a group of Americans who can honestly say they hit rock bottom at an age where most people are still applying for their first job in a 9 to 5 world.

At the age of 22, he became paralyzed from the waist down. He fell from a helicopter during an operation in the Korean Peninsula in 1987. That's not even the worst part. After that, his wife left him, he went bankrupt, and the VA kept giving him the run around. It took the VA nearly five years to settle his claim, during which time Maze was forced to eat two to three times a week for five years just to live. This left Maze mentally, physical, and emotionally exhausted.

"It was hard for me to see people saying, 'Oh we love the soldiers.' They'd wag the flags, but [they were] just wagging a flag," he said. There was no action. "Where's the love?," he asked. All wounded veterans like Maze want is to feel appreciated by their country for their service and devotion to America.

Maze dedicated his renewed passion for life after becoming a paraplegic to his faith in God, but there's actually another man responsible for the motivational change. And to think, Maze doesn't even know the man's name.

He was still in his twenties at the time and had started receiving the paralyzed veteran magazine, Paraplegic News. "I saw a picture of a guy [with the] same level injury as me [who] was a fifth degree black belt in karate [and] I said, 'Okay. How the hell did you do that?'"

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*(We Love DC
Continued from previous page)*

Maze never became a fifth degree black belt but he did go on to participate in what he says is just about every wheelchair sport ever devised. From basketball to skiing, table tennis to pool and even marathons, Maze has since retired from the world of wheelchair sports and speaks occasionally to groups of students and fellow veterans – even though he describes himself as not being a public speaker.

“When stuff like that happens to you I think you have the duty to God and mankind to share it so people can get some kind of hope,” Maze said. Thursday night’s second annual U.S. Armed Forces Wheelchair Basketball Game spread the story of numerous veterans to the eyes and ears of college students, veteran’s family members, current members of the U.S. Armed Forces and community members.

Among those community members, 21-year-old George Washington University junior and Manchester-native George Williams received the first-ever Stone and Holt Weeks Humanitarian Award at half time.

The Stone and Holt Weeks Humanitarian Award, conceived by the Theta Eta chapter of the Pi Kappa Phi at American University, honors the memory of two brothers (Stone, 24 and Holt, 20) who were killed by a tractor-trailer truck on Interstate 81 in Virginia in 2009.

Stone and Holt grew up in North Bethesda and were “super-active members of St. Columbia’s Church in Washington.” While attending the University of Delaware, Stone was a founding father of the university’s Pi Kappa Phi chapter. Both boys are remembered for the passion for life and for giving back to their community.

Williams earned the honor due to his successful attempts to raise funding for disabled Americans. Stone and Holt’s parents Linton and Jan Taylor Weeks were in attendance at Thursday evening’s event and presented to Williams in person.

“I feel incredibly overwhelmed and honored and also as if I’m not worthy of this because the work that Stone and Holt did, it’s incredible,” Williams said of receiving the award.

Maze agreed with Williams’ thoughts. “How [do] you lose your only two sons and [stand] here in front of all of us, telling us about it. You know ... that’s ... wow. We owe it to God and others to share [and to] let folks know ‘Hey, there’s hope.’”

The organizers of the evening were no older than the Weeks brothers. In fact, they are all still in college. **The members of the Theta Eta chapter of the Pi Kappa Phi at American University first conceived the U.S. Armed Forces Wheelchair Game last year.**

The event was developed by 2009 Philanthropy Chairman James Fine. Fine came up with the idea after reading an article about a semi-annual wheelchair basketball game hosted in a nearby hospital for wounded service men and woman. After visiting the program’s website, he e-mailed the USOC Paralympic Military Program and teamed up with them to create the U.S. Armed Forces Wheelchair Basketball Game.

All proceeds from the event go directly to charity and will be split between Pi Kappa Phi’s philanthropy Push America, which is a non-profit to serve people with disabilities, and the Wounded Warrior Project.

“I got to see that the younger generation still loves their country and supports their veterans [Thursday night]. You don’t [always] get to see that. That’s rare, ‘cuz most kids in college [are] in college. That’s their ‘about me’ [time], but not these kids,” Maze said.

AU Supports Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October 5, 2010



“Take a look. This was the sixth annual Breastival. That’s right, the Breastival going on at **American University**. They do it there every year. Now like I mentioned, this is the sixth anniversary of that to raise awareness of breast cancer. Of course October is breast cancer awareness month and that’s what they were doing out there today. “

[Click to watch video](#)

The Washington Post



Campus Overload

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SYLLABUS

Education reporter Jenna Johnson introduces you to ambitious student leaders, journalists, activists, interns and newsmakers from colleges across the country.

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Posted at 03:41 PM ET, 04/15/2011

AU seniors find theatrical inspiration on D.C. Metro

By Jenna Johnson



Chatty tourists. A groaning escalator. Confusing signs. A homeless man reciting poetry. A kid climbing on a bench. Drunks laughing. Trenchcoats. Umbrellas. Heels. Sneakers.

This semester, a group of **American University** seniors turned D.C. Metro stations into their theatrical classroom. They conducted dozens of interviews, studied the mannerisms and created an original docudrama called "[See Something/Say Something](#)."

The play is a funny, crowd-sourced critique of the system's shortcomings. It's a rich collection of the sounds and voices that fill the Metro system. And it's fleeting glimpses into the lives of strangers who huddle together on Metro platforms.



"It's the city through our eyes," the cast sang on opening night Thursday. The play runs through Saturday night at the Katzen Arts Center on AU's campus. Tickets are \$10.



Support AU's Project Move-Out



By Addison H
April 27, 2011

We are rapidly approaching graduation dates at local colleges and universities. One of the biggest issues that arises as students head back home for the summer or off the the real world is the amount of waste generated as they move out of their residences.

Many times, students throw out perfectly good furniture and clothing rather than have to deal with moving it. In an effort to combat that waste, and in concert with their new zero waste policy, **American University** has decided to hold a community sale to combat it and raise money for charity.

The Project Move-Out Sale will take place on Saturday, April 30th, from 8am-3pm at the American University campus. Nothing will be over \$10, even furniture. Parking is free in the Ward Circle lot.

Project Move-Out will support a number of hand-picked local charities. All monetary proceeds of Project Move-Out will go to M.O.M.I.E.S, TLC (Mentors of Minorities in Education's Total Learning Cis-Tem), a DC-based nonprofit organization dedicated to "nurturing the genius" of our children by creating a transformative educational experience. All toiletry and food donations will go directly to the Capital Area Food Bank.

All clothing donations at the end of the Community Sale will go to Damien Ministries, a faith-based nonprofit organization which strives to build not just an organization, but a community, of dedicated volunteers and staff to tend to the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of the "poorest of the poor" living with HIV/AIDS. All donated furniture & household items at the end of the Community Sale will go to A Wider Circle. A Wider Circle provides basic need items to families transitioning out of shelters or simply living without life's necessities.



Graduation Day: AU Students Hopeful for Their Future

May 7, 2011



Graduating students at **American University** here in Washington are walking away from a commencement speech about optimism today. CBS correspondent Bob Scheiffer delivers a speech to graduates of the **School of Communication**.

His words follow the news Friday that the economy unexpectedly added 200,000 jobs last month. As Brittany Morehouse reports, the leaves a group of graduates hopeful.

Crystal Taylor: "You know with the economy being bad the way it was, I kind of had to keep working while going to school. That really wasn't an option to just go to school full time."

Reporter: "So with 17 others she's graduating from a special masters program with classes on the weekends."

Darrell Hayes: "This is the 19th group that's graduated since we started this weekend program in 1992, and the reason was so many people couldn't go to evening graduate school because their bosses expected them to work till 5 to 6, maybe till 9 o'clock."

[Click to watch video](#)



Video: AU Students Raise Awareness of Gay Bullying Prevention

October 21, 2010



Kae Klepitskaya: My name is Kae and I'm a sophomore student for the **American University**, and I am the director of the transgender advocacy and the student group Queers and Allies. Today is Spirit Day, and Spirit Day was formed in response to a number of suicides of queer youth that have been going on. It's an ongoing problem, but there have been a shocking number in the past few months and we really want to stand up for it and make sure these suicides come to an end.

In order to stand up we're all wearing purple today and handing out purple ribbons. Purple is the color that represents spirit. We really want to make sure this is visible on campus. We want people to be wearing purple ribbons so that anybody walking by can see those purple ribbons. These suicides can happen anywhere and we want to make sure they don't happen at American University.

[Click to watch video](#)



God Loves Poetry: Transforming Messages of Hate

By JW Arnold
May 6, 2011

English playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote, "The pen is mightier than the sword," in 1839, and in 2011, this old adage continues to ring true thanks to the efforts of two Fort Lauderdale men.

Since the development of language, words have been used to uplift and celebrate, but also to denigrate and hurt. In response to the hateful language of the fervently anti-gay Westboro Baptist Church, Kevin Cobb and Andres Almeida are using the fundamentalist sect's own words against them to celebrate love and diversity.

The couple created the God Loves Poetry project, an art installation that features press releases from the church with most of the text blacked out, leaving affirming poems and messages. The title is also a play on the very words the Church writes on picket signs - God Hates Fags, God Hates America, etc.

"Every time they send out those press releases, it's just blabbing," explains Cobb, 29, a graphic artist. "They announce they're going to picket the funeral of a little girl who was shot in Arizona because 'she deserved it' because of America's changing views towards gays. Well, it hurts people."

After years of picketing AIDS victims' funerals, members of the church turned their attention to the funerals of fallen soldiers from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. When courts upheld local laws to prevent the rabid churchgoers from disrupting funerals, the church took its case to the Supreme Court, which finally weighed in this spring. The court ruled that Westboro's right to free speech outweighed the feelings of family members.

As Mother's Day approaches, the couple's project can provide some sense of solace for parents, family members and loved ones who have suffered from the church members' hateful speech.

"By doing this," adds Almeida, 24, a self-described advocate for equality, "we make them look even less powerful."

While the duo has lived in gay-friendly South Florida for years, they both come from conservative roots. Almeida is a native of Ecuador who grew up in the United States while Cobb was raised in conservative Indiana.

Several God Loves Poetry works are currently on display at O Cinema in Miami, but the project really took off on the Internet.

"We really started as an online project and quickly built support from our family and friends, as well as on Twitter and Facebook," explains Cobb. "You can start something like this anywhere and connect with likeminded people very quickly."

The project has attracted fans from across the cultural, religious and political spectrum, Cobb says, including atheists, ministers, priests, families, seniors, and children.

"Everyone seems to unify. Many of our fans have submitted their own blackout poems."

The project has also been adopted by several universities, including **American University**, in response to Westboro protests near the Washington, D.C. campus.

Almeida and Cobb's project caught the attention of National Public Radio, which recently featured the project. The reporter contacted members of Westboro Baptist Church, but so far the project has not attracted much ire from minister Fred Phelps' clan.

"Meghan Phelps retweeted us on Twitter once," Cobb recalls. "We don't engage with them either."

Adds Almeida, "We're not looking to vilify them. They do that already."

Instead, Cobb says, "It's creative and therapeutic, taking interesting words and creating something that completely changes their message."

Arboretum, WAMU,
Katzen Arts Center, Museum,
Theatre and Events –
Positive Elements of the
Community

The Washington Post

November 4, 2010

GARDENING

Nature or nurture? Both explain AU's healthy canopy.

Trees are the teachers of the plant kingdom. They teach us the virtues of planning, patience and the idea that we can improve planet Earth in our lifetimes and beyond.

These thoughts spring to mind as I am walking around the campus of American University in Northwest Washington, taking in the autumn colors. If you haven't been to AU in a while, you should go. The place is full of tree huggers, and it shows. A staff of landscape architects, arborists and groundskeepers has worked to retrieve and rejuvenate a 75-acre sylvan landscape that had been in sad decline. In the intervening dozen years or so, they have demonstrated that (A) trees that are taken for granted will suffer and (B) you can turn a woodland around rather rapidly if you have the will.

My visit also reinforced this lesson: Choice trees grow quite quickly and can start to have presence in five years and real stature in 10. In other words, please stop planting Leyland cypress and pick trees that are prettier and better suited to their location.

Sometimes trees grow far more quickly than even the textbooks can imagine. This has to do with soil conditions, groundwater



ADRIAN HIGGINS

patterns and the general microclimate of a site. In the sheltered back corner of a high-rise dorm, a place that sorely needed softening, five deodar cedars have just taken off. Planted as six-foot nursery orphans nine years ago, the trees stretch to 60 feet. Their pendent boughs are soft in texture and dark green highlighted with silver.

Nearby, a grove of dawn redwoods has doubled in size in the past 12 years, while a small stand of young ginkgos planted two years ago will answer the redwood's orange foliage with a bright yellow display in the next week or two.

We are seeing a young arboretum in stages of adolescence. Like the ginkgos, many of the trees are years away from their majestic maturity. This is commendable. Arboretums should be in a constant state of replenishment

because old trees die. Even in youth, however, the beauty of the trees' autumn color is evident. The shrubby bottlebrush buckeye provides sweeps of bright yellow, the dogwoods are now a deep maroon, the blackgum trees are turning scarlet and even some of the oaks have taken on a warm golden glow.

AU landscape architect H. Paul Davis and his colleagues have planted more than 1,200 trees in the past 12 years, along with thousands of shrubs and perennials. This attention to an ailing environment has coincided with the arrival of major new buildings and a strategy of landscape shifts: Underground parking garages support green roofs; old roads and lots are being torn up for new plantings, fresh paths and sitting terraces.

For Davis, these improvements flow from a philosophy based on gardening rather than landscaping. The difference? Gardening is a continuous stewardship of plants and acceptance that they grow and change; landscaping is the idea that an area can be made pretty with the instant installation of "plant material" and a dollop of mulch. Or as Davis says, "Put some shrubs against the building and call it a day." That's not for

(See next page)

the tree team at AU. "We aren't doing landscaping," he said. "We are doing a garden."

This care also requires an understanding that trees and construction don't mix. In an institutional setting, you have to be especially vigilant against destructive carelessness, though the same rules apply to the home landscape. You must create an awareness, Davis said, that certain unthinking practices will seriously harm trees, such things as placing heavy construction equipment on root zones and digging utility trenches through them, and piling soil over roots and damaging bark.

The students, understandably, are taking ownership, flocking to the shade and shelter of the growing canopy. After the Katzen Arts Center was built on Ward Circle, students planted more than 100 trees next to Massachusetts Avenue.

Like many of the students, some of the trees are from distant lands. The tree selection also moves beyond the normal limited plant palette of public institutions. In one sitting area in

the quad, a small round tree named *Maackia amurensis* is 15 feet high and as wide, about two-thirds grown. It is valued for its clean foliage, symmetric outline and fragrant white flowers in summer.

On the western side of the campus, visitors will find four specimens of the Korean evodia, another rare and dainty tree, this one blooming in June. Davis's colleague Michael Mastrota is eagerly anticipating the arrival of a weeping Alaska cedar. This is a fine-textured conifer with layers of weeping branches. It grows at a moderate rate to 40 feet and would make a splendid specimen in the Washington garden, doubling as a screen.

In a period of deep concern about the future health of the planet, surrounding students with beautiful trees seems an enlightened step to take. These young men and women may not know the trees by name, but they surely feel the plants' nurturing spirit. To borrow from an Irish proverb: We live in each other's shelter.

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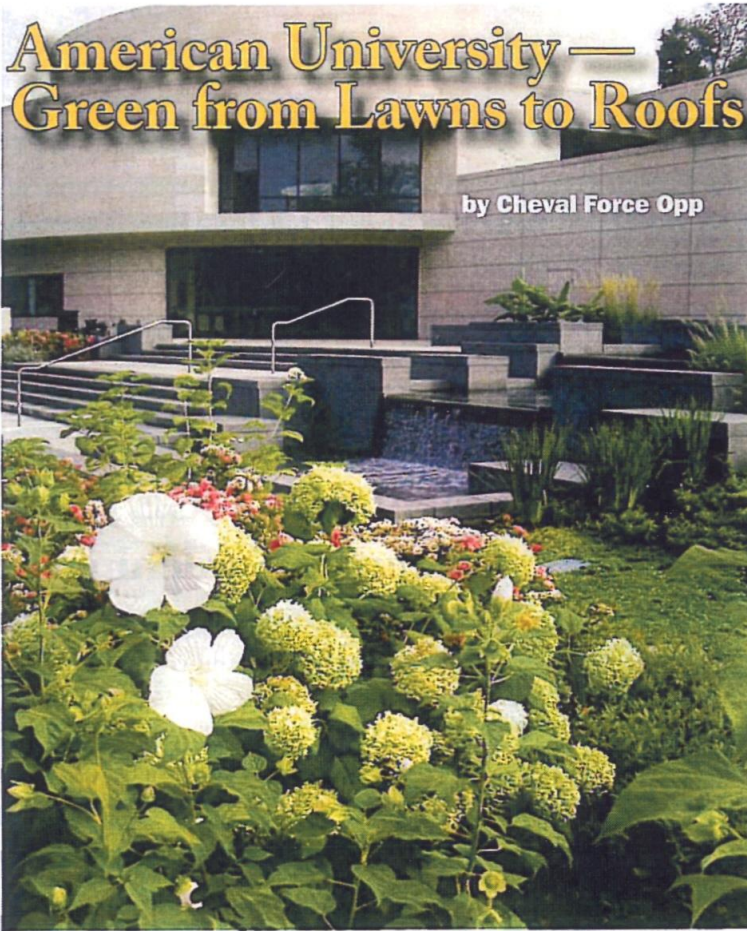
TAKE A FIELD TRIP AND SEE FOR YOURSELF

A brochure and audio tour of the American University campus arboretum can be downloaded at www.american.edu/arboretum. Click on "walking tour." Guided tours are available for groups. Call 202-885-1145.

April 1, 2010

American University — Green from Lawns to Roofs

by Cheval Force Opp



The American University (AU) campus borders Nebraska Avenue, NW, and has been a favorite cut-through of mine for more than 20 years when heading to Maryland from my home in Virginia. Sitting stuck in traffic is a pleasure there! I relax, despite traffic snarls, enjoying innovative, showy street-side borders full of native plants. Tucked in the northwest quadrant of Washington, DC, at Ward Circle, where Nebraska and Massachusetts avenues intersect, the AU campus graces an elegant District corner embracing Embassy Row, and the Russian and Japanese Embassies.

The 84-acre campus has a rich botanical history. The original landscaper for AU's campus is the 19th century's Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., who embodies the American landscape architect innovator. Included in his

more than 500 commissions are the U.S. Capital grounds and New York City's Central Park. Olmsted proposed nature as the "antidote to the ill effects of urban life." He would applaud the creative environmental programs that this historical campus, chartered in 1893 by an Act of Congress, is bringing to our region.

Tree Campus USA

Designated in 2009 as a Tree Campus USA University by the Arbor Day Foundation for its dedication to campus forestry management and environmental stewardship, AU has the only university arboretum in Washington, DC. The campus is littered with charming spaces accessorized with benches, water features, and sculpture. On pleasant spring days, a stroll finds

most nooks filled with visitors, staff, and students. Join a tour through campus under the shelter of 2,500 trees. (More than 130 different species and varieties.) Allow meandering paths to lead you by flowering trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, and seasonal plantings. Take time to honor the venerable White Oak (*Quercus alba*), just middle-aged during the Civil War. Stand by it behind the president's office and wish it a long life, White Oaks have been known to live up to 800 years.

One of the greatest recent transformations on campus happened at the Kogod Ellipse. It was a former parking lot now landscaped into a two-acre green space that serves as AU's front yard. An allee of Chinese elms lines the central lawn, complemented by birch, cherry, crape myrtle, magnolia, and dogwood trees.

A point of historical interest is the Korean Garden, which contains a small stand of cherry trees presented as a gift to AU by then-Korean President Syngman Rhee in 1943.

Roper Pocket Park is the hidden jewel of the campus, with a naturalized pond ringed by flowering shrubs and perennials, including viburnum and oakleaf hydrangea. Unusual perennials such as turtlehead and *Ligularia* weave through the garden. Tall pin oaks form a canopy over groundcovers, such as creeping mazus and *Ophiopogon*, that adorn the stone walkway.

AU has gone "green" from its lawns to its roofs. Working with community volunteers, an existing roof was replaced with a "green roof," resulting in reduced energy use. Community outreach includes a partnership in which the National Park Service assisting with grounds maintenance at Ward and Tenley circles. In January, AU adopted



VANITY FAIR

The Faces of NPR: Diane Rehm

November 9, 2011

Every self-respecting snoot in America knows the exact timbre of Carl Kasell's voice, but could you pick him out of a lineup? As NPR celebrates its 40th anniversary with a new oral history—and a James Wolcott column in *V.F.*'s December issue—VF.com puts faces to the public-radio network's biggest names.



Diane Rehm (*The Diane Rehm Show*)

A veteran of public radio since 1973, Diane Rehm started on WAMU's midday talk show *Kaleidoscope*, in 1979 which changed its name to *The Diane Rehm Show*. Rehm has interviewed the world's movers and shakers for an audience of more than 2.1 million a week since.

The Washington Post

September 25, 2009



BY MICHAEL TEMCHINE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The host of "The Diane Rehm Show" at a gala honoring the program's three decades.

After 30 Years, NPR's Diane Rehm Finally Gets to Be the Guest

By PAUL FARHI
Washington Post Staff Writer

A question for Diane Rehm, who's been questioning the great and fascinating on her radio show for 30 years: Did she ever think she'd be on the air for so long?

"Never!" Rehm said on Thursday night, moments before joining a gala to honor three decades of the morning public-radio institution that is "The Diane Rehm Show."

"I never thought I'd have a career of any kind, much less a career in radio. . . . Who in the world would have thought this evening would happen?"

It kind of worked out, didn't it?

Rehm came out from behind the mike and into a warm bath of celebration and accolades. A few hundred friends — politicians, journalists such as National Public Radio stars Scott Simon and Susan Stamberg — turned up at the Andrew W. Mellon

Auditorium downtown to salute Rehm on the milestone anniversary, and to raise money for her longtime broadcasting home, WAMU (88.5 FM).

Rehm, 73, traversed the broad hall slowly, her gait slowed by the cracked pelvis she suffered from a spill a month ago. She otherwise seemed no worse for wear, decked out in a glummy purple taffeta outfit

See REHM, Page C3

Diane Rehm: Speaking of 30 Years

REHM, From Page C1

that set off her dramatic crown of silvery hair.

As recounted during the evening, Rehm's career trajectory is a tale of persistence, patience and instinctive intelligence. In the 1960s, she had professional aspirations that extended no further than becoming a secretary. A stay-at-home mom without a college degree (her Turkish-immigrant parents didn't believe in higher education for girls), she volunteered one day to book guests for "The Home Show" on WAMU.

Rehm's big break came on Day One: The show's host called in sick and Rehm got a battlefield promotion. She spent her first 90 minutes on the air interviewing a Dairy Council spokeswoman about the joys of milk and cheese. Then came another promotion: Rehm was named host of a local public-affairs show called "Kaleidoscope," which morphed into "The Diane Rehm Show" in 1979.

Long story short: Rehm's Washington-centric program (all those journalists, political figures and book authors as guests) went national in 1995 via NPR. Rehm her-



BY MICHAEL TEMCHINE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Rehm, flanked by E.J. Mudd and J. Robert Vastine at Thursday's gala.

self had to raise the \$250,000 it took to put her show on a satellite (key contributors: Michael Milken, Larry King and book publishers Knopf and Simon & Schuster). The show is now heard on some 120 public stations by 2.2 million people a week. And growing.

Over the years, the math on Rehm has added up — and up: Two hours of talk per day, times five days per week, times two to three guests per hour, times 30 years equals . . . well, a whole lotta talk.

Rehm says she lasted "by going against the grain" of the clattering, combative world of talk radio. For decades, Rehm has laid down some basic rules for the conduct of her

show. No shouting. No insults. Interrupt only when a guest strays. And don't make the show about the host.

"People really listen for understanding, to learn something," said Caryn Mathes, WAMU's general manager. "People say they feel like they're in the room with her, like she's asking the questions they'd want to ask." It's almost a contradiction in terms, Mathes said: "Intelligent radio."

Rehm took the stage and spoke without prepared remarks; no matter — she sounded pretty thoughtful, anyway. "Civil dialogue has a role in our world," she said. ". . . No matter how loud and angry the

voices become, if we persist with voices of kindness and caring, this country will continue to be the strong and decent country that everyone has believed it to be."

NPR's Simon, no slouch as an interviewer himself, recalled being a guest on Rehm's show to plug a roman à clef that included passages about his family. Rehm's questioning about his memories of his relatives brought him to tears on the air. For months afterward, strangers would approach Simon and offer him tissues.

Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) said any guest on Rehm's show knows he or she will get "tough but fair questions" that must be answered honestly "if you have any hope of being invited back."

What's distinctive, too, is Rehm's arrestingly creaky (and instantly identifiable) voice and pacing. A decade ago, she received a diagnosis of the all-but-incurable vocal disorder called spasmodic dysphonia, which she treats with injections of botulin every four months.

The condition hasn't slowed her pace. Rehm says she intends to retire "when I get tired of doing what I do. And I'm still not tired yet."

Ya think? The other day, Rehm had author E.L. Doctorow on her show. She lights up just talking about it. "Do you think that's not a thrill for me?" she said in a brief interview. "E.L. Doctorow!

"I have a wonderful job," she concluded. "It's the best job in the whole world."

WASHINGTON JEWISH WEEK

Teaching Kids Through Theater

'Butterfly onstage at American University'

by Lisa Traiger
November 4, 2010

The dandelions call to me / And the white chestnut
branches in the court. / Only I never saw another butterfly.
/ That butterfly was the last one. / Butterflies don't live
here, in the ghetto.

These haunting words, written by Pavel Friedman, a young man of 20 who was incarcerated in Terezin Concentration Camp, inspired the play, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, which draws on the emotional and inspirational story of one child of just 100 out of 15,000 children who survived deprivation, starvation and Nazi cruelty during the Holocaust.

American University theater professor Gail Humphries Mardirosian brings this play with music by American writer Celeste Raspanti to the campus' **Katzen Arts Center** for public performances Nov. 12 and Nov. 13. In addition to public performances, Mardirosian, who specializes in arts education research, as well as European theater, brought educational workshops late last month to seventh-graders at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville and sixth-graders at Ludlow Taylor Elementary School in the District. The preteen students learned about the history of Terezin (Theresienstadt), which was once a "model" concentration camp set up 40 miles outside of Prague that the Nazis used to dupe Red Cross visitors.

Of the 200,000 primarily Jews who passed through Terezin's gates between 1941 and 1945, 97,297 died there, including 15,000 children; most of the rest were transported to other Nazi killing centers.

"It's still unfathomable to me," said Mardirosian. "Even though I've been to Terezin, interviewed several survivors, I still can't fully comprehend it." Yet, the professor, who grew up in the coal-mining town of Uniontown, Pa., feels compelled to bring this story of adversity and survival to a new generation by directing the 80-minute play for children and their families.

"My mother was a full-blooded Czechoslovak, which is somewhat of a catalyst," Mardirosian said about her ongoing interest in theater and performance in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. She spent the 2008-09 academic year in Prague on a Fulbright fellowship at the Academy of Performing Arts, which provided her ample opportunity to expand her knowledge of the city, its lively theater traditions and of nearby Terezin.

Following a multidisciplinary series of courses, lectures and forums on Terezin at American University last spring, Mardirosian wasn't quite ready to put the material away.



Jenny Haining, left, plays Renka and Elizabeth Bartolotta is Irena in *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* at American University.

"I wanted to see if I could use theater as a conduit to enlighten students and the American population about Terezin," she said. "It was such an unusual phenomenon that you have these intellectually and artistically extraordinary human beings there in the most dire of circumstances." And yet, they continued to create: drawings, paintings, poetry, a children's opera, plays and symphonies amid the struggle and scarcity.

"We always look at it from a personal perspective: What if I had been sent there, what would I have done? Would I have given in to the dismay and the hardships? My life is about teaching and creating theater so I hope that's probably what I would have done."

The play centers around one character, Raja Englanderova, a child who ultimately survived the Terezin ghetto and went on to become a pediatrician. While playwright Raspanti, who lives in St. Paul, Minn., fictionalized Englanderova's life, after she and the survivor met, the author wrote a moving account of that meeting:

"How could you have known that I fell in love, young love, in Terezin? How could you have known about our teacher in Terezin? [Raja asked.] I knew she was pleased and so was I. I had been immersed in these lives for two years, and I assumed that wherever there were young people - lonely and afraid, there would be the need for love. Wherever there were children huddled in the shadows of hunger and fear, there would be at least one strong person to teach the children how to sing, how to write poetry, how to paint pictures - how to survive. How could I have known? If you are a writer, you know. You know."

WASHINGTON JEWISH WEEK

January 5, 2011

A different Anne Frank New play uses visual, movement theater

by Lisa Traiger
Arts Correspondent

Generations of youths around the world have read the diary Anne Frank wrote and edited while a teenager in hiding above a jam factory in Amsterdam. They feel intimately connected to its author through her thoughtful passages, and they believe they understand the Holocaust experience through her eyes.

Czech performer and theater director Mirenka Cechova, too, first encountered the diary, initially published in 1947, as an adolescent schoolgirl and was inexplicably drawn to the story.

"I only remembered a kind of feeling I felt during the reading," she said. "It was so close to me because of the age — I was also about 13. Something resonated for me in the diary."

Fifteen years later, Cechova, now 28, returned to the diary and to Frank's Holocaust experience, approaching it with newfound maturity, a greater appreciation and admiration for her ordeal, and for her unintended role in Holocaust history. The result is *The Voice of Anne Frank*, a theater piece that makes its U.S. debut this month at American University's Katzen Arts Center Studio Theater.

Cechova re-visions Anne Frank using visual and movement theater to lay bare the youngster's internal monologue, which she confided so evocatively on paper. The play is part of the university's ongoing Voices of Terezin Project.

Theater professor Gail Humphries Mardirosian, who had seen Cechova perform in Prague, invited her to Washington. "It's an incredible and authentic visceral presentation," Mardirosian says.

Cechova, who studied classical ballet for a decade, along with acting and mime in Prague, calls the work "multiexpressional theater." The piece melds together physical theater, movement, dance, speech and music — improvised on stage by cellist Nancy Snider, director of the American University music program.

The one-woman play barely has a script, noted Mardirosian, who added that it's hardly more than six to 10 pages, all quotes directly from Frank's diary.

"We take her and her diary from an internal point of view," Cechova explained. "This adaptation is not objective, but it takes the situation as a 13-year-old girl as a very subjective viewing. It really deals most with her emotions, her understanding of the situation, her adolescence. What does it mean to become an adolescent under these circumstances? What does it mean for her to be in a hiding place? What does it mean to deal with problems with members of the family who are in the same situation? What does it mean for a 13-year-old girl to be all the time under pressure?"

Like Anne's father, Otto, who originally published the diary, Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, whose play debuted on Broadway in 1956, wanted her story

universalized and feared that focusing on the Jewishness of the family's experience would alienate the primarily non-Jewish audience of ticket buyers.

Cechova, who is not Jewish, takes no stand on whether Frank's story is uniquely Jewish or universal. "As an author, I didn't think in the creative process about whether I was creating a universal character or a Jewish character," the performer stated. "I just wanted to understand her and [have] a dialogue with Anne Frank. I depend on audiences' perceptions [of her Jewishness] ... and how they experience this theme and understand Anne Frank's fate."

In the end, Cechova admits that understanding both aspects of Frank — her distinctively Jewish experience and her role as a beacon for universal tolerance — is very important.

Although it's a one-woman production, Cechova pointed out that in inhabiting the character of Anne, she is not alone on stage: "The performance is a dialogue. Anne Frank [writes to] her imaginary friend, Kitty, because she's so lonely she needs to speak to someone." (Kitty, of course, is the name 13-year-old Frank gave to the diary she received as a birthday gift a month before she and her family went into hiding.)

"We took this part of Kitty," Cechova explained, "and saw really a metaphysical character. We transformed [Kitty]



Mirenka Cechova performs in *The Voice of Anne Frank*.

into cello music. So in a performance there's a dialogue with me, the actress, and the cello player. Her music is improvising, and it answers my sentences."

The Voice of Anne Frank will be onstage Jan. 14 at 8 p.m. and on Jan. 15 and 16 at 2 p.m. at the Studio Theatre, Katzen Arts Center, American University. Tickets, \$10-\$15, are available by calling 202-885-2782.

THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

AU artist group celebrates 20 years of creativity

By **TEKE WIGGIN**
Current Correspondent

Many are aware of American University's world-class, \$50 million art facility, the Dr. Cyrus and Myrtle Katzen Arts Center. Far fewer, though, are familiar with a tightly knit band of art school alums, known as Group 93, and how they served as the catalyst for its construction.

Huddled in lounge chairs around a couple of coffee tables in the Katzen Arts Center's cafe on Monday, members of Group 93 spoke about the group's origins and the role it has played in shaping their personal artistic growth as well as their alma mater itself.

The group formed in 1990, when several American University art school alums learned that their former professor Luciano Penay would soon retire and went to him to express a desire for informal classes. Penay agreed, but only on the condition that the meetings take on a critique-only, non-lecture character. Group 93 members said Monday that they were happy to accept.

The meetings began to take place weekly in American University's old arts facilities.

For each get-together, Penay would hang members' pieces of art up one by one and offer his critiques while inviting others to do the same. Rather randomly, members admitted, the group took its name for an American University exhibition of its work in 1993. By this time, they said, they were hooked on the feedback they received at each meeting and had formed deep bonds of trust and affection with each other.

Over the years, the composition of the group has changed, mostly

due to relocations, members said, but currently there are 15 members, a number they said they don't see getting any larger. Despite these changes, they said many members have stayed active since the group's inception.

"We stayed together because the group began to work very, very well together, and they realized they were gaining a good deal of knowledge about their own work," said Penay, sitting in his chair as his students nodded their heads in disciple-like assent.

Along with an abiding love for the teacher, the group has flourished due to the inherent dynamism and artistic diversity of the group, members said.

"None of us look like the next person. We all have different styles," said member Gloria Turner.

Added Penay on the group's solidarity: "I think the main reason is that very soon they were able to participate in a very active way in this group with their own personalities."

Still, it's impossible to escape the main reason Group 93 has lasted so long, said Myrtle Katzen, who donated the money for the art center with her late husband, Cyrus. And that is Penay himself.

"He gives his time and energy to everybody. ... If there's something we don't understand, he explains it to us. It's more like a family and less like a group. I just can't praise him enough," she said.

In fact, if it weren't for Penay's mentoring and Group 93, Katzen says she and her husband would not have donated the money for the Katzen Arts Center. Cyrus first met members of Group 93 at one of its annual exhibitions, and he was charmed by the members' character and camaraderie, said Myrtle. It was

that exposure, she said, that led him to decide to make a significant contribution to the institution that was its benefactor: American University.

"It all started because of Group 93," she said. "If it wasn't for Group 93, they wouldn't have had a Katzen Center. He could see how we all got along and how happy we were together."

Jack Rasmussen, director and curator of the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, said he's thrilled the university acted as it did, allowing Group 93 to meet in its old arts center and develop over the years.

"I can't imagine this happening many places. ... To me it's a wonderful example of how a little bit of concern for the university's family and your neighbors and your community can pay big dividends," he said.

According to Rasmussen, the Katzen Center has dramatically enhanced American University's art education capabilities. Calling it a "factory," he said the center is unique because of its broad range of facilities, and its dual function as a museum and learning center.

For a university, the sheer size of the museum area is especially impressive, he said; it is one of the largest university museums in the country and is 40 times larger than American's old gallery, according to the director.

And now more than ever, Group 93's ties to the Katzen Center are in visual abundance. Three of the current exhibitions have Group 93 members' work among them.

In the center's rotunda gallery, an eclectic mix of paintings and prints from Group 93 lines two stories of circular walls just the way Penay,

See **Artists**/Page 23

ARTISTS

From Page 5

who now splits his time between Chile and the United States, decided they should. There are 105 works, and they are all part of "Group 93 — 2010."

Visitors can also stroll down a long marble-floored hall and look up to see some Group 93 works that are part of "RE-VISION: American

University Alumni" exhibition hanging on the second floor.

And if they move through the glass door at the end of the hall, they will find one that is perhaps the dearest of all to Group 93's members: "Luciano Penay: Time, News, Paintings, and Natural Forms."

The Group 93 exhibition will close Oct. 10; Penay's exhibit, Oct. 17; and the alumni exhibit, Oct. 24. For more information visit american.edu/cas/katzen/.



April 17, 2010

American University, Smithsonian Associates Partner for Series of Programs

WASHINGTON_The Smithsonian Associates program is starting a new partnership with **American University** to host lectures and performances on the campus this month.

The programs began Thursday with a discussion about the future of museums. The events will continue through April 29 at AU's Katzen Arts Center and Greenberg Theatre and are open to the public. Tickets are required.

Next Thursday, the series will feature an interview with renowned biologist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author E.O. Wilson about his first work of fiction, "Anthill."

On April 27, the school will host a discussion among White House correspondents. Other events will feature musical performances as part of Jazz Appreciation Month.



Girl Scout Cookie College at AU's Kogod School of Business

April 1, 2011



TLC's *DC Cupcakes*—a primetime reality show about the owners of Georgetown Cupcake—featured **American University's Kogod School of Business** in an episode about Cookie College, a program that teaches Girl Scouts entrepreneurship skills to prepare them to sell cookies. Kogod has a relationship with the Girl Scouts' National Capital Chapter. The Georgetown Cupcake owners were guest speakers for Cookie College participants.

[Click to watch video](#)

Girls on the Run to host their fall 5k at American University on Dec 12th

By Tracey Endo
November 23, 2011

The mission of Girl's on the Run is "to educate and prepare girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living." Girls on the Run is a non-profit prevention program specifically designed for girls in 3rd - 8th grade and it provides them with positive role models, exercise and so much more. The program helps girls build the self-confidence needed for their future and they are given the encouragement, support and training they need to complete a 5k run.

As a culmination of a 12-week program that began in mid-September, Girls on the Run – DC will host their fall 5k at **American University**, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC beginning at 1 PM on December 12, 2010. Official race start time is 2:00 PM but you don't want to miss the fun of the pre-race and post-race activities.

Arriving early, the race participants will be able to visit the Good Happy Hair Station, face-painting or tattoo booth. Then, at 1:40 PM, Chickaro Martin of Project Fitness will lead a group warm-up. Just before the race, participants and guests will hear from some amazing guest speakers such as Mary Cheh, Council woman for Ward 3, DC and Erin Koch, a graduate student and track team member at American University. It's a day that's sure to be a lot of fun and excitement! But, after the race, participants should be sure to stick around for even more fun as Just for Kids, Inc. will be presenting some post-race yoga!

This race is very unique as it is a celebration of all the hard work and training the girls have done. They have all worked to set a goal for their race and when they achieve their personal goal they will have made huge strides toward boosting their self esteem. Coaches and volunteers, as well as spectators, encourage the girls all along the route so many of them achieve their goals when they cross the finish line.

Currently there are approximately 800 participants registered and the race director hopes to sell at least another 800 more registrations by race day. One hundred percent of the registration fees go toward scholarships to support participants in the spring.



Washington Winter Show Celebrates Over 200 Years of Georgetown Style

By Judith Beerman
January 6, 2011

With a new name, new venue, and three new beneficiary charities, the inaugural Washington Winter Show (formerly Washington Antiques Show) opened Thursday evening at the **Katzen Arts Center at American University**.

When friends and Georgetowners Debbie Winsor (designer) and Kate Chartener (historic preservationist) were asked to co-chair the 2011 show, they “were thrilled to do it.” With an opportunity to select the theme, it didn’t take them long to come up with Georgetown, “which seemed a perfect fit for a show long held in this Federal city.”

An extraordinary signature exhibit on loan from historic Tudor Place includes artifacts from six generations of the Peter family, its Georgetown owners. Leslie Buhler, Executive Director introduced the collection of everyday objects, letters, clothing, and jewelry spanning 1750-1983 to Honorary Chairs, His Excellency Sir Nigel Elton Sheinwald, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the United States, and Lady Sheinwald.

Spread over three floors, 45 premier dealers from the U.S. and Europe showed an exquisite range of period furnishings and decorative arts (with emphasis on the Federal period), vintage jewelry, porcelain, ceramics, silver and architectural accents.

Busch & Fielding, dealers from Missouri who’ve been coming to the Washington show for 12 years specialize in late 18th and 19th century French antiques. Dennis Busch explained how their copper is “lacquered for preservation the same way the Smithsonian does it.”

For twins Leon and Steven Weiss, Gemini Antiques is more than their sign, it’s also their business. As kids, they turned a family coin and stamp collection into “one of the leading penny bank collections in the country.” Leon and Steven seen above posing with “Reclining Chinaman Toy Bank” circa 1890 and “American Tin Clockwork Ironclad Monitor” from 1870, one of only five known to be in existence, and worth \$48,000.

The 2011 Washington Winter Show beneficiaries are the Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys, Starlight MidAtlantic, THEARC, and The Founders Board of St. John’s Community Services.

The show runs from January 7-9th. For tickets, and more information, including “Eye on Design” lecture and buffet luncheon on Verdura jewelry (Friday), Jazz Night (Saturday) and appraisals (Sunday), contact www.washingtonwintershow.org.

INSIDE: SPRING REAL ESTATE

THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

Local artist turns the spotlight on Tenley

By **TERESA G. GIONIS**
Current Correspondent

Before there was Wilson, before there was Deal and before there was the park at Fort Reno, there was Reno City.

In the decades after the Civil War, a bustling neighborhood of homes, shops and three churches occupied the land surrounding the old military fort in Tenleytown. The residents were primarily freed slaves and working-class whites. But by the late 1930s, the neighborhood was gone. The government had acquired the land for a park and public schools, causing the displacement of most black Tenleytown residents.

The story of "Reno City" is one of the local tales told in "A Cultural History of My

Neighborhood," artist Gail Rebhan's new photo-collage tribute to her Tenleytown neighborhood, which documents historic changes to the area.

Four mural-size collages, including the panel about Fort Reno, are on view through May 15 in the windows at 4600

Wisconsin Ave., the former site of Babe's Billiards. Smaller versions of these four panels, plus eight additional collages, are on view at American University's Katzen Arts Center.

"A Cultural History of My Neighborhood" is a collaboration between

the artist, Iona Senior Services and the American University Museum.

"My art has been autobiographical, and it's about time and how things change over time," explained Rebhan, a photography professor at Northern Virginia

Community College who has lived in American University Park since 1981.

Two past projects documented the growth of her sons and provided an intimate look at the life of her aging mother.

"My past books have been about changes in my family over time, and time and change is certainly an element of this work. I've just expanded from my family to my neighborhood," she said.

The panels juxtapose old and new photographs and memorabilia like phone-book pages and newspaper articles. Layering these items together with some of her own writing, she shows "how today's city is built upon the past," according to a description of the exhibit.

In the panels, she visits a dozen key neighborhood spots, including the Friendship Terrace Retirement Community, former site of the Washington Home for Foundlings; the block of Brandywine and Wisconsin, the very site of the collage installation; and the block across the street, where The Dancing Crab now sits.

"The collage lists the types of businesses that were on that block," says Rebhan. "In the



(See next page)

(Northwest Current
Continued from previous page)



Artist Gail Rebhan puts local history in her photo collages of the Tenleytown neighborhood.

1930s and 1940s, there were two shoe repairs, and today there are none. I think that speaks to our society and how things are now considered more disposable.”

Rebhan also discovered several laundries on that block, one of which was designated a “colored” laundry — the only solid evidence of segregation that she found.

“Local historians may already know these stories,” said Rebhan. “Judith Helm wrote a well-regarded book on the topic. But I hope to bring this history to a broader audience.”

There are two upcoming community events related to this project. On May 1 at 3:30 p.m., visi-

tors can meet the artist and view the photo collages at the Wisconsin Avenue site. This will be immediately followed by a free concert at 4 p.m. at The City Church, 4100 River Road, sponsored by Iona Senior Services. Iona’s facility at 4125 Albemarle St. will also host a reception after the concert.

From May 16 through 28, Rebhan will be collecting oral histories, photographs and memorabilia related to Tenleytown at Iona Senior Services. This raw material will form the basis of new photo collages.

For more information, visit gailrebhan.com.

The Washington Post

'Catalyst' Looks at WPA, a Place Washington Area Artists Have Called Home



By Michael O'Sullivan
November 18, 2010

A catalyst, according to the dictionary, is something that makes something else happen. Based on what you'll see and learn from a new exhibition called "Catalyst" - a roundup of local art in honor of the Washington Project for the Arts' 35th anniversary - I've got another definition: home.

That may strike some of you as odd, considering that the WPA is, in a sense, homeless. Oh, it has office space. And it does, from time to time, manage to cadge an empty gallery or two to put on a show, as it has here by co-opting all three floors of the **American University Museum** and its outdoor sculpture garden. But the days of putting down roots in a permanent space, as it once was able to do in downtown Washington, are, for the time being, over.

That's not the kind of home we're talking about anyway. Think of Robert Frost's more poetic assessment. "Home," he once wrote, "is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

The WPA, in other words, is less a place than a state of mind. If there's a structure involved, it's built more around moral support than drywall.

That's obvious, first and foremost, in the inclusion of works by such artists as Fred Folsom, Lisa Brotman, Betsy Packard and Wayne Edson Bryan. (Quick - how many years has it been since you've seen a solo show, in or around Washington, by any of them?) "Catalyst" is packed with solid, strong work by these and other artists of a certain age whom time, or at least the contemporary art world, seems to have forgotten.

Washington's museums have never been in the business of nurturing local art, as the show's curator, J.W. Mahoney, correctly points out. And commercial galleries exist to make money. It is the role of nonprofit alternatives such as WPA to act as a catalyst - and a home - for art that might otherwise slip between those cracks.

Nowadays, of course, you'll find "street" art in lots of galleries. You'll also find commercial galleries that represent performance artists such as Kathryn Cornelius and video artists such as Brandon Morse. Both of these talented young people have work in "Catalyst." And both, at least to some degree, can thank organizations like WPA for creating the audience for art you can't hang on your wall.

One reason you don't often see work by some of "Catalyst's" artists is a sad one. Simon Gouverneur, Noche Crist, Kevin MacDonald and Don Cook are among the WPA artists who have died. MacDonald's suite of four untitled drawings of water - known as his "cancer drawings" - were the last pictures made by the late, great draftsman, who died in 2006.

There's an undeniable, if faint, sense of loss here. But that's to be expected anytime you look back at what was. To its credit, however, "Catalyst" looks ahead with as clear an eye as the one it casts over its shoulder. While the exhibition checklist is heavy with names from the 1970s, '80s and '90s, the art of today's Washington is well represented. Look for standout work by photographer Jason Horowitz, conceptualist Molly Springfield, sculptor Ledelle Moe and painter Joe White. (The 70-something White is an exception to the rule about older artists; his one-man show is on view at the Jane Haslem Gallery.) On one floor you'll find a painting by Erik Thor Sandberg, a masterful traditionalist of the next generation. On another, you'll find a canvas by his former painting teacher, Margarida Kendall. The stylistic connection is unmistakable.

While at the museum, don't miss two thematically related side shows: "Claudia DeMonte: Everyday Matters" explores the career of one of Washington's early feminist artists, who came of age during WPA's heyday. "Ed McGowin: Name Change" looks at the work of her husband, who in the 1970s legally changed his name 12 times over the course of a single year in order to create 12 unique personas, under which he still makes art. Their legacy - of conceptualist pranksterism mixed with sober politics - can be felt in "Catalyst's" youngest artists.

And that's what this smart and loving showcase is all about. It may take a spark to ignite a flame, but it also takes a hearth to maintain that flame, for it to not just burn but flourish.

The Washington Post

July 23, 2010

On Exhibit

17

PORTRAITS ALIVE

A theatrical tour of the National Portrait Gallery led by D.C. teens. Wednesday and Thursday at 2:15 p.m., through Aug. 13. Eighth and F streets NW. www.npg.si.edu. Free.

Artistic visions that are poles apart

BY MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

In an age of globalism, is there any such thing as national art?

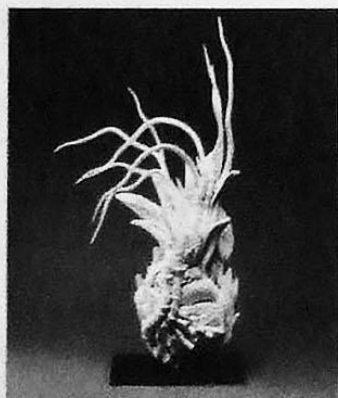
Judging by a pair of exhibitions at the American University Museum, the answer is a resounding yes. The foreign imports — one coming from Japan, the other from Norway — could not be less alike. "Soaring Voices: Recent Ceramics by Women of Japan" and "Norse Soul: The Legacy of Edvard Munch, Social Democracy, Old Myths, Anarchy and Death Longings" are as different from each other as sushi is from lutefisk.

Let's start with the lutefisk.

"Norse Soul" is part of "Norway Comes to Washington," an ongoing, area-wide celebration of Norwegian culture that includes the upcoming National Gallery of Art show "Edvard Munch: Master Prints" (opening July 31 in the East Building). Featuring just four artists, it is idiosyncratic and far from representative of Norwegian culture. Two of the artists, Marianne Heske and Marthe Thorshaug, contribute one video each. The late painter Arne Ekeland (1908-94) is represented by work from the mid-1930s through the early 1990s. Covering a variety of styles and themes, he's hard to pin down. Of the four, Bjarne Melgaard makes the strongest impression. He also leaves the strangest aftertaste.

Incorporating violent, often sadomasochistic imagery, references to hard drugs and an obsession with the phallus that makes gay porn look coy, Melgaard's paintings, drawings and mixed-media works betray the artist's fascination with the culture and aesthetic of death metal. (Known in Norway as "black metal," the musical subculture is infamous there for its alleged role in a series of church arsons in the 1990s.) If Munch were alive today and the lead singer of a headbanger band — call them Eddie and the Screemers — its album covers might look something like Melgaard's pictures.

During a recent visit to the exhibit, a fa-



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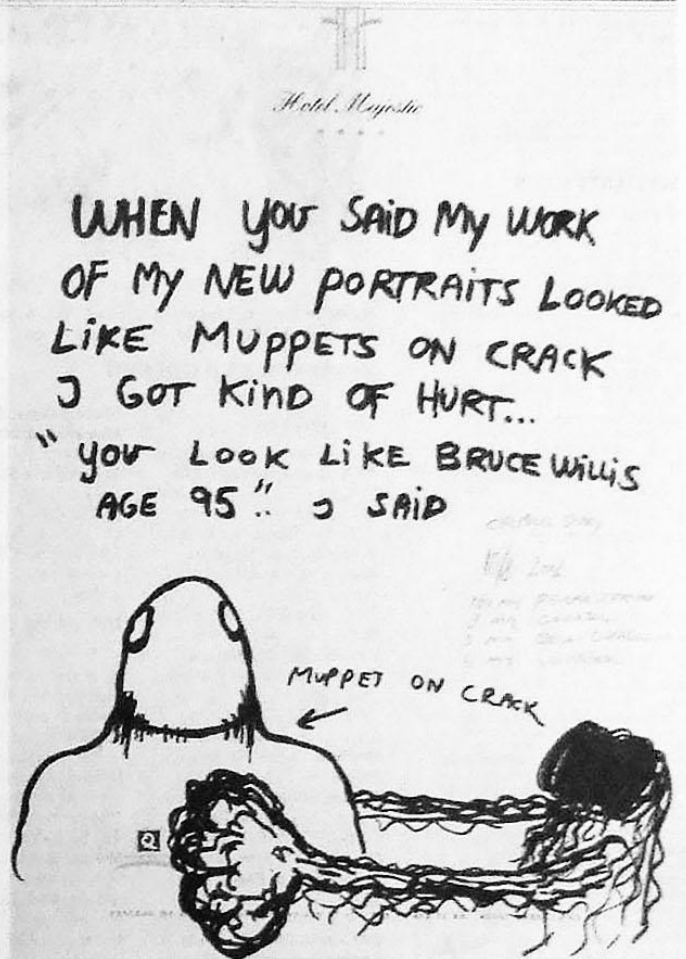
Works by Kyoko Tokumaru, above, and Bjarne Melgaard, right, demonstrate some of the differences between concurrent shows at the American University Museum.

ther was seen shooing his young son away from the artist's "Chemical Diary," a wall-size installation of drawings, most of which have inscriptions that can't be printed in a family newspaper. Yes, they're in English. One of the drawings has what looks like a real knife sticking out of it.

Presumably, there's a critique of something — bourgeois convention? — somewhere in there. But Melgaard offers no solutions, only an incoherent rant.

Compared with that, "Soaring Voices" is a choir of angels.

Featuring 87 works by 25 women, the show offers an overview of work by contemporary Japanese clay artists. With the exception of Takako Araki and Kimiyo Mishima, whose work mimics the look of paper — Bibles, crumpled newspapers, a stack of manga comic books, all in clay — most of the artists dwell in the realm of the biomorphic. Their works celebrate the curve of the human body, sea forms,



COURTESY OF BJARNE MELGAARD

well-worn rocks and exotic plants.

It's subtle, self-effacing stuff. Pierced with holes, Yasuko Sakurai's baskets, for instance, call more attention to the play of shadows they cast than to the clay itself. The floral-inspired work of Kyoko Tokumaru, on the other hand, is otherworldly, a bouquet of bizarre shoots and tendrils.

Is one show better than the other? That's really a matter of taste. As art around the world begins to lose its accent, becoming more homogenous, what's best about the pairing is almost not the work itself but the varied intensity — from a whisper to a scream — of its voices.

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SOARING VOICES: RECENT CERAMICS BY WOMEN OF JAPAN

Through Aug. 15.

NORSE SOUL: THE LEGACY OF EDVARD MUNCH, SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, OLD MYTHS, ANARCHY AND DEATH LONGINGS

Through Oct. 17.

Both at the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, 4400 Massachusetts Ave. NW. 202-885-1300. www.american.edu/museum.

Hours: Open Tuesday-Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission: Free.

The Washington Post

Art Explained: Innovative by design

By Michele Langevine Leiby
April 15, 2011

A flower vase fashioned from the sludge of an oil spill; a lightweight stool shaped like the lower half of a male nude; multipurpose “guerilla” containers, hand-sewn to resemble sandbags used in combat. These are among the objects in “Bravos: Groundbreaking Spanish Design,” an exhibition of works by young Spanish designers now showing at the **Katzen Arts Center at American University**. The exhibition features 21 diverse artists — signifying that we are, after all, in the 21st century — to embody all the trends in contemporary Spanish design.

The curator, Juli Capella, a 50-year-old architect, is well-regarded in Spain for his holistic, witty and sometimes subversive approach to design.

Capella says he approached curating the exhibit the same way he would building a hotel. First, by seeking a strong concept, here young Spanish talent on the leading edge. Then, by defining it, here by selecting 21 designers. And finally, by executing the concept through the exhibit, constructing a small “chapel” for each object, placing each of them in front of a larger-than-life-size photograph of its creator, each image suspended on a spider-like, collapsible, metallic frame.

Capella has worked across the disciplines of interior design, graphic design, industrial design and town planning. As a young phenom, in 1984, he founded and edited *De Diseno*, the first specialty design journal in Spain. He has curated exhibitions including “Barcelona Design in the 20th Century: From Gaudi to the Olympic Games,” shown in Washington in 1997.

In conversations and e-mails, he described the aims behind the exhibit:

“I tried not to be repetitive — not all were chairs and lamps, but I think we do them best in Spain. I wanted there to be real-world objects, but also some experimental, some prototypical — such as the chair of unbreakable Tyvek — others more poetic, even some political, such as the flower vase made from tar as commentary on oil spills.

“They also had to be large objects, so the public could be very close and touch them, without the risk of them being stolen. I did not want to put anything under glass — that’s for traditional museums.

“The functionality of the objects is relative: I think that every user (not consumer!) decides that subjectively. Ettore Sottsass [a preeminent figure in postmodern design] taught us that it may be more practical and comfortable to sit on a rock five hours if you are happy waiting for your girlfriend, than to sit in an ergonomic chair, if you’re working in an office and bitter with disappointment.

“All the Bravos designers are trying to say something new and ingenious; they do not conform to make commercial goods; they seek a more experimental and, therefore, more risky goal. Some have two faces like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Two contrasting styles in the same person.

“The first obligation of a creator is ‘killing the father.’ Tradition is something to disobey, but actually what is done is to continue.



Whether you hate [Catalan architect Antoni] Gaudi’s work or love it, if you’re a Spanish designer you cannot escape his influence, even if you’re trying to contradict him.

“The Bravos are the generation born in the heat of Internet; they know that their field is the world, and they like to exchange and mix disciplines, architecture, graphic design, fashion. . . . They are great communicators in the communication era. So the evolution of Spanish design is similar to that of any other civilized country.

“Unfortunately, we all read the same magazines, go to the same art fairs, and we have similar training. One hypothesis of this exhibition is that although there is a Spanish design with its own personality, what we do is becoming more generic. Within a few decades, it will be difficult to identify the design of a particular country. But I hope not. As was stated by Spanish writer Josep Pla, ‘the most local is most international.’ ”

AU Supports D.C. and Government Priorities



Economics Professor Helps Shape D.C.'s Adoption Laws

December 13, 2010



AU economics professor Mary Hansen helped the D.C. Council pass a subsidy extension for adopted children.

Courtesy of: Jeff Watts

Families of foster children in D.C. used to receive subsidies until the child turned 21, but subsidies for an adopted child ended when the child turned 18. Rebecca Sheir talks with **American University economics professor** Mary Hansen about helping the D.C. Council pass a subsidy extension earlier this year, and about Hansen's own experiences with foster care and adoption: in addition to fostering several children and adopting one, Hansen is an adopted child herself.

[Click to listen to audio](#)



Top Ten Cleantech Cities in the United States

by Shawn Lesser
March 28, 2011

There are numerous cities across the United States which can be considered "cleantech capitals." With a large array of renewable resources, a dedication by businesses and homeowners to become more energy efficient, and a large hub for research and development, a lot can be accomplished when it comes to creating new, efficient and sustainable clean technologies. There are many factors that make up a "capital for cleantech," and although there are more than ten cities around the nation that are involved in clean technologies, here are ten of the top cities.

10) Washington D.C. As the capital of the United States, it must be a leader and set an example when it comes to cleantech. D.C. is the center for all major U.S. cleantech associations and initiatives, including the American Wind Association, the American Council on Renewable Energy, the Renewable Energy Incentive Program, and the Renewable Energy Policy Project...to name a few. **American University**, residing in D.C. is the first east coast U.S. University to go 100 percent green. Because D.C. needs to lead by example, they have a number of energy efficient residential programs, including tree planting, disposal of items harmful to the environment, and various programs on instructing energy saving, environmentally friendly techniques.

American U. to Use Sun for Power, Hot Water

April 15, 2011

WASHINGTON (AP) - **American University** says it is installing Washington's largest solar power system.

University officials announced Friday that they are installing more than 2,150 solar power panels and a solar hot water system. Installation is expected to be completed by July.

The school says the solar system will provide hot water for more than 2,000 students living on campus and for its largest dining hall.

The school announced last spring that it plans to become carbon-neutral by 2020, and all of the electricity it is buying comes from wind power. The university says it also plans to install a wind turbine on top of a parking garage and a generator that runs on used cooking oil from the campus dining hall.



AU To Install D.C.'s Largest Solar Panel System

Sabri Ben-Achour

April 16, 2011

American University says it is installing Washington's largest solar power system.

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[Click to listen to audio](#)

The Washington Post

April 15, 2011

The Buzz

What's trending, quirky, fun in the D.C. region

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The Buzz brings you the trends, the quirks and the just plain wackiness of life in the DMV.* And you can join in: comment, take our polls, send us tips, follow us on Twitter and Facebook. *(District-Maryland-Virginia. Get with the program.)

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- [Jose Andres to open pop-up eatery](#)

Posted at 03:18 PM ET, 04/15/2011

Schools race for solar supremacy

By Patricia Sullivan

It's another kind of "race to the top" as American University joined a number of other Washington area schools in announcing the installation of solar power systems.

[AU officials](#) said Friday that they are installing more than 2,150 solar power panels and a solar hot water system. Installation is expected to be completed by July.



(By Jeff Watts/American University)

The school says the solar system will provide hot water for more than 2,000 students living on campus and for its largest dining hall.

AU announced last spring that it plans to become [carbon-neutral by 2020](#), and all of the electricity it is buying comes from wind power. The university says it also plans to install a wind turbine on top of a parking garage and a generator that runs on used cooking oil from the campus dining hall.

[Catholic University](#), however, has a solar-powered picnic table and just announced plans to add 440 new solar panels to its existing 1,000; [Bullis School](#), [Sheridan School](#), [Sidwell Friends](#) and others have recently announced installation of solar arrays in a type of array-race paid for with a combination of public and private funds.

AU's Role in D.C.

WASHINGTONIAN

January 1, 2010

Cornelius Kerwin » Doing the university proud

American University was still reeling from the ouster of president Benjamin Ladner when Neil Kerwin took over as acting president in 2005. But Kerwin was a believer—he had deep roots in AU. He'd arrived in 1967 as a scholarship freshman and, aside from detours for his master's and PhD, he never left.

By September 2007, when Kerwin became AU's 14th president and the first alum to lead it, he was prepared. He had moved up the ranks from his first faculty appointment in 1975 to dean of the School of Public Affairs and then provost. But he still needed to gain the confidence of a faculty, student body, board, and donors whose faith in the institution had been shaken. "The test of how you manage a crisis is how you emerge from

it," Kerwin says. "We came through admirably."

The university is about to complete a \$200-million capital campaign. A second building for the Kogod School of Business was recently completed, and the Kogod campaign includes scholarship money so "kids like me can come to AU," Kerwin says.

He grew up in a family where neither parent had finished high school. But his father dared to run for public office and won the primary against a sitting state senator. The lesson for young Neil Kerwin: Never say no to an opportunity.

Kerwin has plans to expand AU's programs into public health, Latino studies, and sustainability. He's also committed to strengthening AU's ties to DC. More than 600 freshmen come to campus a



week early to do community service. The School of Education is involved in every ward in DC. The business school offers free tax advice to residents, and the law school op-

erates free clinics.

Kerwin is inspired by the students he meets on campus: "They are not only academically strong—they want to change the world."

January 1, 2011

SENSE OF PLACE

American University School of International Service

Committing to peace and justice

By KeriLee Horan

THE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL Service at **American University** (D.C.), founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1957, is the largest U.S. institution focused on international service. Now it has a dedicated building, as well.

- **FUNCTION:** Three-level, 70,000-square-foot academic building with 300-car parking garage serving 3,200 students, 200 faculty, and 50 staff members

- **CHALLENGES:** The school had been spread out within eight buildings on campus, and over the past decade AU officials worked to create a dedicated space for it. Faculty, staff, students, and designers determined the building should reflect the overall goals of the School of International Service, which teaches students to be socially responsible and maintain a commitment to social justice, as well as of the university, which has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2020.

The process of expanding was also a challenge, says Dean Louis Goodman. "In any urban construction, it's difficult to coordinate with the city, meet federal requirements, and get the appropriate permits. We wanted to start construction in September 2007, but March 2008 was when we were actually able to because of misunderstandings with permits." During construction, other issues came up, such as the need to divert excess water to blasting more stone than anticipated.

- **SOLUTION:** The project team came up with creative ways to counter all of these difficulties, ultimately finishing the project ahead of schedule and within budget. AU funded the project by selling off property and garnering private donations, as well as through bonds.

A focus was placed on demonstrating the school's commitment to peace and

Rich in natural light, the building aims to help students be inspired by the school's mission, encouraging them to remember the need for accountability and transparency in international service.



justice, transparency, accountability, and environmental responsibility. "We want the building to be an inspiration, and it already is," says Goodman. "We want it to inspire students to dream and think about what they want to do in the world."

The building boasts the first LED-lit parking garage and first D.C. building with three solar water heating systems. Other green features include rooftop photovoltaic solar panels and cisterns that collect rainwater for use. Carl Elefante, project manager for Quinn Evans Architects, says, "Green only works when you're able to make it part of an integrated process. Getting the thinking right allows you to get the technical issues right, as well."

Initially, the design called for green features such as a solar wall that would

preheat air as it entered the building, Elefante says. Although some of the ideas were initially put aside due to budgets, eventually enough money was raised and they were added before completion.

From the standpoint of faculty, staff, and students, they now have one place for classes, advising, and administrative offices. Elefante says, "The School of International Service community needed to be relevant to the larger community: peace and justice in the world couldn't be more global concepts and we've tried to create a building that embodied them."

- **COST:** \$45 million

- **COMPLETED:** September 2010

- **TEAM:** Quinn Evans Architects/William McDonough + Partners; Whiting-Turner Contracting Company



American University's History and Progress

October 29, 2010

WAMC-Northeast Public Radio interviewed **President Neil Kerwin** about **American University's** history and progress throughout the past 30 years during a live broadcast on campus. "The stature of the institution has increased enormously due exclusively to the influence of a remarkable faculty," Kerwin said.

[Click to listen to audio](#)

AU Students, Faculty and
Alumni are Smart,
Passionate and Engaged

The Washington Post

High-achieving Sisters Hang Together at AU

Area's freshman loaded with smarts. Now they have to unload their stuff.

By Daniel de Vise
August 19, 2011

Four-fifths of the sport-utility vehicles queuing up behind the entrance to Letts Hall on a muggy move-in day at American University carried students who had finished in the top 10 percent of their high school class.

Even in that distinguished company, the Esson clan from Cleveland merited notice: Meghan and Moira, the valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, of Brunswick High School, with grade-point averages separated by one-hundredth of a point. Older sister Kaitlin, an AU junior who was valedictorian of Brunswick High two years ago. Mother Irene, who was valedictorian of her high school class. And father Michael, who was valedictorian of his.

"Kind of runs in the blood, I guess," said Moira, 17, pausing to rest Saturday after the eight-hour road trip and a blur of unpacking comfort-top mattress covers and rented kitchen appliances.

AU welcomed a 1,500-student freshman class last weekend with red, white and blue balloons, one of the first universities in the region to open for the fall term. Howard and Trinity Washington universities also welcomed their new students last weekend. Move-in day arrives this week at the College of William and Mary and the University of Virginia, on Tuesday at James Madison University and late next week at many other schools, including Georgetown, George Mason and George Washington universities, and the University of Maryland.

The days before the start of classes are a time for purchasing textbooks and locating mailboxes, and also for ceremony and giddy moments of bonding. In one of the odder events, nearly 4,000 freshmen at James Madison will gather on the quad next Thursday to celebrate the human genome through dance.

Entire families of valedictorians are rare. But in the upper tier of big-name universities in the Washington area, students like Meghan and Moira Esson are no longer so uncommon.

Applicant numbers have doubled in the past 10 to 20 years at some schools, driven both by a growing college-bound population and surging interest in top-ranked institutions. Admission rates are down, and the caliber of admitted students is up.



Moira Esson, one of three Esson girls at American, hauls her gear into her dorm room. One sister's room is nearby.

High-achieving sisters hang together at AU

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"The girls 'grew up in an environment where doing your best was always expected.'"

—Irene MacGonigle, the girls' mother

AU's Class of 2014 has an average SAT score of 1275 out of 1600 possible points in reading and math, and an average high school grade-point average of 3.79. The admit rate was 43.5 percent, the lowest in university history. The share of students who finished in the top 10 percent of their high school class stands at an all-time high.

(See next page)

*(Washington Post
Continued from previous page)*

At William and Mary, 79 percent of entering freshmen finished in the top 10 percent of their class. At GWU, the average freshman finished in the 91st percentile. And more than 90 percent of incoming freshmen at U-Va. ranked in the top 10 percent of their class, for the first time.

Just close enough

On the AU campus in Northwest Washington, Moira and Meghan settled into dorm rooms that were separate but nearly adjacent, each woman throwing in her lot with two roommates who had yet to reveal themselves. Meghan got the first choice of beds and selected the upper bunk by the window. Moira got the last choice, a loft-style perch five feet off the ground and next to the door. (Meghan later switched beds with a roommate after repeatedly hitting her head on the ceiling.)

The sisters thought sharing a room might be a bit much. "But knowing that she's here is so important," Meghan said.

Kaitlin was the first Esson to enroll at AU, choosing the Northwest school after falling in love with Washington during a two-week visit with a youth leadership group in her sophomore year of high school. Moira followed Kaitlin. Meghan followed Moira, picking American over Sarah Lawrence College with dramatic flourish on the day before the registration deadline.

They liked "the political advocacy, the feminism, the fact that even when they were 15," visiting campus with their older sister, "the faculty treated them like they were real people, adults," said their mother, Irene MacDougall, a corporate lawyer in Cleveland.

Michael Esson is a clinical psychologist. Both parents attended Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Today they are a suburban power couple.

The girls "grew up in an environment where doing your best was always expected," their mother said. But Meghan said her parents were "very relaxed" about homework and house rules. Studying was "our choice," she said, and the girls never wanted to let their parents down.

Meghan and Moira are part of triplets; brother Sean graduated in the top 10 percent of Brunswick High's 600-student class and is attending the University of Evansville in Indiana.

Moira rides show horses; Meghan is terrified of horses and smitten with classical ballet. Meghan plans to study economics and international relations; Moira is noncommittal. Moira packed a pink stuffed pig for her dorm room; Meghan brought a green stuffed rabbit.

Parting words

They carried boxes past poignant scenes. A mother, tears welling as she embraced her daughter one last time: "Study hard, sweetheart, and I'll see you in summer." Other parents rushed past, hauling double-size boxes of cereal and tubs of fresh blueberries.

When the last box had been liberated from the Esson family cars (they had brought two), the family paused for a brief farewell. There wasn't much time: It was 4 o'clock, and the key to Kaitlin's off-campus apartment had to be secured by 5.

The final goodbye fell to Dad, and he kept it simple. "Hang tough," he said. And then the elder Essons were gone, and Meghan and Moira were in college.

Study: Women Rare on Local Tech Company Boards

More than half of Washington, Virginia companies don't have any women on their boards

By Bob Keefe
March 1, 2011

Participants talk at a Women in Technology mentoring event. The group is launching a new program aimed at getting more women on boards of local tech companies. SOURCE: Women in Technology

It's widely known there aren't enough women in the upper-ranks of technology companies, but a new report shows just how few females there are on the corporate boards of Washington-area tech firms.

The study commissioned by the Women in Technology (WIT) group and conducted by **American University's Kogod School of Business** analyzed the boards of 172 publicly traded companies in Washington and Virginia.

Some of the findings:

* Nearly 52 percent of companies in Washington, D.C. and Virginia have no women serving on their corporate boards.

*Only 3 percent of companies have more than three women board members.

*Among Virginia-based companies, 101 of 1,318 board seats (about 8 percent) are held by women.

*Among Washington companies, about 14 of 109 board seats (about 13 percent) are held by women.

Local technology industry executives - like their peers nationally - often bemoan the fact that there aren't enough women in their ranks, from the bottom to the top of their organizations.

"It's not just a matter of tokenism, it's a matter of helping us grow, helping us fundamentally change," Steve Hunt, vice president and chief information officer of Fairfax, Va.-based Salient Federal Solutions said at a recent Women in Technology event.

In addition to improving diversity, research from organizations such as women's advocacy group Catalyst show that companies with women on their boards have higher rates of return than those that have fewer women board members.

"Diversity defines the workplace of the 21st century," said Jill Klein, the executive in residence at American University's Kogod school who oversaw the Women in Technology study.

"Women, a vital element in this diverse workplace, represent one of the largest, untapped corporate resource at all levels, including on the board of directors."

One of the biggest problems for getting women on corporate boards - in the technology industry and other businesses - is that there aren't enough women in the corporate pipeline to begin with.

"Diversity defines the workplace of the 21st century"

-Study supervisor Jill Klein of American University.

Partly as a result of the findings, the Women in Technology group announced it plans to launch a new program it calls "The Leadership Foundry." that is designed to help women leaders get spots on corporate boards.



Participants talk at a Women in Technology mentoring event. The group is launching a new program aimed at getting more women on boards of local tech companies. SOURCE: Women in Technology

Beginning in March, the program will provide intensive board training sessions for senior women in technology with the aim of getting more of them on corporate boards of tech firms.

Through the program, the group also will advocate for more women to serve on corporate boards and provide networking and mentoring opportunities.

"Women leaders should collectively make an effort to actively seek and accept board positions to contribute their knowledge and experience, build personal brand and enhance their careers," Nanci Schimizzi, president of Women in Technology said in a statement.

"Through The Leadership Foundry, we plan to create a strong awareness of the lack of women's representation on corporate boards, encourage local organizations to support board diversity, as well as prepare more women for their first board service," she said.

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES INTERNATIONAL WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2011

THE DEATH OF BIN LADEN

9/11 Inspires Student Patriotism and Celebration

By KATE ZERNIKE

Ashley Bright was 15 years old and on her way to school in Cottonwood, Ariz., when she stopped at a friend's house and saw the news that two planes had hit the World Trade Center.

At the time, Ms. Bright did not even know what the twin towers were. "I had no concept of what it meant," she said Tuesday, "except that suddenly we were saying the Pledge of Allegiance again every day and having assemblies about patriotism, and everyone was flying their flags again out of nowhere."

Young Americans, like many others, had a variety of reactions to the death of Osama bin Laden — sadness and anger at the lives he had destroyed, questions about how much safer his death made the United States. But their response, in some notable instances, was punctuated by jubilant, if not jingoistic, celebrations.

In Washington, college students spilled in front of the White House chanting "U.S.A! U.S.A.!" and puffing cigars. In State College, Pa., 5,000 students waved flags, blew vuvuzelas, and sang the national anthem and the chorus to Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A." Cheering students jumped into Mirror Lake at Ohio State — as they do with big football games — and swelled the Common in Boston.

Some, like Ms. Bright, thought the celebrations excessive. But they were not surprising, she and others said, in the context of how much their young lives had been

shaped by Sept. 11. For them, it set off a new emphasis on patriotism, with constant reminders from teachers and parents that it is important to be proud of being an American — a striking contrast to the ambivalence of the Vietnam years that marked their parents' generation.

The attacks were the first time they had considered that people in the rest of the world might harbor ill will toward Americans. The experience established the world in polarities of black and white, with Bin Laden being the new emblem of evil.

"I probably wouldn't be as appreciative of living in America if I hadn't seen 9/11 happen and grown up in this time," said Ms. Bright, now a graduate student at American University.

"We carry the weight of it more because our entire adult lives have been during a time of war," she said. "The strong reaction is because it's the first goal that has been met that we can take ownership of."

Michelle Vered, a senior in an Advanced Placement government class at South Eugene High School in Eugene, Ore., said: "We learned about our identity as Americans through this really horrible tragedy. Even the celebrating the death of Osama bin Laden — we rely on all these bad things to identify who we are."

Like many her age, Leora Yashari, 18, a freshman at Boston University, called Bin Laden "the villain of our generation."

"We were always aware and always told he was such a threat to us," Ms. Yashari said. "He was responsible for all this pain and all this heartbreak — not just when 9/11 happened but anytime you heard a group of soldiers died or

Matt Collette contributed reporting from Boston, Dan Frosch from Denver, and Isolde Raftery from Eugene, Ore.

(See next page)

hit another anniversary.”

In the world of the so-called millennial generation, said Neil Howe, a writer and historian who is often credited with defining that term for the generation, “Evil is evil, good is good. There are no antiheroes, there is no gray area. This is a Harry Potter vignette, and Voldemort is dead.”

“In a Harry Potter world,” he said, “their mission is to save the world for the rest of society. This is their taking pride in what their generation is able to do.”

Cara Kelly, a 14-year-old high school sophomore in algebra class in Somerville, S.C., when the attacks happened, agreed that her generation likes clear-cut endings. “That’s why a lot of people haven’t paid attention to Iraq and Afghanistan,” Ms. Kelly said. “It’s so convoluted — are we winning? What is winning? We don’t even really know.”

Patriotism after Sept. 11, she said, “was something that we could rally behind to kind of make sense of the attacks.”

“Since the attacks,” Ms. Kelly said, “we haven’t had something so clear as the objective of finding Osama bin Laden.”

Ms. Kelly and Ms. Bright were among American University students involved in a project called “Growing up in the Shadow of 9/11,” which was completed last week, before Bin Laden was killed. In a video for the project, many college students in the Washington area recalled how teachers and parents were emphasizing the importance of patriotism after the attacks — with classes that had not said the Pledge in years suddenly saying it daily, and singing patriotic songs at weekly assemblies.

In a survey for the project, stu-

dents defined themselves as more open to the rest of the world, to study foreign languages and foreign relations — a similar trend has been noted by the freshman survey done yearly on campuses nationwide by the University of California, Los Angeles, which found that students post-Sept. 11 are increasingly inclined to study abroad.

But the students in the video for the American University project also said they believed that their generation was more patriotic than previous ones. They saw this for good and bad; a young Muslim woman who began wearing a headscarf after the attacks said, “I feel like regardless of your religion after 9/11, it made everyone question what it was like to be an American.”

Sean Clark, a senior at the University of Oregon, said in an interview Tuesday that before the attacks: “I thought we were the good guys, the best in the world, and that world was perfect. Then people came and threw planes into the towers and shook everyone into believing that there were other things out there.”

Among those barely able to remember the attacks, there was still ambivalence. But ambivalence gave way to celebration.

Margaret Chavez, a 16-year-old sophomore at East High School in Denver, said it was difficult to fathom the significance of a man who to her seemed as much a figure of the distant past as Hitler.

But after her mother had excitedly announced the news to the family on Sunday night, Margaret had quickly checked her Facebook page. All her friends were posting about Bin Laden’s death, and she wanted to join them.

She wrote one word: “Dead!”

Student Project: Growing Up In the Shadow of 9/11



By Chris Gordon
5/4/2011

The reaction to President Barack Obama's Announcement that Osama bin Laden was killed drew crowds of cheering people to the White House -- many who are called "millennials" -- a generation that has grown up in the shadow of 9/11.

A new report and survey compiled by students at **American University's School of Communication** examines the impact of the terror attack on people between the ages of 18 and 29.

"The majority of the millennials who took our survey said that they were affected but that they don't live in fear of another attack," said Rachel Boehm, a graduate student who worked as a reporter and photographer on the report.

"Growing up in the Shadow of 9/11" features voices of students from diverse backgrounds. "On Sept. 11, I remember I was in my math class in fifth grade," one said.

"I remember watching the news together with my parents and it was really confusing at first to see it was Muslims responsible and I was not used to seeing myself in the media before then," a Muslim-American said.

"Every time I see it, I get chills," said AU student Samantha Miller, an editor and reporter on the project. "It just reminds me of a lot of the things I felt growing up in the shadow of 9/11."

The report was posted online just days before the killing of Osama bin Laden so we asked the reporters what they would add if they could write one more chapter.

"Does the Millennial generation really feel that this is the turning point, the end of a chapter?" Boehm said. "What do they think will come next?"

For the journalism students, it was a chance to examine their own feelings about 9/11 by surveying others. It is the defining moment for the millennial generation much like the assassination of President John F. Kennedy or Vietnam was for their parents.

[Click to watch video](#)



AU Student Participates in Tribute to Civil Rights Freedom Ride

May 9, 2011



Fifty years ago, a brave young group set off from D.C. in a series of buses headed to the South, determined to end segregation.

Their actions helped change the course of history.

And today some of those same brave people recreated the Freedom Rides for a younger generation.

From across the country, 40 select college students boarded a bus Sunday in downtown D.C. with several older travel companions to retrace the steps of a remarkable movement that changed history.

"It's more than an extraordinary feeling," said Bob Singleton, a Freedom Rider. "It's a dream come true."

Nearly 50 years ago to the day, black and white activists known as Freedom Riders dared to desegregate interstate bus travel.

"I definitely would not be here were it not for the sacrifices of the Freedom Riders," said Tania Smith, an **American University** student. "And I owe a lot to them."

And at the front of this bus were original Freedom Riders like Dion Diamond from the District, Bob and Helen Singleton from California, and Joan Mulholland of Arlington.

"I felt like a soldier going into foreign country, into enemy territory," Helen Singleton said.

"It's good to know that we were able to make a difference," Mulholland said.

Mulholland, Diamond, and the Singletons were all arrested and imprisoned in Mississippi for challenging racist "Jim Crow" policies.

Freedom Riders were beaten in Birmingham and nearly burned alive in Anniston. But their tenacity prevailed. And thanks to them and thousands of others, civil rights laws were eventually enacted.

In 1961 Freedom Riders were greeted by armed guards, paddy wagons and fists. In 2011, at stop one, the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, they were welcomed as heroes.

The hope from here is to motivate a new generation to continue the fight for social justice.

The deeper into the South they go, the more lessons the college students can expect to learn.

"By the time they get to Montgomery I want them to know what it was like," Rip Patton said.

The PBS-sponsored 2011 Student Freedom Ride ends May 16 in New Orleans.

[Click to watch video](#)

For educational and informational purposes only.

The Miami Herald

‘You Can’t Defeat Hate With Hate’

By Leonard Pitts Jr.
May 10, 2011

GREENSBORO, NC - She has never seen the picture before and it stops her.

Tania Smith, a Haiti-born, 20-year-old **American University student**, is participating in the 2011 Student Freedom Ride, commemorating the series of rolling desegregation protests that changed the country in 1961. Today, the tour has brought her to this city and, specifically, to the “Hall of Shame” of its International Civil Rights Museum.

She has walked down that hall past the photo of a thing that used to be a man, now burned to charcoal, past the photo of the men hanging in the tree as onlookers laugh and point from below, past the photo of the little girl with the swollen face and gauze patches over her eyes.

It is the last picture that stops her, Emmett Till in his casket.

Dozens of times I’ve seen it, and it does not stop me any more, this image of a 14-year-old lynching victim from Chicago who went to Mississippi - a cocky, handsome black boy and came back a misshapen obscenity, bloated from the waters of the Talahatchie River, barely recognizable as something once human.

The picture no longer takes me by surprise. I am used to it.

Tania Smith is not. She stands there in the darkness of the hall, weeping. One of her fellow students offers her a tissue. She accepts without a word.

Later, she talks about that moment and the words tumble out of her like live coals, as if she cannot make her mouth move fast enough to express the anguish of her thoughts.

“To see how much hate, you know, was involved in that era, the leaders and the activists of the Civil Rights Movement, they weren’t just fighting against injustice, they weren’t just fighting against institutional laws of segregation.

They were fighting against hate, such a hate that enabled man to be able to beat and kill and shoot his fellow man. Like, to be able to look at another human being and have no remorse of killing him just because of the color of his skin, to me, it’s just mind-blowing to have that much hate.”

She understands now, she says, why the architects of the civil rights movement chose nonviolent protest as their weapon.

“You can’t defeat hate with hate. And so, the nonviolence movement, they projected love because love balances hate. Look at what hatred got us. Those faces in that room are the consequences of hatred.”

The experience of traveling through the racial history of the American South, of seeing the corpse of Emmett Till, has, she says, left her burning with a desire to be an agent of change. When she gets back to school, she wants to organize a campus wide dialogue “to confront Islamophobia, homophobia” and “any other kinds of prejudice that we might have.”

It is always hard to watch when the bad thing you take for granted becomes the bad thing someone else has just discovered. It is always difficult to see a young person come face to face with how mean the world can be, to bear witness as the native optimism and faith of youth runs aground on the shores of The Way Things Are. To do so is to watch something innocent stolen away and know that it will never return.

When we are lucky, though, the young person responds to that theft as Smith did – not with defeat, but with a determination whose sheer ferocity makes you wonder when you got so old.

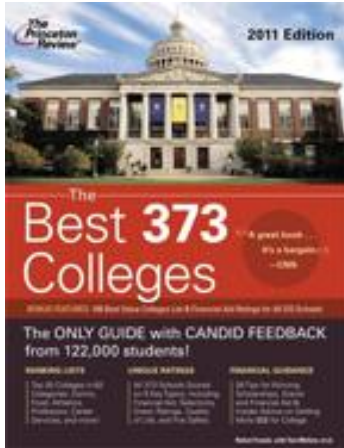
“He was so young,” she says of Till. “It just shows...they didn’t even care. This was just a child. And his face, the way that he was scarred, the agony of his mother, I couldn’t even imagine having lost a 14-year-old child in such a brutal manner.”

She is right. Some things you should never get used to.



AU's Students Ranked as Most Politically Active

August 2, 2010



The *Princeton Review* named **American University** the most politically active college students for the third time in five years. The Career Center was also recognized, earning a #15 ranking. AU's rankings were highlighted in WashingtonBusinessJournal.com, [WTOP 103.5 FM](http://WTOP103.5FM.com) and [WUSA 9 News Now](http://WUSA9.com).



10 Universities Producing the Most Interns

By Brian Burnsed
March 1, 2011

The number of people receiving bachelor's degrees in the U.S. has grown by more than 30 percent over the past decade, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Meanwhile, the most recent Census indicates that the population grew by only 9.2 percent during the same time period. Given that the growth of college graduates is outpacing population growth more than threefold, those who don't wish to seek a graduate or professional degree need to take extra steps while in college to set themselves apart from their peers. The most logical step to take? Secure at least one internship before you graduate.

Most college departments preach the importance of internships, and some even require that students complete an internship before they graduate. Journalism students, for instance, are often encouraged to write for a local publication and business students can jump start their careers by spending a summer working for an investment bank. At schools where undergraduate populations can be in the tens of thousands, however, it can be difficult to impart this message to every student.

Of the 692 schools that provided internship data to *U.S. News*, 36.8 percent of 2009 graduates took part in an internship at some point during their studies, on average. The average is lower—32.8 percent—among the 81 national universities that provided the data to *U.S. News*. There are some large universities that stand out, however. Highly ranked schools like the University of Pennsylvania and Duke University claim to have 90 and 75 percent of students completing internships before graduating, respectively. The University of Pittsburgh, a public university that awarded more than 3,800 bachelor's degrees in the 2008-09 academic year, reported that 72 percent of those students worked as interns before graduating.

Numerous liberal arts colleges require all students to partake in at least one internship before graduating, so only national universities were considered for this list. Of the national universities surveyed, 178 did not offer internship statistics and were not included in the data analysis for this list. The table below highlights the 10 national universities with the highest percentage of 2009 graduates who worked as interns at some point during their studies.

National University	Bachelor's Degrees Awarded in 2008-09	Percentage Graduating with Internship Experience
University of Pennsylvania	2,831	90
Colorado School of Mines	620	84
American University	1,384	81
Seton Hall University	1,017	76
Duke University	1,625	75
Fordham University	1,885	75
University of Pittsburgh	3,856	72
George Washington University	2,485	68
Johns Hopkins University	1,487	66
Florida Institute of Technology	449	65



JASON HORNICK

As a producer at National Public Radio, Heidi Glenn creates online multimedia packages to complement on-air stories.

All Together Now

Multimedia journalist Heidi Glenn learned to merge news, video, photography and tech

Transitions

At the University of Pittsburgh in the early 1990s, Heidi Glenn covered music and movies for the campus newspaper. She also DJ'd for fun. "In retrospect," she muses, "I was building up to a multimedia job at NPR."

First came a single-media job on Capitol Hill. Upon moving to D.C., she became a proofreader of tax-related news stories and toyed with the idea of grad school. Two years later she moved up to reporter at a magazine called *Tax Notes* — "the bible in its field but obscure to everyone else," as she puts it — and spent a decade interviewing lawmakers, covering hearings, pushing a microphone at presidential contenders.

It was a heady life even if "the topics could make people's eyes glaze over," Glenn says. "I found

that the tiny provisions that most people didn't care about were where the juicy stories were — like, who got the goodies here?"

Still, by 2003-04, her expertise in print was looking anachronistic. She enjoyed amateur photography; was that an avenue? Her news judgment was good; what else might she do with it? More and more, jobs that sounded appealing wanted digital skills. In 2005, Glenn found the answer to her old grad-school question at an American University School of Communication open house.

"The coolest thing about this program is our ability to be nimble about what's needed right now," says Amy Eisman, director of AU's master's program in interactive journalism (202-885-2040; American.edu/soc/journalism).

Instructors "are at the top of their field," she says, with backgrounds as varied as *USA Today*, the Sunlight Foundation, the F, PBS, NPR and cutting-edge blogs. The program's 10 courses cover "everything needed to be a contemporary journalist," from building

a website and Web writing to photography, legal aspects, multimedia and video journalism. There's a seminar in public affairs, and the last class culminates in an online newsmagazine.

Designed for working adults, the IJ program meets from 9 to 5 most Saturdays for 20 months. Class structure varies: lectures, Q&As, speakers via Skype, assignments such as "go report a story, then come back and make a video about it." Glenn fell in love with audio slideshows and wrote a paper on their emergence. For her Flash class, she created a show on an H Street upholsterer.

Though most students, like Glenn, live around Washington, some commute from Pennsylvania, New York or the Eastern Shore. About 40 percent have no journalism background; students include White House correspondents, tech workers, researchers, photographers and some who do advocacy work. Tuition is \$40,440. The program's next open house is May 14.

"Ours is the only master's program that brings digital and journalism together," Eisman says.



(See next page)

getting ahead

Most graduates do some sort of Web journalism. Some teach; some start in journalism or advocacy or advance their careers; some move into leadership. Entry-level work at a news site can fetch a salary in the \$30,000s; with experience, the \$60,000s. With experience, a Web developer or designer can start at \$75,000 to \$80,000.

Glenn left reporting only upon taking a job at NPR as national producer for digital news in fall 2007. Her boss found her news experience an asset, but “the AU degree made my resume stand out from the pack,” Glenn says. Plus, “it’s beneficial to be submerged in the academic world of your profession — it gives you a new perspective and contacts.”

Her new role is to build a multimedia experience to complement

“The coolest thing about this program is our ability to be nimble about what’s needed right now.”

— AMY EISMAN, DIRECTOR OF AU’S MASTER’S PROGRAM IN INTERACTIVE JOURNALISM.

certain stories that listeners hear. For instance, in early 2010, journalist Susan Stamberg aired a report on 1,100 young women who flew military aircraft stateside during World War II. The report, on the occasion of some survivors receiving the Congressional Gold Medal, included “remarkable stories of heroism and dedication,” Glenn says. To accompany it, Glenn helped compile photos and essays on 21 pilots, a six-decade timeline and an audio slideshow with one pilot’s color photos from the era.

The eight-month effort just

won a White House News Photographers Association award and a Gracie Award from the Alliance for Women in Media. “This shows how far the NPR newsroom has come in melding the Web part with the traditional radio part,” she says.

It also shows how far Glenn has come from her traditional scribbling in a reporter’s notebook. Just since she was hired, NPR has more original content online. “With a mandate to be creative with stories people want to read and see,” she says, “the sky’s the limit here.”

ELLEN RYAN

The New York Times

Public Broadcaster Is to Sell Current, a Trade Publication

By Elizabeth Jensen
December 13, 2010

Current, the newspaper that has covered the public broadcasting business every two weeks for three decades, is leaving the hands of its longtime owner, WNET.org, the New York City public broadcaster. The board of WNET.org last week approved an agreement to sell Current to the **American University School of Communication**, whose board has also approved the move.

The change is expected to take place in the new year, once a final contract is signed. The trade publication, which is based outside Washington, was founded in 1980 by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, but in 1982 it shifted to the Educational Broadcasting Corporation, the forerunner of WNET.org.

Neal Shapiro, WNET.org's president and chief executive, said he found it odd for his organization to publish a paper that covered WNET itself. "It always had the potential to be a problem," he said. American University "seemed like the perfect place" for Current, Mr. Shapiro said. "They are all about thinking about the next generation of journalism."

Larry Kirkman, the school's dean, said the school had "become a laboratory for the future of public media," helped by initiatives like the Center for Social Media and the Investigative Reporting Workshop, which produces for PBS's "Frontline." He added that he hoped students would become more engaged with public media with Current at the university.

Current, which has a circulation of about 4,000 and about 29,000 unique visitors monthly to its Web site, will remain editorially independent, Mr. Kirkman said, and will continue as a trade journal but also will "play an even greater role in informing and shaping the future of public broadcasting." American University plans to expand Current's online and digital presence, he said.

Because the deal is not final, neither side would discuss the price, although Kellie Specter, a WNET.org spokeswoman, said the broadcast company would receive "nominal compensation" for the publication, which lost money in the last couple of years.

Mr. Shapiro said WNET did not sell Current for the revenue the sale would bring, but because his company did not have the resources to shepherd a trade publication "while trying to run a multimedia company."

The Washington Post

College Presidents Taste Life Outside Their Offices

By Jenna Johnson and Daniel de Vise
July 12, 2010

In his three years as president of George Washington University, Steven Knapp has tried nearly everything to bond with undergraduates.

He moved onto campus, right across the street from a freshman dorm known for its party culture. He hired a graduate student to tell him which events to attend. He helped students haul their stuff into the dorms, created a Facebook account, danced at parties, judged a pie-eating contest and drummed with a basketball player.

Still, many students thought he was boring and out of touch.

They kept comparing the quiet academic to his gregarious predecessor, Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, who worked the campus like a politician for 19 years and wrote a book called "Big Man on Campus."

A generation ago, it was typical for college presidents to be stuffy and hard-to-approach chief executives, the type who inspired the Dean Wormer character in "Animal House."

Many of the barriers separating a college's top-paid leaders from its tuition-paying students have disappeared in the past decade. E-mail, text messaging and social media give students unprecedented access to a chief executive, who can no longer hide behind a secretary and an office door.

Today, many students -- and their increasingly over-involved parents -- want a personal bond with the president. Instead of occupying the president's office, more students are stopping by to chat. They want to be friends -- and not just on Facebook.

In an effort to be more cool, presidents across the United States are starring in YouTube videos, serving hot dogs, starting blogs, hosting parties and eating with the masses in dorms.

Knapp's big break came in February, when he stopped by a nighttime snowball fight between GWU and Georgetown University, surprising student organizers.

"It was like a Civil War battle. We were all lined up," Knapp recalled. "I think I was a target, because I got pretty pelted."



Neil Kerwin, president of American University, attends the 2008 All American Barbecue, an event for students held each fall at the beginning of the academic year.

After victory was declared, Knapp made a speech and canceled classes for the next day. Suddenly, he had some street cred.

"I was worried that he was going to get pushed or trampled," said organizer Kyle Boyer, who graduated in May. "I was very skeptical about it, but he really, unprompted, took a very active role in the snowball fight. He really pumped people up."

The student newspaper commended Knapp for attending. A commenter on a Georgetown student blog wrote: "Steven Knapp sounds like an awesome guy. Would [Georgetown President John J.] DeGioia ever condescend to come to a snowball fight?"

"Students expect a kind of face-to-face interaction that wasn't around when I was an undergraduate," said Knapp, who attended Yale in the 1970s and rarely saw the university president. "There is this expectation that you will always be out there and always be available."

Said Terry Hartle, senior vice president of the American Council on Education, an association representing presidents: "If you wanted to speak to your college president a generation ago, you either waited for them to come out to their car at night, or you made an appointment and you saw them a week later."

(See next page)

*(Washington Post
Continued from previous page)*

The gestures that win students' hearts don't have to be grand, usually just genuine and unscripted, several presidents said.

Edward Ayers, president of the University of Richmond, deejayed at his 2008 inauguration party. Wesleyan University President Michael Roth played piano at an open-mic night.

President David Hodge of Miami University in Ohio formed an intramural broomball team.

University of California President Mark Yudof tweets several times a day, usually about higher education, but occasionally about celebrity deaths and parking problems.

Shenandoah University President Tracy Fitzsimmons allowed nursing students to watch the birth of her twins.

Tufts University President Lawrence Bacow serves hot chocolate to students sledding down the president's lawn. He also offers to meet with every student treated for alcohol poisoning, since an undergraduate was found passed out on that lawn.

At Macalester College in Minnesota, students call President Brian C. Rosenberg "B-Ro." He isn't sure how it started, but he went with it. He also agreed to star in a university-produced Presidents' Day YouTube video that went viral in February (and, more importantly, got a positive shout-out from the student newspaper).

Meeting expectations

Getting along with students is sometimes overlooked during searches for presidents, Rosenberg said, but "it's something that's very important to determining the success of a presidency."

Students expect more of presidents at a time when presidents have never been busier with fundraising, alumni relations, balancing the budget and branching into international education. Parents, too, have come to expect more personal attention.

The Rev. Brian Linnane, president of Loyola University Maryland, said he thinks that spiraling tuition has spawned a "consumer mentality" among parents: "I'm paying so much, I want X, Y and Z, and I want the president to be on it." He recalled one blistering note from a parent who arrived late to a popular campus event and was unable to find parking: "It was like somehow we failed her."

And it's not just more demanding students and parents -- presidents themselves have evolved.

Many sitting presidents are baby boomers, reared in the anti-establishment '60s, uneasy in suits.

They oversee flattened organizational structures, teach their own classes, hold office hours and sometimes seem more comfortable lunching with a group of underclassmen than at a table of well-heeled donors.

"Interacting with students keeps me sane," said Freeman Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland Baltimore County. "It reminds me why I continue to do this work."

These presidents "are a far less formal generation than those that came before," said Leonard Steinhorn, a professor in the **School of Communication at American University**. They are the same men and women who, as college students in the 1960s and 1970s, "fought against hierarchy, questioned authority, didn't feel that they had to dress a certain way to express expertise."

AU President Neil Kerwin tells students about how when he was an undergraduate at American in the 1960s and '70s, he "many, many times threatened to occupy the president's office -- and now I finally have."

"All of us came out of that experience," Kerwin said. "Being remote as a college president? If they hope for that, then they are in the wrong job."

How to be a president

College presidents take leadership seminars on "the importance of walking around," said Loyola's Linnane, who is a regular presence on the Baltimore campus and on the elliptical machines at the student fitness center.

C.D. (Dan) Mote, the departing University of Maryland president, was known for telling students at the freshman convocation, "I want to shake the hand of every single student, every single year," an invitation that tended to slow his pace on the 37,000-student campus.

Students can be a hard crowd to please, and one appearance at a snowball fight is not always enough to keep them happy through four years of college. GWU's Knapp was again under fire from students when he announced last month that he couldn't make it to three of the five freshman orientation sessions.

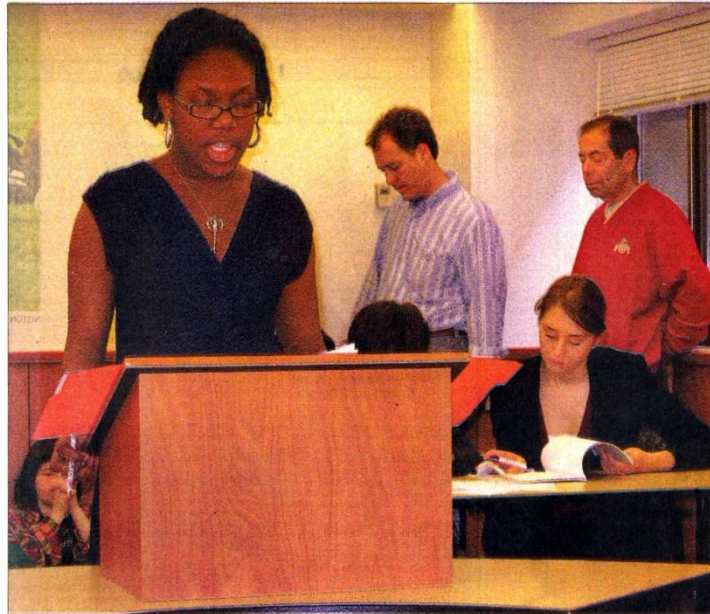
The GW Hatchet published a staff editorial that asked, "Are students his priority?" A columnist advised freshmen to savor the occasion if they did get to hear Knapp speak: "The closest you'll come to interacting with our president again is the sternly worded letter you'll receive when you leave some empty Natty cans on his front lawn late one night."

Knapp rearranged his calendar so that he would miss only one session.

The Washington Post

Getting a hands-on lesson about the U.S. Constitution

November 22, 2009



"I think, 'What if I was in that situation?'" Ebony Stewart, 15, of Southeast says of the case she handled, which focused on whether a principal was justified in ordering nurses to strip-search a female student.

Teens in American U. program argue cases in moot court

BY JAMES HOHMANN

Ebony Stewart, 15, thought her school's constitutional law class sounded "kind of boring," but she needed an elective. A few months into it, however, she's considering becoming a lawyer.

On Saturday, the Southeast Washington sophomore was one of 65 students from a dozen area high schools who spent the day at American University's Washington College of Law arguing the merits of a fictional case that hinged on whether a principal was justified in ordering nurses to strip-search a female student.

"Students are not entitled to full Fourth Amendment protections," Stewart, a student at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, told a three-judge moot court panel. "She was wearing

baggy clothes. She might have had the drugs stashed on her person somewhere."

For the past few months, Stewart has studied the Bill of Rights with Colby Redmond, a 25-year-old law student at American who is part of a year-long fellows program that teaches teens about the U.S. Constitution.

Their class started with a lesson about unreasonable search and seizure (Fourth Amendment) and moved on to free speech and freedom of the press (First Amendment). Next up is the 14th, which covers equal protection under the law. "The fact is a lot of high school kids love to argue, and we channel that aggressive energy into constitutional learning," said law professor Jamie B. Raskin, who founded the Marshall-Brennan project in 1999.

Raskin, a Democrat who represents Silver Spring and Takoma Park in the Maryland Senate, wrote a textbook that delves into all the landmark Supreme Court cases affecting students' rights.

The class and the competitions force students to grapple with tough issues, to defend points of view that might have never occurred to them.

"I'm just 15, and [the fictional girl in the case] is 14," Stewart said. "I think, 'What if I was in that situation?' It's really hard to be, like: 'The school is right. She's wrong.' I got through it, though."

The hypothetical case on Saturday's docket sounded similar to one the Supreme Court ruled on in June, when justices voted 8 to 1 that school officials violated the rights of a 13-year-old Arizona student when they strip-searched her on suspicion she might be hiding ibuprofen in her underwear.

One of the judges at the moot court was Barbara Marrin, a federal trial lawyer who taught in the program four years ago.

She told the would-be lawyers not to get flustered by her tough questioning. "Just keep coming back to your arguments," she said.

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Barefoot Coach Brings Awareness to DC Charity, Samaritan's Feet

January 19, 2011



Jeff Jones, **head coach of AU men's basketball**, coached the Eagles-Army game barefoot in support of Samaritan's Feet, a non-profit that provides shoes for the poor. WRC-NBC4, WTTG-FOX5, WJLA-ABC7, TBD-Channel8, and WUSA-CBS9 profiled Jones for his efforts to bring attention to the cause. Earlier in the week, Coach Jones and the team did volunteer work on behalf of Samaritan's Feet which was covered by Comcast Sports.



[Click to watch video](#)

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Networking Plays Big Role in Landing Hill Job

By Rachael Bade
April 22, 2011

Graduation approaches and you're freaking out about landing that first job. Just remember, your frantic self is not alone.

American University's Career Center counseled more than 5,000 students in their job searches last year — a bulk of them political science undergraduates or policy wonks hoping to work on Capitol Hill. In a recent interview, Chris Hughes, career adviser for students in the School of Public Affairs, offered some tips on résumés and securing a Hill gig.

Rumor has it that most Washington human resources departments ignore the applications of people living outside the Beltway. Do résumés really need a D.C. address to be considered?

For Capitol Hill jobs, probably not. To government recruiters, it's not a big deal that applicants have D.C. addresses as maybe it would be to the private sector in this city.

What's most valuable is having relevant experience: completing an internship on the Hill or working on campaigns or for advocacy groups.

More so than living in D.C., these experiences are viable assets. For the most part, Members hire staffers who have interned or had some other experience working in Congressional offices previously.

One- or two-page résumé?

If you've spent years working in the legislative field, you can get by with a two-page résumé, but recent graduates should only have a one-page résumé. They can still have solid, substantive information on just one page.

How early (before or after graduation) should upcoming graduates start applying for jobs?

There are instances where employers are looking for someone to start immediately and can't wait for students to finish school to fill the vacancy, but students definitely should start applications before graduating. They should start exploring their options during the beginning of their last semester of college (at the latest) because it's not unrealistic to say the job-search process takes months.

What's your best advice for someone looking to work on the Hill?

Get Hill experience. Period. Do an internship with your Member or for a committee. That's a necessity not only for experience — it also allows students to establish a network even before they start their job searches.

Studies show that 70 percent of all jobs (not just Hill positions) are never actually posted online. People find them through networking. That's why I also encourage students to not only complete internships on the Hill but to network and conduct informational interviews with people on the Hill. And maintain those contacts even after the internship is over.

These people will be more helpful in finding jobs than websites.

Is it better to tackle an unpaid or poorly paid internship at your dream employer or take the paid job at a less ideal office?

I think people should pick the job where they know they'll be happy, but sometimes it's important to be realistic. On a short-term basis, though it might not be palatable to do so, taking an unpaid internship might be necessary to reach a long-term goal of working on the Hill.

This happened with hopeful Republican staffers when the Democrats were in control of both chambers — there were few full-time job opportunities with Republicans. Students at the time had to take internships in Republican offices to get their foot in the door until things got better.

Now, it's the opposite — there are fewer paid positions for students looking to work for Democrats, so some post-graduates are now doing internships in Democratic offices to build their résumés in the hope that there are increased Democratic job opportunities after the 2012 elections.

I think a lot of this can be sidestepped by early planning with internships during college. Internships with any Member on Capitol Hill or with lobbying groups or other government agencies can build your résumé to jump-start the job search.