Covering a Century
Selected covers from the Alumni Review's first 100 years reflect our culture and tell our history as a college and community.

Food for Thought
Before farmers' markets, organic agriculture and seasonal produce became mainstream, two alumni set out to change the way consumers shop for food.

Victory at Sea
The story of the large World War II ship that was named for little Williams College.
Williams is so strong today because its leaders in the past were adept at dealing with the present while planning for the future. That balance is especially important now, as the drop in financial markets and the prospect of a long recession necessarily capture our attention. The letter I sent after the most recent board meeting spoke of the ways we intend to cut spending in order to protect our commitments to financial aid and to current faculty, staff and students while ensuring our endowment will retain its value for their future counterparts. You can read the letter at williamsawc.org/0XHMM/.

The time calls not for panic but prudence. Williams heads into this global economic downturn with around the 10th-highest endowment per student in the country and should emerge from it roughly the same. In addition, history shows that financial crises can present great opportunities to those alert enough to see them and strong enough to act. In the case of Williams, that might be the chance to have an even greater pick than usual of top faculty prospects.

The steps we take now will help determine how we emerge from the economic turmoil, and since emerge from it we will, it’s important that we continue to plan for the future.

In recent columns, I’ve written about the College’s 2020 Project—the effort to identify the trends likely to affect Williams over the next dozen years and how best to respond to them. In addition to changes in U.S. demographics, in globalization and in the recruitment and retention of faculty, which I wrote about earlier, the remaining two themes involve technology and environmental sustainability.

While heartened by the College’s progress toward its goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (williamsawc.org/QQWVC), we know that more needs to be done to seize opportunities for Williams to grow as a leader in this vital field.

We’re combining the academic resources of the Center for Environmental Studies and the practical focus of the new Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives to advance on several fronts. We perform an environmental assessment for every significant capital project, and our newest buildings are designed to earn LEED certification. We’ve begun to tighten up our traditional buildings in ways that reduce their energy needs yet retain their New England charm.

To harness student energy, we now have the Thoreau Fellows—students trained to work with faculty, staff, architects and engineers to apply green design practices to College projects. The Zilkha Center hires student eco-reps to work on projects such as improving recycling and investigating a possible bike-sharing program. We also continue to explore possibilities for more renewable energy and for more involvement with sustainable food practices. Most of these efforts have the added advantage of saving money, now or in the future.

Prospects for greater use of information technology are also exciting. Innovations in that field promote creativity in teaching and learning. Faculty can incorporate new technologies to explain concepts and challenge students to think and express themselves in a variety of media—increasingly important skills in the 21st century. The key is to support faculty in acquiring new skills and to back them up in a timely way when they hit a glitch. The Center for Media Initiatives in the new Sawyer Library will be an important locus for much of this work.

More broadly, we need to take greater advantage of how technology can link Williams with the world. Students and faculty can now engage with resources and people far from Williamstown. Perhaps nothing enlivens a discussion more than drawing into it different global perspectives. At the same time, we can use technology to share our own academic resources more effectively and widely.

The possible silver lining in financial crises is that they force all of us to think harder about what’s most important. Everything we do at Williams advances our mission, but some things do so more centrally. By prioritizing those more clearly, while still planning for the future, we can best position the College to continue providing the finest possible liberal arts education. It’s certainly the case that the world has never needed more than it does now the public service that Williams provides.

—Morty Schapiro
A gem of a footnote on p. 60 of the 1935 autobiography And Gladly Teach: Reminiscences, by Bliss Perry, answers several questions encircling the famous remark by James A. Garfield about Mark Hopkins and the log, noted in "Quotable Williams" (September 2008). Perry, Class of 1881, a young student of the 78-year-old Hopkins, Class of 1824, writes: "This famous phrase, as originally uttered by General Garfield at a Williams dinner at Delmonico's in 1872 did not contain the word 'log.' Washington Gladden, who heard the speech, reported that Garfield's actual words were: 'A pine bench with Mark Hopkins at one end of it and me at the other is a good enough college for me.'" Perry's source is Theodore Clarke Smith's Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield (1925).

Garfield was talking about Hopkins and himself. During his two years at Williams, Garfield was "a favorite of President Hopkins," according to The Life, Speeches and Public Services of Gen. James A. Garfield of Ohio (1880). Washington Gladden, Class of 1859, known for "The Mountains," also attended the Delmonico's dinner, according to the Frederick Rudolph '42 book Mark Hopkins and the Log (1956).

Perry valued precision in writing. Besides being a renowned teacher, he was respected as a serious man of letters. He wrote many books and for 10 years edited The Atlantic Monthly. O. Henry was among many Perry admirers.

—Ernie Imhoff '59, Baltimore, Md.

Robert Smith '55 did a wonderful job capturing the man who was for so many of us the "first face" of Williams ("Admitting Success," June 2008). Fred Copeland's '35 warmth, his questions testing me in a friendly way and his enthusiasm were a bit overwhelming. But my appreciation for the quality of the man and his school grew immeasurably when at our next stop, Amherst, his opposite number had the keenness about his school and zest for his job of a giant sloth. Even the usual suspects farther East could not hold a candle to Fred.

I have one small correction. Though I only stayed two years I remember it well: Shortly after we arrived on campus Dean Copeland told the whole freshman class that we were the first to have a majority of public high school students, by the smallest of margins (less than 1 percent). He seemed very pleased. Being a member of that first majority, I have never forgotten it.


Oehrle '62, Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Sheff Otis '98 "Seven under Seven" (March 2008) is the best article I've read in the Alumni Review in years. What an antidote to the usual "here's what I've accomplished since graduation" thinking that so many of us are too often guilty of.

—Paula Butturini '73, Paris, France
Quite the Crowd

by Caroline Cretti '06

I was overwhelmed. To my left, a dozen women, decked out in glorified bathing suits; to my right, hundreds of people on Boston's Mass Avenue Bridge blowing by in a blur of camera flashes and white noise. Straight ahead—probably the most intimidating part. I was 20 minutes into the 26.2-mile Women's Olympic Trials Marathon. There was a long way to go.

I turned my eyes from the chaos to the ground and tried to calm the rising panic. For the next mile, I ignored what (I am told) was an amazing view of downtown Boston and the Charles for the black asphalt of Memorial Drive. Suddenly I heard my name.

I looked up, and there was a person in purple cow-patterned spandex screaming my name—no, not just one person, two! Three! It took me a minute to figure it out. A group of alumni from the Williams Nordic ski team was cheering madly on the side of the road, clad in their famous cow-print uniforms. I smiled to acknowledge their bravery in wearing them in public (though they probably had been waiting for an excuse to break them out since their last ski race)—and spent the next mile and a half unable to wipe the grin from my face.

The streets were packed with Ephs, and a few very special spectators had chalked the road with encouraging words. I was literally surrounded by Williams pride and support. With each purple chalking, familiar shout or sign from even the most unexpected alum, I felt myself relax—light and ready to race.

I was reminded of an experience six years earlier. Right after my high school graduation cap toss, I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned to see a curious man who introduced himself as Gus Ball, Williams Class of 1942. (I soon realized that was a common habit of Ephs: state your name, shake a hand, give your class year.)

He had come to graduation just to invite my family and me to his home for dessert later that summer to "tell you about Williams." Then he gripped my arm and said, "We are just so proud of you."

At that moment he introduced an immediate, unmitigated new community—maybe "we" was "Williams," and Gus had simply and naturally taken it upon himself to stand as representative.

Dessert, of course, was more than cake or ice cream, and after an hour of regaling us with Williams history, Gus Ball cleared his throat.

"I thought I would sing for you before we ate," he said. My parents and I exchanged quick looks, but without hesitation, the tiny 82-year-old man launched into "The Mountains."

A capella has always made me a little uncomfortable, so when Gus started belting, "The mountains! We greet them with a song" alone in his living room, I could barely keep it together. But just as I gulped down a snort, his voice cracked. I looked up and saw a few tears stream down his face.

"Let me just finish the last chorus," he said. That's when I knew Williams was going to be different.

The memory came back to me in a rush around mile seven of the marathon. I now know what makes Williams unique: its alumni, who will have the picture of themselves at Hopkins Gate placed right next to the one in the Alps with the 10th Mountain Division. Who will actually wear full-bodied, spotted purple spandex in the middle of Boston to make sure you see them cheering. Who will sneak onto one of the busiest roads in Massachusetts to write your name in purple chalk, prompting others to ask, "Wow, are you the one from Williams? You've got quite the crowd."

"Yep," I reply. "That's me. I'm from Williams." And tears come to my eyes. Gus would be so proud.

Caroline Cretti '06 hopes to give the Williams fans another shot at cheering her on for the 2012 Olympics.
SCENE & HERD

BLACK CAUCUS VISITS PURPLE VALLEY

"The election was like the Emancipation Proclamation, like your birthday and like the mountaintop speech by Martin Luther King. A burden was lifted off our shoulders. The world was ours," said U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas (third from left) during a Nov. 17 discussion in Chapin Hall moderated by 60 Minutes correspondent Lesley Stahl. The talk, which included Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick and Williams students, was part of an evening with members of the Congressional Black Caucus and initiated by Bernard Moore, visiting lecturer in political science. For video of the event, visit williamsawc.org/ORKMG/.

SCHAPIRO TO BECOME PRESIDENT OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

President Morton Owen Schapiro announced in December that he will become president of Northwestern University on Sept. 1.

At Williams, Schapiro has helped significantly expand access and affordability and has overseen the most ambitious fundraising effort in College history, The Williams Campaign.

They Said:

“The general feeling is that we’re in this together, we believe in the guiding principles of the institution and, as a community, we’ll work together to rethink the way we do business.” —Martha Tetrautl, human resources director, on campus-wide response to the College’s efforts to reduce operating expenses. Record, 11.19.08

“We recognize that the language may not be as upsetting and as fraught as the racist slur used in Willy E last spring, but we don’t think it has a place here.” —Karen Merrill, dean of the College, on offensive writing and graffiti discovered on and near the door of an Asian-American first-year student’s room. Record, 10.29.08

“We want to talk about challenges that may not be immediately apparent. We want to provide a forum for everyone and [deal with] the disparity between what is and what we want Williams to be.” —Danielle Selzer ’10, Claiming Williams Steering Committee member, on the goals for the Feb. 5 all-day event designed to generate dialogue about inclusiveness and community at the College. Record, 11.12.08

“Twenty of my 30 years in academe have been spent at Williams, and I’ve loved virtually every minute,” Schapiro stated in a letter to the College community. "The past nine as president have been the greatest honor and privilege of my professional life. But with the completion of our comprehensive campaign this month and my strong feeling that institutions need new leadership every decade or so, I think the timing is right.”

Greg Avis ’80, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, who will lead the Presidential Search Committee, said Williams is in an “excellent position to make a smooth transition over the coming year.” He added, "We deeply appreciate the outstanding leadership Morty has provided... Williams is better positioned today because of initiatives he has expertly led."

EPHS ADDRESS FINANCIAL CRISIS

With news of the world financial markets becoming more dire each day, Williams brought together a panel of faculty, staff and alumni in October to share their expertise and prognoses.

Before a packed Chapin Hall, the panelists agreed that the downturn was cyclical and expressed concern with government’s response. "What we’ve had is 18 months of 'Whack-a-Mole' regulatory practices," Cadogan Management principal Paul Isaac ’72 said.

For more information on any of these stories, visit www.williams.edu and enter the topic into the search field.
THE WILLIAMS CAMPAIGN WRAPS UP

The Williams Campaign, the most ambitious fundraising effort in the College's history, came to an end in December, far exceeding its $400 million goal. Though the numbers had yet to be finalized by the deadline for this Review, it is already clear that tens of thousands of campaign gifts—including all gifts to the Alumni Fund and Parents Fund—have transformed the Williams experience. A larger faculty (and smaller classes), triple the number of tutorials, new team-taught and interdisciplinary classes, rigorous writing and quantitative reasoning course requirements, vastly expanded need-based financial aid, residential life initiatives and four new buildings—the Paresky Center, the ’62 Center for Theatre and Dance, and the North and South Academic Buildings—are but a few of the campaign-related successes. Check back for more details in the March 2009 Review.

in The Record. Watch video of the talk at williamsawc.org/OYSJ/. IN MEMORIAM

The College marked the passings of William H. Pierson Jr., the Massachusetts Professor of Art, emeritus, in December, and Edson M. Chick, professor of German, emeritus, in November.

Pierson was the last of the legendary "trinity" of Williams professors who helped awaken in generations of students a lifelong passion for art. He joined the faculty in 1940 and introduced studio courses and the study of photography and American art to the curriculum. He taught art and architecture until his retirement in 1973. He wrote the first three volumes of American Buildings and Their Architects and edited The Buildings of the United States, a 60-volume inventory and analysis of every significant building in the country.

The College honored him by creating the Faison-Pierson-Stoddard Professorship in Art History and with an honorary degree in 2001. Among his survivors are two daughters and two granddaughters.

Chick came to Williams in 1972 to chair the German and Russian department, focusing on 19th- and 20th-century German literature, especially drama. He also was a volunteer official at virtually all home swim meets before retiring in 1992. Among his survivors are his wife Barbara, four children and seven grandchildren.

WOMEN’S SOCCER’S STELLAR SEASON

After an undefeated regular season, top-ranked women’s soccer lost to Wheaton (Ill.) in the NCAA Tournament national semifinal in December.

Williams finished its season 19-1-1 and was the first in conference history to claim back-to-back NESCAC crowns. Michelyne Pinard was named NESCAC Coach of the Year for the second year in a row.

MORRISSEY SETS RUSHING RECORD

Football tailback Brian Morrissey ‘09 broke the Ephs’ career rushing record by gaining 86 yards in a 24-23 victory over Amherst on Nov. 8.

The co-captain entered the season finale 48 yards short of the 2,644-yard set by Fred Storz ’01. Facing the top rushing defense in NESCAC, Morrissey carried the ball 27 times, including a four-yard touchdown run with 12:54 remaining. The run put the Ephs ahead to stay and helped deliver their 46th outright “Little Three” title since 1910.
Like the rest of the country, the Williams campus became more politically engaged than usual in the weeks leading up to Election Day. Among the nearly two-dozen election-related activities and events on the calendar in the fall:

"The Road to 2008: Presidential Politics Today": Arianna Huffington, co-founder and editor-in-chief of The Huffington Post, discussed what she considers to be the diminishing integrity and increasing availability of the media.

"Lipstick Republicans and Why They Make the Left Crazy": Former Massachusetts Gov. Jane Swift addressed the injustices faced by women seeking political office.

"The Failure of the U.S. Electoral System": Michel Balinski '54, professor of the Ecole Polytechnique and CNRS, Paris, talked about whether the U.S. can still claim to be the leading democracy of the world.

"Every Vote Counts? Mathematics and Statistics Colloquium Talk": Ali Barrett '09 proved the Gibbard-Satterthwaite Theorem, which states that in a case of three or more candidates and a finite set of voters, no "reasonable" and manipulation-proof voting method exists.

"The United States of Mathematics Presidential Debate": A fight to the finish between math professors Colin Adams, representing the beacon of geometrical progress as a figure-eight knot of modern topology, and Tom Garrity, defending old-school mathematics as a Euclidean algorithm.

"The NESCAC championship win over Amherst was one of the best wins in the history of the program, and it's a tribute to the amount of heart and pride our players have in the way they compete as a team."
—Women's volleyball coach Frances Vandermeer, after the Ephs defeated the Lord Jeffs 3-1 to secure their 25th victory of the season and the conference crown heading into the NCAA tournament.

"It represents the quality of our wrestlers, and it speaks about our capability. Respect is something you earn, and our guys have carried themselves with integrity."
—Men's wrestling co-coach Rafael Vega, on his team being ranked first in New England and 15th in the nation in preseason polls conducted in late October by the New England Wrestling Association and the Brute/Adidas NWCA Div. III Rankings, respectively.

"You always get surprises in sports, and it's hard to predict what's going to happen at Nationals. But hopefully we've got it figured out so we can do it again next year."
—Cross-country coach Pete Fanwell '73, on the men's and women's squads each placing third at the Nov. 22 National Championships in Hanover, Ind.—the first time both cracked the Top 4 since 1994.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

Just when you thought the elections were over—it's time to cast your ballot for this year's alumni trustee and Tyng Bequest administrator. Questions? Contact alumni.relations@williams.edu or 413.597.4151.
Selected covers from the *Alumni Review*'s first 100 years reflect our culture and tell our history as a college and a community.

FOR COVER CREDITS, VISIT WILLIAMSAWC.ORG/AHNXM/
To mark the Alumni Review’s 100th birthday, we braved dust bunnies, mildew and more than a few paper cuts to explore how the magazine has changed since its inception in February 1909. With a centennial story planned for each 2009 issue of the Review, we wanted to kick off our celebration by looking at our covers.

In its 100 years of existence, the Review rarely has rushed to adopt new fads in imagery or design. Yet its covers reflect a history of photography and magazine editing that is familiar to us from other publications, telling us as much about a changing medium as a changing college.

The Review’s first makeover was in the 1930s, when printing technology allowed the magazine to replace its decades-old spot illustrations with photographs of the campus and its people. Following the conventions of their time, the subjects of these early covers tended to be front and center,

WORLD VIEW

As Williams began to understand itself as an increasingly global institution, so too did the Alumni Review in the images and events depicted on its covers. Left to right: An unprecedented faculty/student visit to China in ’78; campus response to 9/11; North Korean propaganda depicts ambassador Don Gregg ’51, who writes about that country’s nuclear threat; an award-winning photo invites readers to see modern Cuba through Williams’ eyes.
uncropped and given space to breathe. The passage of time has made the incidental details of these images—things the original photographer would not have noticed or thought to include—all the more striking. Look at how smartly people dressed in those days, we might say today, or how much more snow New England seemed to get.

On later covers, subjects are less likely to be centered or posed. We see bodies in motion and a taste for the candid and anecdotal. Lighter cameras get us into the action, and faster shutter speeds freeze it. Zoom and telephoto lenses become evident in the flattened perspective of several images. Color makes its debut.

Yet few of these covers depict breaking news. The prevailing mood is one of serenity and timelessness, with landscapes, buildings and the commencement
or reunion photo as regular as fall foliage, winter snow, spring flowers or blue summer skies. Only a few covers, starting in the 1960s, break the spell, gesturing toward change on campus and in the world. The most direct is a 1968 cover showing a burning Fort Hoosac (the former Kappa Alpha house). More oblique is HSS an image of a Vassar exchange student in Greylock Dining Hall, published at a time when Williams had begun, not without controversy, to admit female students. And would it be a stretch to read that young soldier standing behind Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara on a cover from 1963 as a sly comment on that year’s commencement speaker?

Recent covers are even more topical and likely to pack an editorial punch. They assume greater familiarity with College iconography, featuring corners and edges of buildings instead of full facades. Imagery ventures off campus, reflecting a broader understanding of the College’s mission and a sense of Williams as an increasingly global
institution. There is a return to illustration, though it bears little resemblance to the generic flowers (likely plucked from the typesetter's drawer) that graced our first issue.

Still, the changing typefaces, image styles and tastes in layout seem merely incidental as one pores over 100 years' worth of magazine covers. There is a consistency and a familiarity. The Grimmets game depicted on the May 1958 cover could be a Frisbee game today on the very same Science Quad lawn. A March 1945 view of Chapin is as recognizable to current students as it is to our oldest readers. Perhaps that is what sets the Alumni Review—and the College—apart.
Before farmers' markets, organic agriculture and seasonal produce became mainstream in America, two alumni set out to change the way consumers shop for food.

Barry Benepe '50: Father of the Modern Greenmarket

BY DENISE DIFULCO
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON ROEMER

The year was 1976, and words like local, seasonal and organic weren't exactly front of mind for grocery shoppers. In urban areas and New York City, in particular, where food was shipped, flown and trucked in by necessity, what passed for a tomato was frequently flavorless and mealy. Peaches were small, hard and pea-colored. So when the first Greenmarket opened in a police parking lot at East 59th Street and Second Avenue, just a block away from Bloomingdale's department store, it was a bit of a revelation for city dwellers—at least for those who had never tasted a fully ripened peach in season.

Today farmers' markets are far more common, especially as consumers have become more culinarily sophisticated and environmentally aware. But when Barry Benepe '50 launched that first Greenmarket, it was a tough sell. All around the New York metropolitan area, farms were failing and formerly verdant fields being converted into suburban cul-de-sacs, while city dwellers were being fed a steady diet of imported produce. As a planning consultant working on farmland preservation and open-space protection in the Hudson River Valley, Benepe began thinking about the symbiotic relationship that could be had between city and country—how the marriage of the two made sense both economically and ecologically.

He regularly spoke with Bob Lewis, a colleague who was working on a plan for Woodstock, N.Y., about how to stem the tide of farmland depletion. “We began kicking around this idea of farmers and food,” Benepe says. “We thought it might be one way to address the issue of the loss of farmland.”

The problem was that the city never saw itself as a critical marketplace for regional farm products. With no immediate political or popular support for their idea, the two men obtained an $800 grant from the America the Beautiful Fund to do a feasibility study for a farmers’ market. They eventually got the go-ahead from the office of then Mayor Abraham D. Beame.

The police gave over that tiny parking lot on the Upper East Side every Saturday starting in July 1976. The following month a second location opened at Union Square. Today the Greenmarket, still under the purview of the mayor’s office through the Council on the Environment of New York City, operates 46 locations throughout the five boroughs—17 of which are open year-round. During the high season, more than a half million shoppers every week browse stands brimming with locally raised fruits, vegetables, eggs and meat. All told, an
estimated 30,000 acres of farmland have been preserved as a result of Benepe and Lewis’ initial efforts.

Although he retired from the Greenmarket in 1998, Benepe is a regular and frequent visitor, especially to Abingdon Square, the location nearest his home in Manhattan’s West Village. Sitting at the kitchen table in his fourth-floor walk-up apartment on a bracingly cold January morning, he pulls out a recent purchase: a large, green stalk packed tight with Brussels sprouts. Even in winter one can find a veritable bounty at the city Greenmarkets—honey, maple syrup, meats, baked goods. “Everything we can get there, we’ll get there first,” he says, taking a spoonful of applesauce he made himself with Winesaps from the market.

Benepe, now 80, grew up near Gramercy Park on Manhattan’s East Side, though he wasn’t exclusively a child of the city. His family owned a farm in Maryland, and by age 16 he was driving crops to market during school vacations. When he arrived at Williams, Benepe thought he’d study economics. But he was so inspired by legendary art history professor S. Lane Faison ’29 that he switched his major to art by his senior year. After graduation, he took additional courses at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York City, and feeling a pull toward architecture, he decided to pursue graduate study at M.I.T. There he worked closely with noted urban planner and author Kevin A. Lynch. It was that experience, Benepe says, that edged him toward urban planning and helped him develop “a consciousness of looking at space.”

Never entirely comfortable as a draftsman, Benepe landed at a Manhattan-based planning firm where he worked on open-space protection and farmland preservation projects that first got him thinking about the Greenmarket. To this day, he and his wife Judith maintain a summer residence in Saugerties, N.Y., where he has lived part time since 1984 and serves on the comprehensive planning committee and as chairman of the historic preservation commission. Looking back at the early days of the market, he recalls it was equally difficult to persuade farmers that the effort would be worthwhile as it was to convince city officials. When his partner Lewis approached growers in southern New Jersey, they balked. “They thought they’d take full trucks into the city only to return home with empty pockets,” Benepe says. “They were afraid they were going to encounter the Mafia.”

Educating consumers about the advantages of consuming seasonal produce also proved a challenge. “People used to love coming when the market opened in May, but they were looking for
oranges when there really wasn’t anything except lettuce,” Benepe says. “People didn’t understand seasonality.” Part of Benepe’s legacy is that people these days have come to appreciate the importance of a regional, sustainable food system and its positive impact on the environment. They also understand to a greater extent the connection of such a system with health and wellness, says Michael Hurwitz, the Greenmarket’s current director. “Barry is still seen as a pioneer, and his ideas and commitment are as important today as they were 32 years ago,” Hurwitz says.

Hurwitz says he occasionally consults Benepe on issues related to the Greenmarket, but the way Benepe tells it, “I stick my nose in from time to time.”

In his retirement, Benepe also enjoys whispering loudly in the ear of his son Adrian, one of his five children and commissioner of the city’s Department of Parks and Recreation. Benepe has long championed the movement to rid Central Park of vehicular traffic. A founding member of Transportation Alternatives, a civic group that promotes bicycling, walking and public transportation, he led demonstrations during the administration of Mayor John Lindsay that resulted in the city closing park roads at certain hours to all traffic except bicycles. One day he hopes the park will altogether cease to be a through route for automobiles commuting to midtown. “I talk to Adrian about it,” Benepe says. “While Parks has jurisdiction over the Central Park Drives, over the years the Department of Transportation has influenced traffic policy.”

As for the future of the Greenmarket, Benepe says he’d love to see some of the current marketplaces become dedicated pedestrian environments, “so when the market is not there, it’s an inviting public place.” Currently, Union Square is the only site with that setup, though Times Square, Cooper Square and Madison Square all could be redesigned to be more friendly to the public. “The future of the market is connected with urban space,” he says. “We need kinder urban spaces.”

"Barry is ... a pioneer, and his ideas and commitment are as important today as they were 32 years ago.” —Greenmarket Director Michael Hurwitz

Denise DiFulco is a freelance writer and editor in Cranford, N.J.
Although she’s not a farmer, Kathleen Merrigan ‘82 has cultivated organic agriculture for nearly 20 years.

Kathleen Merrigan ’82: Pioneer in Organic Food Policy

INTERVIEW BY JENNIFER WEEKS ’83
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIEL COONEY

Kathleen Merrigan ’82 was the lead Congressional staff author of the 1990 Organic Food Production Act, which directed the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop standards for certifying organic foods. Later she rallied critics when the USDA initially proposed weak guidelines for its organic seal of approval. From 1999 to 2000 she headed USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service and oversaw publication of a final organic rule. Now an assistant professor at Tufts University’s Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, she’s still stirring the pot. Here she shares her thoughts about rooftop gardens, eating local and bitter melon.

Q: Organics are the fastest-growing segment of the food and beverage market. Would you have predicted that in 1990?

A: We didn’t expect the law to be so successful. Organic production was heresy to mainstream agriculture. It challenged conventional thinking, and a lot of farmers
Several studies (including one of mine) have shown that organics contain higher levels of beneficial plant chemicals ... and other antioxidants.

and ranchers saw it as an implicit criticism of their methods, even though we were careful not to knock other production systems. And a lot of early organic prophets were counter-culture types who lived alternative lifestyles. But we worked hard to get grassroots support from farmers, and environmentalists joined in because the bill addressed issues like water quality and pesticide use. So it passed much faster than we expected, which is one reason why it took 12 years to finalize standards. We barely had time to catch our breath before we started debating the details.

Q: Can the industry get much bigger?
A: It's still a baby compared to mainstream agriculture. Organic production gets a lot of press for its size, but less than 1 percent of agricultural land in the U.S. and less than 2 percent in Europe are farmed organically. Right now organic farming is getting beaten up because people are looking at issues like food miles [the environmental impact of shipping food from farm to market]. It's true that some organic products travel a long way, but it's still a small industry, and that will change as production expands.

Q: Are locally grown foods a good alternative?
A: They can be, although some arguments you hear about eating locally aren't very well thought out. Some people say it's more sustainable than buying organic, but if everyone gets into their car and drives 20 miles to a farmers' market, the impacts add up.

Q: What other issues are you researching?
A: I'm very interested in all kinds of urban agriculture, from rooftop gardens to school gardening programs. My program at Tufts has a garden-based learning project at a Boston school where 80 percent of students are from families below the poverty line. We're studying whether teaching through gardening actually raises kids' scientific literacy and encourages them to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Tufts also runs a program called the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, which helps immigrant farmers get started in Massachusetts. Many of them are from Asia and Africa, and they raise their own traditional crops. When I visit our farmers' markets to support our trainees, I always come home with tons of produce. It's great, although I'm still trying to figure out what to do with bitter melon.

Jennifer Weeks '83 is a freelance writer in Watertown, Mass.
The story of the large World War II troop ship that was named for little Williams College.

by Ernest F. Imhoff '59

On March 16, 1945, workers at the Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard Inc. of Baltimore, Md., laid the keel of the SS Williams Victory. A prefabricated emergency cargo/troop ship, she was faster and bigger than her more famous cousin, the Liberty cargo ship. As one 85-year-old seaman I know in Baltimore puts it, the Victory was like a Chevy Suburban compared to the Liberty’s Model T Ford.

So why would a 455-foot government vessel that could haul 11,000 tons of cargo be named for a small New England college whose waterfront and maritime heritage consisted of the Green and Hoosic rivers and the Hemlock and Broad brooks? It turns out Williams, and the 38 other colleges and universities for which Victory ships were named, just happened to be born at the right time—early. And that happenstance was enough to go to sea, in the eyes of the War Shipping Administration.

The Williams Victory was launched on May 7, 1945, and outfitted and ready for sea later that month, just a few weeks after the Nazis surrendered and before Japan gave up. She probably helped in the mop-up before becoming a commercial freighter with Smith & Johnson steamship company. The U.S. government sold her in 1947 to Rotterdam Lloyd, for whom she sailed as a freighter named Salatiga under the flag of the Netherlands. She later carried goods under the Liberian flag for the Magellan Strait Development Co., which called her Salamat.

The story of the Williams Victory ended on land in June 1969, when shipbreakers in La Spezia, Italy, took her apart for scrap metal. (The Amherst Victory, by the way, was scrapped in 1977.) As of last June, only two Victory ships were still sailing, as historic museum vessels.

With news of the worldwide financial crisis changing from moment to moment, Williams professor Darel E. Paul offers some perspective.

CREDIT CRISIS: LONG VIEW

by Denise DiFulco

Given his research interest in international political economy—especially globalization, urbanization and commodity deflation—political science professor Darel E. Paul has been answering a lot of questions lately. In October, during one of the worst weeks in American financial history, he offered some sobering perspective on money and markets, examining the social and political forces that propel societies from one economic cycle to the next.

How did you become interested in political economy?

I became interested in political economy when I was doing my Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Minnesota, and especially
“I THINK WE’RE AT A POINT NOW, VERY SIMILAR TO WHERE WE WERE IN THE 1970S: THE OLD ORDER HAS GONE INTO CRISIS, PEOPLE ARE RUNNING ABOUT TRYING TO RESCUE SOMETHING THAT MIGHT NOT BE SALVAGEABLE, AND A NEW ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ORDER MAY BE COMING OUT OF IT.”

interested in the finance and money side because, at some fundamental level in a capitalist society, money is power. And power is, of course, our central theme in political science. So it was a way to link up economic processes and the more self-conscious political understanding of the world. I think of political economy as it was thought of in the 19th century: as the master social science discipline. And that’s why I love it. Because it allows me to dip into economics, sociology, geography and history as well.

You spoke at a faculty research luncheon in September about the government rescue of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. If Fannie and Freddie had somehow collapsed, what would have happened?

I don’t think in any realistic scenario it would have happened. Fannie and Freddie are so essential to the American mortgage market because they are government-sponsored enterprises. And because foreign creditors, who have plowed enormous sums of money—hundreds of billions, really—over the last 10 years or so into American corporate and government debt, as well as Fannie and Freddie debt, they couldn’t be hung out to dry.

You’ve said that Fannie and Freddie are part of the “social bargain” that the U.S. government has with the American people. What does that mean?

The social bargain ties economic practices directly into politics. Not just home ownership, but everything about debt has been tremendously important for having an American social bargain over the last 20 to 30 years. The belief that I could have the social programs that I expect—I could have my Social Security, my Medicare, my kids’ education at the public schools, my roads, etc.—and at the same time I could have my taxes cut, was a very deep-set belief in America. A lot of that was papered over by economic growth in the late ‘80s and the late ‘90s. But it’s also papered over by a lot of debt. So if we don’t have robust economic growth, we’re going to have to start facing some unpleasant choices we haven’t faced probably since the 1970s.

We’re still at war, which is an enormous financial commitment. Then there’s the $700 billion bailout to the banks and to aid the financial system. Something is going to have to give somewhere, right?

There’s that quote from A Streetcar Named Desire: “I have always depended on the kindness of strangers.” As Americans, we rely upon the kindness of savers—in East Asia, particularly, but also some of the oil states that have made lots of money over the last few years. They loan us money at incredibly low rates. So, in a relative sense, there’s probably a lot more borrowing the U.S. government can do, but it depends on what foreign powers think of us. If they think we’re a good investment, if they think we’re a safe bet, we probably can do a lot more borrowing to get over this rough patch. If they think, “Well, Americans, you’re going to have to raise your taxes just so we can be sure that you’ll pay us off,” or “We’re going to demand higher interest rates on the debt that we give you to make sure our investments are safe,” then that’s a cost that America is going to have to pay.

What are the potential implications for our political power as well as economic power?

We’re in a very unusual, some would argue dangerous, situation where the world’s greatest military power is at the same time the world’s greatest debtor. It seems the place that this would give is where those countries that fund American debt are least interested in American military exercises. So if the Chinese and the Arab oil emirates are happy for the U.S. to keep troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, then fine. But if they want the U.S. to stay out of the Taiwan Strait or to stay out of Darfur, there are strings that can be pulled. We’ve made ourselves profoundly vulnerable.
A POET FINDS HER VOICE

by Jim Mulvihill

“Even the flowing river has been blocked.” It’s an elegant line of poetry—simple—inspired by a news report on an earthquake in the mountains of Pakistan some years ago. But for Susanna Lang ’77, it was a source of frustration.

It took Lang more than a year to “figure out how to write the poem that line seemed to want,” she says. “I tried it a number of different ways, and each time my readers advised me to give up on the material. The problem was that I couldn’t get that line out of my head.” Lang’s struggle with what would become the title poem of her first collection, Even Now, published last summer by The Backwaters Press, typifies her own evolution as a poet. A French and English major, she
“‘EVEN NOW’ WAS A PARTICULAR STRUGGLE TO WRITE. ... BUT I FOUND [AT POETRY READINGS OVER THE SUMMER] THAT THE POEM READ WELL, AS IF IT HAD JUST COME TO ME IN A BURST.”

left Williams with a newfound love of Keats’ odes and a Hubbard Hutchinson Memorial Fellowship for her writing ability. She moved to Chicago ready to start life as a working poet while her new husband, classmate Henry C. Ricks III, went to graduate school. Her plan backfired.

“I thought I was no good,” she says today. “I still really needed to be cocooned in a group of working writers and pointed to what I should be reading and what kind of work I should be doing to revise my writing. ... I was working pretty much on my own and couldn’t sustain it and quit.”

So instead, armed with a master’s degree in French from Loyola University of Chicago, she threw herself into teaching high school students French and English. Twelve years would pass before Lang picked up her pen again.

What inspired her was Ron Sable, an openly gay physician, AIDS activist and candidate for Chicago’s city council who died in 1993 from AIDS complications. His long, painful struggle with the disease left Lang reeling with emotions for her friend that cried for an outlet. “I wrote my way through my grieving and back into poetry,” says Lang, who was a lead volunteer and later a staffer in Sable’s two campaigns for alderman.

As she wrote, Lang found that teaching the fundamentals of poetry to high school students had helped her subconsciously to hone her own abilities. She also began attending workshops with writers she admired. As the collection Even Now slowly began to take shape, she finished new poems and substituted them for those that were not as well received by her readers. She revised constantly. Lang was executing all of the necessary steps to becoming a published poet that had eluded her right after college.

“I discovered that those 12 years were not completely wasted,” she says. “I came back to writing much more skilled than I had left it.”

Even Now comprises 57 works that deal with domestic themes, especially family and the effect of illnesses within her own life. One poem, "Good Fortune," was inspired by a friend who was able to maintain her spirits in the face of cancer. The raven in this poem "reaches into the rain to pull out the morning,/ as he has done ever since there were mornings." Lang also delves heavily into nature, both as a setting and metaphor.

As a whole, the poems in the collection segue naturally from one to the next, subtly adding new layers of meaning and possible interpretations, as with a skillfully curated art exhibition.

Of building that sequence, Lang says, "I went over that process for years, talked to people about it, and I think that is what I’m perhaps proudest of.”

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Even diplomats are required to pay the tax, said the mayor.
Shopkeepers have disappeared in full daylight and the daylight disappeared as well.
The eclipse could be seen from Brazil to Mongolia, but not here;
we did not even bother to look.

Even the flowing river has been blocked;
its roots laid bare and trimmed before it was lifted onto the flatbed.

Even the government knows where the earth will quake and split,
removing entire sections of the city as if they were never there
except that we will remember them, the streets and houses shaded by trees;
but no one knows when.

Even our parents have lost their way home.
The streets turn right where they used to turn left,
the lights blink red, the bridge is permanently raised,
the freight train stops at the crossing.
It may not move again until tomorrow.

Even you have misplaced your keys, your wallet, the reason you were leaving the house,
and I can’t find that paper I just had in my hands
or the story I used to know by heart.
We have all lost so many things, perhaps all we had, perhaps not

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—Susanna Lang
Williams professors and others weigh in on the issues of the day. For a complete listing of media appearances, visit www.williams.edu/admin/news/inthenews

"With the tremendous decline in wealth, I think fewer people will hold onto needs blind" admission policies, Williams president and economics professor Morty Schapiro says in a Nov. 11 New York Times article about the effects of the economic downturn on colleges. Williams itself believes it can continue to admit students regardless of need.

When the country is "going off the rails," political attack ads have less traction, says political science professor George Marcus in an Oct. 20 Newsweek article exploring whether negativity in campaigns threatens the electoral process.

Explaining why liberal comedians’ jokes outnumbered those of conservatives in the run-up to Election Day, John Limon, the John J. Gibson Professor of English, says in the Oct. 20 Boston Globe: "A joke has to feel like it’s overcoming some kind of norm, some kind of inhibition. … I think Republicans are always better at norms and inhibitions than Democrats."

In an October Op-ed in the Houston Chronicle and other newspapers, Michael MacDonald, the Frederick L. Schuman Professor of International Relations, writes that the Neoliberal Era—a hitherto unnamed period beginning with Ronald Reagan and defined by the “belief in the primacy of financial power over government”—is ending.

"I developed heightened powers of observation not just from curiosity but for survival," says art professor Laylah Ali ’90 in an Aug. 29 Boston Globe interview that addressed how being biracial has influenced her art.

A Nov. 14 Boston Globe essay urging Boston to reclaim native son Edgar Allen Poe quotes English professor Shawn Rosenheim, who says Poe “hated everything Boston stood for. He was a naysayer, the repressed underside, to the Transcendentalists.”

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

Delusion. By Peter Abrahams ’68. William Morrow, 2008. A crime thriller about an exonerated convict, the woman who originally identified him and her husband, the detective who put him behind bars.

Demystifying Legal Reasoning. By Larry Alexander ’65 et al. Cambridge University Press, 2008. A defense of the claim that there are no special forms of reasoning peculiar to law.


Francesco II Gonzaga: the Soldier-Prince as Patron. By Molly Bourne ’87. Bulzoni, 2008. A study of the artistic patronage from 1484-1519 of the Marquis of Mantua, whose cultural contributions have traditionally been overshadowed by those of his consort, the famous art collector Isabella d’Este.


Farm Friends: From the Late Sixties to the West Seventies and Beyond. By Tom Fels ’83, Grad Art ’84. RSI Press, 2008. A memoir of the individuals who came together on a communal farm and their journeys in the following decades.


With Love From Haha: Essays and Notes on a Collective Art Practice. Edited by Wendy Jacob ’80, Laurie Palmer ’81 et al. WhiteWalls, 2008. Five contributors from the fields of art, art history, urban studies and anthropology, explore topics such as temporality, everyday life and the place of collaboration in the work of the art collective Haha.


Civic War and the Corruption of the Citizen. By Peter Alexander Meyers ’79. University of Chicago Press, 2008. An account of long-term transformations in the relationships between citizen, government and war that were set in motion by the Cold War, have continued since 9/11 and threaten the future of America’s “government by the people.”


Voluntary Madness: My Year Lost and Found in the Loony Bin. By Norah Vincent ’90. Viking, 2009. The author checks herself into three mental facilities to study the state of mental health care in America from the inside.

The Prudent Mariner. By Leslie Walker Williams ’85. University of Tennessee Press, 2008. Winner of the Peter Taylor Prize and the Hackney Literary Award, this novel explores a 1913 lynching that impinges on the present when a young girl begins to explore legacies of complicity and violence within her family.


Teaching the Brain to Read: Strategies for Improving Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension. By Judy Willis ’71. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2008. The neurologist, author and middle school teacher connects what educators do in the classroom to what happens in the brain when students learn how to read.

Is now a good time to be an investment banker? How does falling four stories from the Freshman Quad become the intellectual break of a lifetime? What if John McCain really hadn’t shown up for the first presidential debate? How do a balcony, the Maldives, Dubai and an NGO relate to creativity?

Answers to these and scores of other questions were shared last semester in a series of live, unscripted interviews with alumni conducted by math professor and Gaudino Scholar Ed Burger as part of the new series “The Gaudino Dialogues.” Addressing the theme “Failing to Succeed,” alumni who shared their failures, triumphs and creative minds were:

Fay Vincent ’60: former chairman of Columbia Pictures and former commissioner of baseball
Janet Brown ’73: executive director of the Commission on Presidential Debates
Herbert Allen ’62: president, CEO and director of Allen & Co. Inc.
Deborah Robinson ’78: program director of Emergency Network Los Angeles

To watch video footage of their interviews, visit www.williams.edu/admin/news-multimedia/
What’s your claim to Williams?

All have the power to create community—or disrupt it, even in the Purple Valley.

On Feb. 5, the entire Williams community will join together with speakers, performers and facilitators from many fields to discuss the issue of privilege and explore the ways in which it manifests itself along the lines of class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, race, religion and ability.

Presenters will include: Dorothy Allison, award-winning author and editor of early feminist, and lesbian and gay journals • Peggy Diggs, artist and former Williams studio art lecturer • Kiana Green ’07, who is researching black gender-transgressive women and violence at University of Southern California’s department of American Studies and Ethnicity • iLL-Literacy, four performers who blend verse, theatrics and audience interaction • Richard Lapchick, human rights activist and founder/director of the Institute for Diversity & Ethics in Sports • Peggy McIntosh, associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women and co-director of the National S.E.E.D. Project on Inclusive Curriculum • Lenelle Moise, performance artist and self-proclaimed “culturally hyphenated pomosexual poet” • Tim Wise, award-winning author of White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son • Stephen Spencer, University of Waterloo psychology professor, who studies motivation and the self.

CLAIMING WILLIAMS DAY is a first step toward rendering the inequities created by our differences visible and building a college community to which all members have equal claim. For more information on the day and related events, visit http://claiming.williams.edu
“Like my dad:
I am on the faculty at Williams.
I help edit a journal.
I care deeply about teaching.
I am unlike my dad:
I have never taken an economics course.
My journal has a picture of a giant robot on the cover.”

CHRISTOPHER BOLTON
(RIGHT) ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF JAPANESE, ASIAN STUDIES
& COMPARATIVE LITERATURE,
WITH ROGER BOLTON,
PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS,
EMERITUS, AND COORDINATOR
OF SELF STUDY FOR COLLEGE ACCREDITATION

“I trust science with open eyes; the truth with closed ones.
‘Quasi una fantasia’ Op. 27, No.2, Mvt. 1 made me cry,
so I taught myself how to play it.
I cannot resist a samba beat.
I wonder where and why the universe is.
I believe in love.”

AMY STEELE ‘08