

# H&SS NEWS

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES *and* SOCIAL SCIENCES

## CREATIVE WRITING GRAD ZASLOW PLAYS BIG PART IN LAST LECTURE SUCCESS



HEIDI OPDYKE

**JEFF ZASLOW, A 1980 H&SS GRADUATE AND RANDY PAUSCH'S CO-AUTHOR OF THE BEST-SELLING BOOK, "THE LAST LECTURE," SPOKE AT THIS YEAR'S CONVOCATION CEREMONY FOR FRESHMEN.**

The late Carnegie Mellon Computer Science Professor Randy Pausch became an overnight sensation after he delivered his Last Lecture, "Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams," on campus last fall. H&SS has a tie to the story, too. The Wall Street Journal columnist Jeff Zaslow, a 1980 graduate, wrote a column that helped the lecture's lessons reach people around the world. Zaslow was also the co-author of the book based on Pausch's lecture, which now has four million copies in print in the U.S. and has been translated into 36 languages.

Recently, the H&SS News got the chance to talk with Zaslow about Pausch, the book and his fondest Carnegie Mellon memories.

**Q: How did you hear about Randy's talk?**

**A:** I write about life transitions for The Wall Street Journal. Anne Watzman from Carnegie Mellon's

media relations department told the Journal's Pittsburgh bureau chief that a dying professor was giving a last lecture. The bureau chief thought it might work for my column and called me. I knew about the Last Lecture series because my favorite professor at Carnegie Mellon, Richard Schoenwald of the history department, gave a last lecture, and I had written a column about it years ago when I was at the Chicago Sun-Times.

**Q: How did you decide to come and hear it?**

**A:** The plane ticket from my home in Detroit to Pittsburgh was \$850, so my editor suggested that I skip the flight and just call Randy after the lecture. But Randy was so engaging when I talked to him on the phone the night before that I wanted to hear the lecture in person. I drove the 300 miles. I'm thrilled that I went. It was one of the most inspiring hours of my life.

**Q: What sort of reader response have you gotten directly to the original column?**

**A:** I got thousands of emails. The four-minute highlight video we posted on WSJ.com was the most-watched video in the history of the Journal. My column was passed around to thousands of Web sites, too. The response was beyond anything I've ever experienced before.

**Q: What were some of the more memorable things that people said in those emails?**

**A:** I heard from a lot of people who were dying, and they'd tell me Randy changed the way they thought about how they were going to die—their attitude, their relations with their loved ones. That's pretty strong stuff.

I heard from people who said they're going to leave their spouses because after reading the book, they realized life is too short. Randy got an email from a woman who hadn't talked to her mother in years, and had decided to reconnect with her after reading the book. So I reminded Randy that we've heard from people who were leaving their spouses because he had inspired them. I told him he was a peacemaker, but he was also a home wrecker.

**Q: Why did the lecture and the book touch so many people when Randy himself said that it was just intended for his colleagues and, most importantly, his kids?**

**A:** It was authentic. He was talking to his work family here at Carnegie Mellon, and so, people watching online felt like they were

eavesdropping. He was naming the people that mattered to him, talking about things that happened that weren't relevant to anybody but the people in the room. Seeing a dying man saying that, it just took people by their hearts.

Also, we're used to a dying person being in bed with the covers pulled up, and here was Randy, doing push-ups and talking about living every day left to the fullest.

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## CARNEGIE MELLON HOSTS FIRST STATEWIDE DELIBERATIVE POLL ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE



**CARNEGIE MELLON PROFESSOR MICHELE DIPETRO (LEFT) WAS ON THE RESOURCE PANEL THAT PROVIDED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS. ALSO PICTURED IS WIDENER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW PROFESSOR RANDY LEE.**

In September, a group of randomly selected voters from Pittsburgh and its surrounding communities gathered at Carnegie Mellon to participate in a unique endeavor—the first statewide “Deliberative Poll® on the Issue of Marriage in America.”

A deliberative poll indicates what a community as a whole might think about a particular issue if that community had time to become informed about the issue through an intensive deliberative process. It can be a useful strategy for such hot-button social issues that require an educated and aware public in order to reach a representative opinion.

“The deliberative poll will set a much better stage for discussion than the current soundbite-ridden, bumper-sticker battlefield,” said Robert Cavalier, a co-director of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Program for Deliberative Democracy (SPPDD), which co-sponsored the event. The SPPDD is housed within the Department of Philosophy’s Center for the Advancement of Applied Ethics and Political Philosophy.

In addition to Carnegie Mellon, the other Pennsylvania poll sites included Slippery Rock University, Shippensburg University and Com-

munity College of Philadelphia. The four sites were selected to represent both urban and rural voters from various geographic areas in the state. A total of approximately 250 individuals randomly selected from voter registration records of the sites’ surrounding counties participated.

According to the poll results, nearly 70 percent of Pennsylvania voters who participated in the statewide deliberative poll support the legal recognition of same-sex relationships, either through marriage or civil unions. Interestingly, though, participant data also showed that approximately half supported the Pennsylvania Marriage Protection Amendment, which restricts marriage to heterosexual couples.

This apparent discrepancy likely emerged because up to 70 percent of those supporting civil unions may have been reluctant to re-define the specific term marriage. Nonetheless, because the current amendment’s phrasing precludes recognition of civil unions, only about 35 percent of the participants would support it based on the analysis of the poll’s data.

“As to the process itself,” Cavalier said, “an overwhelming majority across all four sites felt that the experience was helpful, enjoyable and

intellectually stimulating. These are not college students speaking here, but a representative sample of our voters, with a median age of 54.”

For this deliberative poll, participants read background materials on the historical, religious and societal aspects of marriage. The materials also compared and contrasted the Pennsylvania legislature’s Marriage Protection Act with the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriages and the Vermont legislation that legalized civil unions in that state.

On the day of the poll, the participants gathered in small, moderated groups to discuss and deliberate the topic amongst themselves, and they did so respectfully.

“My role has often been minimal in the sense that people in the room usually take responsibility for monitoring the discussion, even disagreements,” said Tim Dawson, one of the small group moderators and a Carnegie Mellon doctoral student in rhetoric who also designed the background document. “I’m inspired by watching these people engage with each other.”

Also in those small groups, participants worked to develop questions for a resource panel—a group of experts able to provide an additional source of information on the topic. The participants came up with thoughtful questions that touched on topics such as parenting and civil rights.

The resource panel included Michele DiPietro, a Carnegie Mellon faculty member who teaches a course called The Statistics of Sexual Orientation, law professors from Widener University School of Law and the University of Pittsburgh, an assistant professor of Christian ethics at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and a faculty member from the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work.

In the day’s final activity, participants responded to a 14-question survey that measured their opinions on various aspects of the same-sex marriage issue.

Mary E. Marshall, of Wilkinsburg, Pa., was unfamiliar with the concept of deliberative polling before she participated in the event, but she was impressed by the experience.

“I just enjoy the fact that we can all have a difference of opinion but have a civil discussion about it. I didn’t always agree with what was said, but I accepted it,” she said.

State Rep. Dan Frankel noted that legislators would find the information generated by such an event useful.

“The results of this deliberative poll are going to be something I think my colleagues are going to pay a lot of attention to,” he said in remarks before the resource panel discussion.

As the federal government continues its current trend of allowing the states’ discretion to shape policies on these types of issues, the deliberative poll could emerge as a valuable tool in gauging the electorate’s beliefs.



**DELIBERATIVE POLL PARTICIPANTS GATHERED IN SMALL GROUPS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT CAVALIER



## TOURISM IN CHINA'S WEST: AMBIGUITIES OF MODERNIZATION

China used the opportunity presented by this summer's Olympics to showcase its modernization efforts in Beijing. The nation's development has reached far beyond its urban centers, though, at times bringing as much upheaval as opportunity to some remote regions. One example: the tourist centers north of the earthquake that occurred earlier this year in western China's Sichuan province.

At the scenic and historic area of Huanglong, H&SS faculty members Xiaofei Kang and Donald Sutton are examining the tensions between the region's residents and tourists. For centuries residents have made pilgrimages to this religious site, and tourists have flocked there since it was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992.

"The sacred rituals performed at Huanglong require specific conditions, according to the pilgrims' beliefs," said Kang, an associate professor of Chinese in the Department of Modern Languages. "The tourism efforts have dismissed the

site's religious significance and, in some ways, interfered with the rituals."

A diverse local population that includes ethnic Han Chinese, Muslims and Tibetans has assigned various meanings to the site. Huanglong's natural landscape provides the setting in which Tibetans honor a mountain god who overlooks the valley. The site's man-made temples are important worship sites for the Han and Qiang groups.

However, the area's tremendous natural beauty—the source of much of its tourism potential—was the focus of China's proposal to UNESCO, not the area's spiritual side. In fact, the region's cultural and religious importance was entirely absent from the proposal.

The government-run Management Bureau upholds UNESCO's ecological preservation standards but discourages religious activity. Consequently, worshippers are dwindling in number, over-



DONALD SUTTON

**TIBETANS AND HAN CHINESE CELEBRATE AT THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL HELD AT HUANGLONG'S REAR TEMPLE IN CHINA'S SICHUAN PROVINCE.**

whelmed by the masses of tourists and discouraged by the commercialization of the temples, secularization of the annual fair and high cost of nearby hotels.

But some enterprising locals have capitalized on the opportunities presented by the site's evolution.

"Of course locals are not just victims but also are agents of change," said Sutton, a professor in the Department of History. "Many have profited from tourism despite the setbacks at Huanglong."

Development takes unexpected forms: Tibetans have reinvested in new homes with altar rooms; Muslims in new mosques.

## SCHEIER REAPPOINTED HEAD OF PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT



STEPHEN CHABASSOL

**MICHAEL F. SCHEIER**

Psychology Professor Michael F. Scheier, a leading researcher in the field of health psychology, particularly in the exploration of optimism's influence on health outcomes, has been appointed to his second five-year term as head of the Department of Psychology.

Scheier has been on the university's faculty since 1975 and has been head of the Department of Psychology since 2003. In addition to expanding in terms of faculty and research projects under Scheier's leadership, the department established an infant research cluster that explores variations in critical early childhood development milestones, including speech perception and the development of categorization.

The department includes 27 full-time faculty members, a number of research centers and an early childhood education center. U.S. News and World Report magazine ranked the department's graduate program ninth in the nation and deemed the cognitive psychology program the second-best in the country.

"I'm honored that my colleagues in psychology and the administration at the university have trusted me again to oversee the activities of the department. Without the help and support of those folks, this job would truly be impossible," Scheier said.

## ADVANCES IN NEUROSCIENCE: BROUGHT TO YOU BY STATISTICIANS

The field of neural prosthetics—which uses ideas from engineering to restore nervous system function in patients who have suffered from trauma or disease—has been getting a lot of attention lately. Experimental subjects are now able to control computer cursors or robotic devices by simply “thinking” about the movement they want the device to make.

At the heart of these systems are signal processing algorithms, which translate brain signals to useful control information.

“The real goal is to better understand how complicated networks of neurons behave,” said Statistics Professor Rob Kass, whose work has been instrumental in providing the foundation for advances in this area. “Techniques developed for very different applications can be adapted nicely to this setting.”

An essential mathematical tool, known as Bayes’ Theorem, has been a workhorse for researchers in many disciplines at Carnegie Mellon. In this context, Bayes’ Theorem provides a formula for predicting a desired movement based on observed brain signals.

Along with former Carnegie Mellon faculty member Anthony Brockwell and graduate student Alex Rojas, Kass was one of the first researchers to show how Bayes’ Theorem could be applied to neural signals that control movement. Subsequent work by postdoctoral fellow Shinsuke Koyama, Kass, and other colleagues at both Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh has greatly improved the algorithms.

New techniques developed by statistics faculty member Valerie Ventura will be crucial in allowing the algorithms to work with electrode arrays implanted in humans, where processing time is limited by such things as the heat generated by the processor and the bandwidth of the wireless broadcast to the robotic controller.

According to University of Pittsburgh collaborator Andrew Schwartz, whose work was recently featured on 60 Minutes, “The brain acts as a statistical machine and we’re just trying to learn its rules. We’ve made progress, but to describe the neural control of complicated movements, such as those involved in grasping an object in three-dimensional space, we will need the powerful methods developed by our Carnegie Mellon colleagues. Recent results, where a monkey has

controlled the movement of a cursor using the new algorithms, are very promising.”

Some of Kass’ fellow faculty members in the Department of Statistics are making important contributions to neuroscience as well. For instance, work done by Professors William Eddy and Chris Genovese help researchers analyze the volumes of data generated in functional imaging experiments, which often shed light on the brain’s most fundamental mechanisms.

Their work pushes the limits of modern-day statistics, though. The questions being raised require the analysis of massive amounts of data in order to predict highly complex relationships. Consequently, the creation of completely novel statistical techniques and tools is frequently necessary in order to make progress.

“When conventional statistical approaches fall short in answering the questions posed by scientists, innovative tools must be developed,” Kass said. “Here at Carnegie Mellon, we are leading the way in developing those techniques.”

Indeed, the quality of work coming out of the department has positioned Carnegie Mellon as a prominent player in this statistical specialization.

This past summer, the department hosted the Fourth International Statistical Analysis of Neuronal Data (SAND4). This biennial event, which takes place in Pittsburgh and was launched by Kass and Massachusetts Institute of Technology colleague Dr. Emery Brown, has evolved from a small gathering of like-minded academics into a bona fide scientific meeting. More than 170 researchers representing nearly 50 institutions attended SAND4.

Additionally, a new doctoral program housed in the Center for the Neural Basis of Cognition (CNBC), a collaborative effort between Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh, underscores the university’s role as a leading educator in this unique and important discipline. The CNBC’s Ph.D. program in Neural Computation, which currently has seven students, is training the next generation to use a variety of computational tools to address tomorrow’s problems in neuroscience.

“The projects grow more complex as we continue to explore new frontiers,” said Kass, who also has appointments in the CNBC and the Machine Learning Department.

## STATISTICIAN’S RESEARCH UNCOVERS TROUBLING TEEN SUICIDE TREND

After more than a decade of steady decline, the rate of suicide among 10-to-20-year-olds jumped by 14 percent between 2003 and 2004. While that one-year change did not necessarily indicate a broader trend, new evidence from a Carnegie Mellon researcher presents cause for concern.

Statistics Professor Joel Greenhouse examined national suicide data from 2005—the most recent year for which the numbers are available—and his findings strongly suggest that the latest youth suicide information could portend a public health crisis.

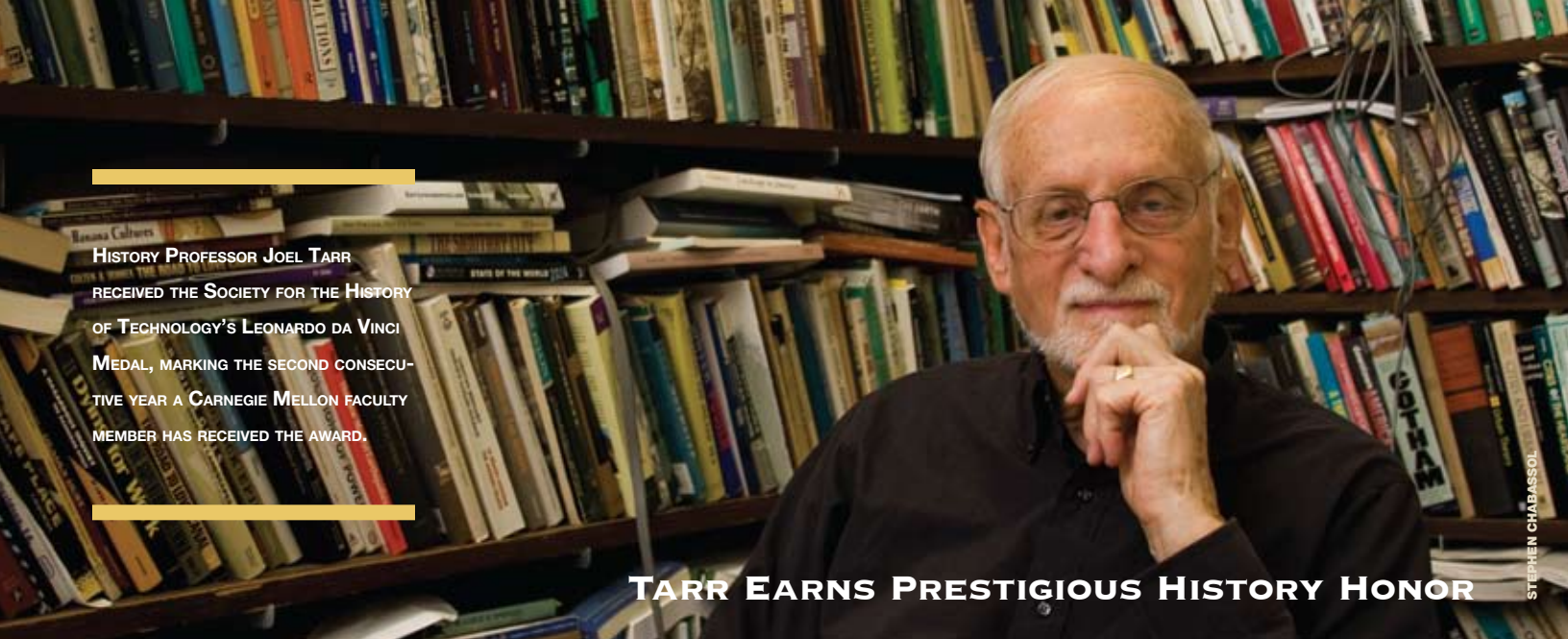
While the 2005 rate dropped off slightly from the prior year, it remained higher than what was predicted based on the trends that emerged in a regression analysis of adolescent suicide rates from 1996 to 2003.

“This development is quite troubling, particularly after such a long period of time during which the teen suicide rate dropped consistently,” said Greenhouse, who, along with Jeff Bridge of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, co-authored the study published in the Sept. 3 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

According to the researchers, a number of developments, such as influence of Internet social networks and increases in suicide among U.S. troops, could be influencing this alarming trend. Additionally, higher rates of untreated depression in the wake of recent “black box” warnings on antidepressants required by the Federal Drug Administration in 2004, may factor in as well.

“Whatever the explanation,” Greenhouse warned, “we now need to consider the possibility that the increase is an indicator of an emerging public health crisis. The need for effective interventions to reduce pediatric suicides must be addressed nationally.”





**HISTORY PROFESSOR JOEL TARR**  
RECEIVED THE SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY  
OF TECHNOLOGY'S LEONARDO DA VINCI  
MEDAL, MARKING THE SECOND CONSECU-  
TIVE YEAR A CARNEGIE MELLON FACULTY  
MEMBER HAS RECEIVED THE AWARD.

## TARR EARNS PRESTIGIOUS HISTORY HONOR

The list of winners of the Leonardo da Vinci Medal, the highest honor presented by the Society for the History of Technology, includes some of the most widely respected scholars who examine technology in a historical context.

For the second straight year, the name of an H&SS faculty member has been added to that list. Joel A. Tarr, the Richard S. Caliguiri Professor of History and Policy in the Department of History, was presented with the medal at the society's annual meeting, which was held at the end of October in Lisbon, Portugal.

Last year's da Vinci prize winner was David Hounshell, the David M.

Roderick Professor of Technology and Social Change, putting Carnegie Mellon in the prestigious position of having two da Vinci award winners on its faculty.

"The Society for the History of Technology's Leonardo da Vinci Medal is a tremendous honor, and I am humbled by the recognition," said Tarr, who has been on Carnegie Mellon's faculty since 1967 and a university professor since 2003.

According to the society's Web site, the da Vinci Medal is given to an "individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the history of technology through research, teaching, publication and other activities."

The award has a most deserving recipient in Tarr, who also holds appointments in Heinz College and in the Engineering and Public Policy Department in the College of Engineering. Prompted by Pittsburgh's industrial past, his research focuses on the environmental history of cities and the impact of urban technological systems.

Tarr, who describes himself as an urbanist rather than as a historian of technology, has sought to bring a consciousness of the importance of technology to both urban and environmental history, and a consciousness of cities and their environments to the history of technology. He not only examines urban technologies within the eras in which they emerge,

but he also follows how they develop over time and even the lingering effects they leave in their wake, such as the brownfields that resulted from industrial contamination in Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh in general, and Carnegie Mellon specifically, provide the perfect setting for his research in his field, Tarr notes.

"It's quite fitting that an institution like Carnegie Mellon is so well-represented among da Vinci Medal winners," he said. "Because the work done here leads to so many groundbreaking technologies, it's only natural that we would take on a leadership role in studying how those technological developments influence society."



## H&SS INTRODUCES NEW PROGRAMS IN GLOBAL POLITICS, INNOVATION

After graduation, H&SS students will find themselves competing in an increasingly international workforce and making contributions as citizens of a global society, so the college has launched two new programs — one in global politics and another in innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development (IEE) — this semester.

Students may select global politics as a primary major, an additional major or a minor, while the IEE course of study is available as a minor. Both of the new programs are initiatives of the Global and International Relations Program, a relatively

recent addition to H&SS' academic offerings that is directed by Kiron Skinner, an associate professor in Carnegie Mellon's Department of Social and Decision Sciences (SDS).

"Carnegie Mellon has consistently demonstrated a commitment to exploring the complexity of globalization," said H&SS Dean John Lehoczky. "These new programs will support the institution's academic and scholarly goals in this field."

"The university is well-positioned to take a leadership role in the confluence of educational and research opportunities surrounding global and international relations that are likely

to develop over the next few years," Skinner added.

The global politics program provides students with a broad understanding of the complex, interdependent connections among politics, cultures, markets and technology around the world. The program's coursework covers a variety of salient topics, ranging from international trade and economic structures to political systems and cultural studies. The program also places heavy emphasis on analytical social science tools and methods, such as behavioral decision-making theory and economic analysis, which facilitate the in-depth

examination of global issues.

"The new major embraces a 21st-century design for a core social science program," Skinner said.

The interdisciplinary IEE minor was created to provide students with the opportunity to pursue academic interests in entrepreneurship, innovation management and economic development. Many of the minor's core courses and electives also focus on technology's role in the modern marketplace and its potential to influence future innovation and development.

Students completing the global politics major will receive a Bachelor of Science degree.

**Q: What's it like for you, being swept up in an international phenomenon?**

**A:** It's overwhelming. I've been getting a lot of speech requests. It's an honor to share Randy's story. People were so touched by him. I've heard from many, many people who said they cried for him, even though he was a stranger. How many people cry for someone who's a stranger? To be part of that is beyond special.

**Q: You had an unusual method of interviewing Randy for the book. How did that work?**

**A:** Randy was a time-management...um...enthusiast. Knowing that he only had months to live, he didn't want to waste time that he could be with his kids. His doctors had told him to ride his bike every day for his health, and he said that we could talk while he was on the bike for an hour a day. He wore a cell-phone headset, and I was at my office in Detroit, typing on the computer. We did that for about 53 days, and those conversations became the book.



**Q: What do you feel that you, personally, learned from Randy?**

**A:** I'm always going online to see what the world is saying about Randy. He sent me an email a few weeks before he died: "Stop Googling my name and go hug your kids." I have three daughters, so I think of him now, when I hug them or tell them I love them.

As for his advice: The book offers a lot of simple truths that we all need to be reminded of. But Randy was a very black-and-white thinker. He wasn't as always attuned to the gray areas. Not everything that Randy says in the book should be read as the gospel. It opens us up to discussion.

**Q: Can you talk about how the fact that this experience all unfolded at your own alma mater?**

**A:** I think Carnegie Mellon was calling me home in a way. There's a Yiddish word—b'shert—which means "meant to be." I'd like to think that Randy and I were meant to collaborate, and Carnegie Mellon is what brought us together. When Randy needed to decide who was going to write the book with him, he might have been more comfort-

able with the fact that I had gone to school here, too.

**Q: How did you wind up as a columnist at the Journal?**

**A:** When I was a Carnegie Mellon creative writing major, I wrote a letter to every newspaper editor in America, (the top 150 papers), and told them a little white lie—that I would be in their town. I asked to meet with them. And 140 said no, but 10 said yes. So, I went to those towns.

I first worked at the *Orlando Sentinel* as a feature writer, then I went to the *The Wall Street Journal* for three years. There, I wrote a column about replacing Ann Landers. I entered a contest to get an angle for my story, and I won. I did it for 14 years, and now I'm back at the Journal.

**Q: What's on tap for your next project?**

**A:** I'm in the middle of writing a book called "The Girls From Ames," which also grew out of a *The Wall Street Journal* column. It's a nonfiction book about 11 women who grew up in Ames, Iowa, and are now 45 years old. They're hoping it will be like a

nonfiction ["Secrets of the] Ya-Ya Sisterhood" or something. It will be coming out in fall 2009.

**Q: What do you remember most from your Carnegie Mellon career?**

**A:** I left sophomore year to go to Columbia University, and I was there for three weeks. I was so miserable and lonely in New York, and I missed Carnegie Mellon, so I called the dean of H&SS and asked if I could come home. He said yes. I came back, and my fraternity house was a mess. There were bottles and cups and trash everywhere. I asked what happened. Turned out, I was gone for such a short period of time that they hadn't cleaned up from my going-away party.

I wrote a story about the Columbia experience for the Tartan, and Carnegie Mellon printed up that story and sent it out to high school students, saying here's a guy who loved Carnegie Mellon so much that he left an Ivy League school to return here. Columbia officials got very angry and demanded that Carnegie Mellon cease sending out that brochure.

That's my most memorable story.

I HEARD FROM A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO WERE DYING, AND THEY'D TELL ME RANDY CHANGED THE WAY THEY THOUGHT ABOUT HOW THEY WERE GOING TO DIE—THEIR ATTITUDE, THEIR RELATIONS WITH THEIR LOVED ONES. THAT'S PRETTY STRONG STUFF.

## H&SS STAFF RECOGNIZED THROUGH ANDY AWARDS PROGRAM

Steve Pajewski, Associate Director and Senior Academic Advisor of the Information Systems program, received the 2008 Andy Award for Commitment to Students.

The Andy Awards, named for Andrew Carnegie and Andrew Mellon, recognize individual staff members and teams for their outstanding performance and commitment to excellence. In addition to commitment to students, the awards are presented in four other categories: dedication, innovation, culture and university citizenship.

Melissa Snyder, an academic advisor in the H&SS Academic Advisory Center, was also nominated for the award in the commitment to students category.



KEN ANDREYO



## INFORMATION SYSTEMS MOVES INTO NEW SPACE

This semester, the Information Systems program moved into its brand new 3,200-square-foot wing on the second floor of Porter Hall. Housed in a floor built from scratch above the Gregg Hall auditorium, the wing is the end result of an eight-month construction project. It features six offices, a large conference/seminar room, a lounge area for students and reception space.

The space not only brings together faculty members who had previously been in offices scattered through various departments in Baker and Porter Halls, but it also is environmentally friendly, with design and construction meeting LEED certification specifications. The green features include computer-controlled lighting systems, localized heating and cooling controls, use of efficient fixtures and appliances and approved finishing materials like paints and carpets. The renovation also included uncovering the bricked-over windows to reflect the original architectural intent of the building.



**ABOVE:** IN ADDITION TO AMPLE OFFICE SPACE THAT HOUSES ALL OF THE PROGRAM'S FACULTY MEMBERS IN ONE LOCATION, THE NEW INFORMATION SYSTEMS WING FEATURES A GREAT DEAL OF NATURAL LIGHT AND MANY INTERESTING ARCHITECTURAL TOUCHES.

**LEFT:** FIRST-YEAR STUDENT CELETE KATO TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW LOUNGE AREA IN THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS WING WHILE WAITING TO MEET WITH A FACULTY MEMBER.

## MODERN LANGUAGES PROGRAM TEACHES HISPANIC YOUTH ABOUT CULTURE

Once known for attracting a diverse pool of immigrants who provided labor for its many factories, Pittsburgh now is one of the few urban cores in the United States that lacks a sizeable population of the country's newest immigrants—Hispanics. That population seems to be growing, slowly but surely, though.

As is the case with any immigrant population, Pittsburgh's Latino transplants may struggle to achieve a balance between assimilating into their new hometown while holding on to their unique cultural traditions. In the case of Pittsburgh, where the Hispanic population is more dispersed than in other cities, the latter task becomes that much more challenging.

A group of Modern Languages Department faculty members has started a new children's group to help with that effort. El Circulo Juvenil de Cultura gives children from Spanish-speaking households the opportunity to interact, speak their native tongue and learn about the customs and traditions of their countries of origin.

"We're providing children with the opportunity to practice their Spanish and learn about their culture in a fun environment," said Mariana Achugar, an associate professor of Hispanic Studies and Second Language Acquisition who is the group's coordinator. "Plus, they get to make new friends with children from different areas of the region whom they might not get the

opportunity to meet otherwise." The program, which takes place in two-hour sessions held on Saturdays for 10 weeks, relies primarily on the arts—largely music and theater—to provide children with instruction in language and culture. The students work to write a play and accompanying music that is presented to the public during the program's final week.

When the program began last fall, only 12 participants signed up. However, that number doubled for the spring session, jumping to 25. This semester, the students are split into two groups by age.

While Achugar serves as the program's coordinator and point person, she notes that making Circulo Juvenil happen takes a group

effort. A number of her fellow faculty members, including Kenya Dworkin and Felipe Gomez, pitch in, and Spanish-speaking graduate students and undergraduates eagerly offer their assistance as program volunteers. Those students come from throughout the university.

"This type of outreach is such a central part of Carnegie Mellon's mission that we make an effort to include representation from various colleges within the university," Achugar said. "We've found that the student volunteers are very enthusiastic, and the children in the program love to work with them."

"Everybody wins."

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# Carnegie Mellon

FALL 2008

## Reminders

H&SS also issues a monthly email newsletter, the H&SS eNews. If you would like to receive the eNews, please send your name and email address to Joanne Ursenbach at:

[joanneu@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:joanneu@andrew.cmu.edu)

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In addition, Carnegie Mellon University does not discriminate in admission, employment or administration of its programs on the basis of religion, creed, ancestry, belief, age, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity. Carnegie Mellon does not discriminate in violation of federal, state, or local laws or executive orders. However, in the judgment of the Carnegie Mellon Human Relations Commission, the Presidential Executive Order directing the Department of Defense to follow a policy of "Don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue," excludes openly gay, lesbian and bisexual students from receiving ROTC scholarships or serving in the military. Nevertheless, all ROTC classes at Carnegie Mellon University are available to all students.

Inquiries concerning application of these statements should be directed to the Provost, Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, telephone 412-268-6884 or the Vice President for Campus Affairs, Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, telephone 412-268-2057.

Carnegie Mellon University publishes an annual campus security report describing the university's security, alcohol and drug, and sexual assault policies and containing statistics about the number and type of crimes committed on the campus during the preceding three years. You can obtain a copy by contacting the Carnegie Mellon Police Department at 412-268-2323. The security report is available through the World Wide Web at [www.cmu.edu/police/](http://www.cmu.edu/police/).

Obtain general information about Carnegie Mellon University by calling 412-268-2000.

Produced by the Communications Design Group for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, November 2008, 09-302.

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