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# The Observer

Volume 18, Number 17

May 23, 1997

THE OBERLIN COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF NEWSPAPER



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

Mudd's circulation desk supervisor may do cartwheels Monday.

## Class of 1997 Includes Peggi Ignagni

By Carol Ganzel

"Everyone knows about children's tuition," says Peggi Ignagni, "but I wanted it for myself."

Oberlin College offers tuition-remission scholarship aid to children of employees—and a free course every semester to full-time employees. Ignagni, who is circulation desk supervisor in Mudd, has used the second of these benefits to take a course every semester since fall 1988. She will graduate with the Class of 1997 and plans to march in Monday's commencement.

"You might see me doing cartwheels," she says. Unlike some of the student workers at the circulation desk who are her classmates, she notes, she does not have student loans to repay.

Ignagni came to Oberlin with an Associate Science degree from Oakland Community College in Michigan—46 credit hours toward the 112 Oberlin requires for graduation. The tuition benefit attracted her here; she read the catalog before she applied for a job. In April 1988 she "took

*Continued on page 6*

## Student Proposal Could Save the College Money and Reduce Paper Use

A student initiative could save the College 133,000 sheets of paper and more than \$10,000 next year.

Senior Devin Theriot-Orr, organizational senator from the Oberlin Student Cooperative Association to the Student Senate, and sophomore Sadhu Johnston, recycling assistant in the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, are leading a drive to reduce the daily flood of paper in students' mailboxes by implementing a weekly student mailing. The mailing, to be called Oberlin Shorts, would be the job of a student worker, who would compile and abbreviate messages from submitted announcements. Oberlin Shorts would also exist as a web page on Oberlin Online. The complete announcements would be available in Wilder Hall and electronically.

The plan would have no effect on faculty and staff mailings, and certain exceptions to the restrictions on student mailings would be allowed: security alerts, Fusers, and schedules for the Oberlin Film Series, WOBC, and conservatory concerts would still go through.

The purposes of the plan, according to Theriot-Orr and Johnston's Proposal to Reduce Waste and Create a More Informed Student Body, are "to create a more informed student body by developing a vehicle for the efficient distribution of information to students" and "to push for the continuing realization of Oberlin College's commitment to environmental responsibility."

The students estimate that if their plan had been in place this year, 133,000 sheets of paper would have been eliminated from student mailboxes, and College departments and student organizations—which initiated the 72 mass student mailings of the year—would have collectively saved \$10,380. An average all-student mailing costs College departments—academic or administrative—and student organizations \$130.

The proposal calls for a summer student worker in the Office of Environmental Health and Safety to work out details of the plan, including an educational program for the beginning of next school year.

## Mellon Grant to Bring Postdoc Fellows to Campus and Expand Emphasis on International and U.S. Ethnic Studies

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded Oberlin \$380,000 for a new postdoctoral-fellowship program in the humanities and social sciences. The program has two goals. One is to give recent Ph.D. recipients in the humanities and social sciences significant teaching experience and research opportunities that will help prepare them for regular faculty appointments. The other is to release Oberlin faculty from some of their teaching responsibilities so that they can spend time developing courses that emphasize U.S. ethnic-minority experience or international content. The project will bring four postdoctoral fellows to Oberlin for two-year positions over the next five years.

Clayton Koppes, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, will direct the project with advice from the College Faculty Council and the college Educational Plans and Policies Committee.

"International subjects and ethnic-minority issues—and, potentially, the relationship of these two areas—are central to higher education today," says

Koppes. "The presence of Mellon postdocs [at Oberlin] will enable us to enhance significantly our treatment of these areas. I think new Ph.D.s will also benefit greatly from their involvement with the Oberlin College community."

"The Mellon Foundation has had a unique impact on liberal arts education in the United States by targeting much of its grant making to support innovation at colleges," says David Love, associate vice president for research and development, whose office prepared the grant proposal with Koppes and other members of the faculty. "The postdoctoral program will help broaden the curriculum in areas that are of great interest both to students and faculty."

The program is open to several departments and programs in the humanities and social sciences, including those in African-American studies, anthropology, art history, East Asian studies, English, German and Russian, history, philosophy, politics, religion, Romance languages, sociology, and

*Continued on page 4*

## Two Conservatory Students Head for Germany as Fulbright Scholars

By Larry Herman

Graduating seniors Amy Durica, a double-degree voice and German-studies major from Norfolk, Virginia, and Jennifer Novak, a piano major from Omaha, have been awarded Fulbright scholarships for next year. Durica will teach English and American studies at the Voltaire Gesamtschule in Potsdam, Germany, starting in September. She will also enroll in the Berlin Musik Hochschule and study voice privately. Novak will study Ger-

man piano repertoire at the Würzburg Musik Hochschule and participate March 1998 in the International Bach Piano Competition in Saarbrücken.

After her year in Germany Novak will study collaborative piano and chamber music with Samuel Sanders at the Juilliard School.

Larry Herman is director of public relations and career development in the conservatory.



Novak



Durica



With the General Faculty discussion and acceptance of the College's final long-range planning report on Tuesday (see "Faculty Meetings" inside), only two official discussions of the report remain on the docket: one with the Board of Trustees during its June 12-14 meeting and one with the Alumni Council Executive Board at its June 20-22 meeting. In the fall faculty and administrative committees will take up specific ideas in the report for further discussion and action.

## Faculty and Staff Notes



**Stephen Aron**, teacher of classical guitar, has recorded a CD with his wife, soprano JoNell Aron, of turn-of-the-century songs in original arrangements, *Pleasant Moment:*

*Popular Songs from the Dawn of the Century*. The recording is scheduled for June release on the Soundset label; Tuscany Publications will publish the arrangements. •

With his recently acquired replica of an 1824 fortepiano in the back of his van, pianist **David Breitman**, assistant professor of historical performance, and baritone Sanford Sylvan are traveling the country, giving more than 25 recitals of Franz Schubert's lieder on the occasion of Schubert's 200th birthday. Performances have included two programs at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York. The pair's most recent recording—*L'horizon chimérique: Songs and Piano Music of Fauré* (their third for Elektra/None-such)—was nominated for a Grammy award this year. • **David Brockett**, assistant professor of horn, appeared with the Cleveland Orchestra playing Wagner Tuba in Bruckner's Seventh Symphony April 17-19, with Jahja Ling conducting. He also appeared with the Burning River Brass in a recital of brass and organ music at the Church of the Covenant in Cleveland April 21. The recital was recorded for later broadcast on National Public Radio's "Performance Today." Earlier, David played for the National Touring Company production of *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* during its run at Cleveland's Palace Theater. • In February **Paul Cohen**, teacher of saxophone, and his New Hudson Saxophone Quartet performed the revival premiere of Flagello's *Concerto Sinfonico* with the Manhattan Philharmonia.



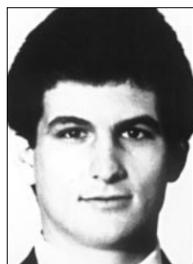
The work had been performed once in 1985, then lost. Paul was instrumental in preparing the reconstructed parts. Also in February Paul performed *Gomma*, a new work for solo saxophone by Swedish composer Magnus F. Andersson, as part of a contemporary music festival concert by the North/South Consonance in New York City. To the Fore Publishers, Paul's publishing company, recently published a lost work by Elie Siegmeister, *Around New York*, that was premiered at the 1939 World's Fair. This season his CD *Vintage Saxophones Revisited* was released. As part of the Henry Cowell Centenary, Cohen performed Cowell's *Hymn and Fuguing Tune #18* (soprano and contrabass saxophones) at Lincoln Center. In April Paul performed the Creston Concerto with the Ridgewood Concert Band and on the same concert premiered a new version of Fisher Tull's *Sarabande and Gigue* for alto saxophone and percussion ensemble. In a concert by the Long Island Composer's Guild Paul premiered a work for clarinet and saxophone by Leo Kraft, and performed works for saxophone and piano by Elie Siegmeister and Steven Rosenhaus. In April he performed the alto saxophone solo in Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances* with the Greenwich Symphony. Paul, who is principal saxophonist with the orchestra, was featured in interviews and articles in the Connecticut papers. He also played tenor saxophone with the Glenn Miller Band in a series of April and May concerts. In May he joined the New Sousa Band on a midwest tour; he is principal in the group, and plays soprano and alto. He also served as clinician and adjudicator in two wind-ensemble festivals, New York OnStage in New York City, and the Lake Erie Festival in Cleveland. • **Marcia Colish**, Artz Professor of History, lectured for the Medieval Institute at the University of Notre Dame March 5. Her talk was "Re-envisioning the Middle Ages: A View from Intellectual History." On March 14 she was a commentator in a panel, Medieval Debates on the Eternity of the World, at the meeting of the Medieval Association of the Pacific in Honolulu. Marcia chaired a May 9 session, *Cantus and Theology*, for which she was also a commentator, at the 32nd International Congress of Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University. She gave a paper, "Machiavelli's Art of War: A Reconsideration," May 16 at the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association meeting in Banff, Alberta. • **Roger Copeland**, professor of theater, delivered eight outside lectures this semester: "Who Lost the Arts: Why America Has No National Arts Policy as We Approach the 21st Century" at Arizona State University April 10 and at the University of Maryland Humanities Forum, where he spoke as part of the Distinguished Lecture Series April 2; "Founding Mothers:



stations in 40 states, is the oldest continuous speakers' series in the nation. Recent speakers include President Bill Clinton, Gerry Adams, Madeleine Albright, Sarah Brady, and Vladimir Ashkenazy. • **Joanne Erwin**, assistant professor of music education, conducted the North Olmsted String Festival April 25 with 300 string students in grades 5 through 12. Joanne is also a consultant in an evaluation of the secondary instrumental-music program in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. • **Gregory Fulkerson '70**, professor of violin, joined Lynne Ramsey, teacher of viola, and pianist Elizabeth Pastor for an all-Mozart concert on the Music from Stan Hywet series in Akron May 11. • **Jeffrey Hamburger**, Houck Professor in the Humanities, has received a Guggenheim Fellowship. He will do scholarly work on the art of female monasticism in the Holy Roman Empire with a view to preparing a major international loan exhibition devoted to the subject, to be held in Germany sometime early in the next millennium. "It will be the first show of its kind ever organized," says Jeffrey, "and will involve about 200 objects, some never previously exhibited." Jeffrey proposed the show and will be leading the team of scholars preparing the catalog. • **Herbert Henke '53**, professor of eurhythmics, spent March 2-18 at Tunghai University in Taiwan as a consultant in aural skills. The Shansi Association sponsored his trip. • **Roderic Knight**, professor of ethnomusicology, gave a presentation, "World Music: Up Beat or Dead Beat?," at Denison University March 19. The talk focused on the effectiveness of genres that mix the sounds of western popular or art music with traditional music from the Mandé of West Africa, the qawwali genre of Pakistan, and the Australian didgeridoo. Rod illustrated his talk with recorded examples. • **Wendell Logan**, professor of African-American music, **Nanette Yannuzzi Macias**, assistant professor of art, and **Carter McAdams**, associ-

Cont. on page 3

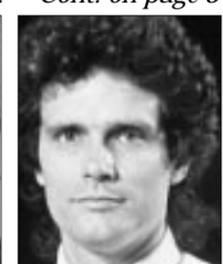
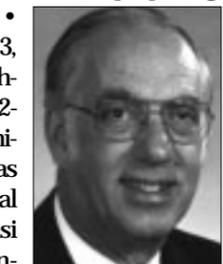
ate professor of double bass and jazz studies, toured Germany and Austria in January as principal double bassist with the American Sinfonietta. In March he organized 65 bassists and 15 clinicians in the Richard Davis Foundation for Young Bassists annual convention in Madison, Wisconsin. Peter was one of the musicians featured in the clinicians' concert. In June Peter will coordinate and adjudicate the International Society of Bassists International Jazz Bass Competition held at Rice University. • On April 13 **Tammy Dowley-Blackman**, associate director of admissions and coordinator of multicultural student recruitment, was a guest on *Women of Color Speak Out*, a television show produced with Channel 19 and Meridia Hospital by GAP Productions, a public-relations and marketing firm owned by Alexandria Johnson Boone, host of the show. Tammy talked about educational issues and Oberlin College. On May 8 Tammy was in the *Today Show* live outdoor audience. Holding a sign with Oberlin's name on it, she publicized the College in a brief interview with Al Roker. • In April **Monique Duphil**, professor of piano, performed the Ginastera Piano Quintet with the Rios Reyna String Quartet in Tucson, Safford, and Scottsdale, Arizona. She also played a recital at Carnegie Hall with cellist David Primo and performed two Ravel concerts with the Caracas Symphony Orchestra under Akira Endo this month. This summer Monique and her husband, cellist Jay Humeston, will be in residence at the Hakuba Chamber Music Festival in Japan and will spend August in Europe, performing 12 concerts at five summer festivals. • President **Nancy Dye** has been invited to address the City Club of Cleveland about education issues July 11. The City Club Forum, broadcast over 180 radio and television



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# Transitions

## New Employees

**Ralph Francis** (Lorain County Community College A.A. 1982) is an officer with the department of safety and security. From 1974 to 1978 he was in the U.S. Air Force, where he received many awards, including a Commendation Medal, an Outstanding Unit Award, a Good Conduct Medal, and the Meritorious Service and Longevity Services Award. He worked as a mall security officer from 1979 to 1980 and for Inner-City Hospital Security from 1981 to 1990. Since 1990 Francis had been employed by the state of Ohio as a security-officer specialist. In 1988 he completed the Ohio Peace Officer Basic Training Program at Cuyahoga County Community College. His interests include spirituality, religions, environmentalism, aviculture, holistic health, psychology, photography, and quantum theory and thought. Francis lives with an Amazon parrot named Buddy-bird and enjoys reading and listening to music. He says he looks forward to "working with members of a diverse residential and academic community." **Dennis Greive** (Ohio State B.S. 1979) is manager of grounds. His professional interests include horticulture, education, and, he says, parenting. His previous employment includes work at the Smithsonian Institution (1995-1997), the Maryland National Capital Park and

Planning Commission (1989-1995), and, earlier, ISS Landscape Management, in Tampa. A native of Medina, Ohio, Greive enjoys photography and golf. He says he is looking forward to "making staff and students aware of the benefits of beautiful grounds." He and his wife, Bonnie, have two children, Elizabeth, 12, and Gregory, 10. **Pradnya Martz** (University of Bombay B.Arch., University of Massachusetts, Amherst M.L.A. 1994) is architect/project manager with the Office of Facilities, Planning, and Construction. Her professional interests include renderings, black and white sketches, graphic design, slide shows, urban design, and land use. Self-employed from 1994 to 1996, she did "anything and everything related to design" for contractors, architects, landscape architects, and artists. Since 1996 she worked for Architectural Design Studios in Medina. Martz received an Ohio Arts Council Research Grant through the Oberlin Historical Improvement Organization for designing a garden pavilion as part of a landscape master plan. Married to Todd Martz, she immigrated to the U.S. in 1991 and enjoys calligraphy, plants, philosophy, singing Indian



popular music, dance and music from around the world, long walks exploring Oberlin, biking, hiking, camping, and attending events at the College. She says she is looking forward to "walking to and from work on warm, sunny days."

## Changes in Title and Appointment

On April 24 **Wendy Smith Huen's** title changed from career advisor to assistant director of career services. She's been at Oberlin since September. Secretary IV **Sandra Kolek** transferred from the economics department to the main library April 28. She started her College employment in the economics department in September. On May 5 **Rhonda Worcester** joined Development Resources as a departmental assistant. She had been an administrative assistant in the Office of Mail Service since 1987. **Gail Johns** transferred May 21 from the registrar's office, where she had been an administrative technician in student records, to the Office of Student Accounts, where she is a loan clerk. Johns started working for the College in the development office in 1985 and spent almost a year with the student union beginning in August 1995. On July 1 **Wendy Kozol** will become assistant professor of women's studies and history. She had been a visiting assis-

tant professor of history from 1992-93 through this school year. **Kai Li**, visiting lecturer in Chinese since 1989, will become the East Asian studies faculty-in-residence August 15.

## Departures

Client support analyst **Don Hilton** left the Houck Computing Center April 27; he started at the center in 1992. May 14 was **Kathy Mead's** last day as director of the Oberlin Fund. She joined Development and Alumni Affairs in 1994, when the Oberlin Fund was called the annual fund. On May 15 **Christine Kretiv**, sports-medicine intern, left the College, and on June 15 **Miguel Curl**, head basketball coach and assistant soccer coach, will leave. Kretiv and Curl had worked for the College since August. The end of the job assignment is coming up for these people on June 30: **Hiroko Hirakawa**, visiting instructor of Japanese; **David Stradling**, visiting assistant professor of history; **Jyotika Viridi**, visiting assistant professor of women's studies; and **Amy Wordelman**, visiting assistant professor of religion. Hirakawa and Stradling were in their positions a year; Viridi taught this semester; and Wordelman was a visiting instructor in religion the first semester of 1990-91 and a research associate in 1991-92 before returning to teach this school year.

## Faculty & Staff . . .

*Continued from page 2*

ate professor of theater and dance, have each received a \$5000 Individual Artist Fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council. They are among 81 recipients of the 1997 fellowships awarded to Ohio artists judged to possess exceptional talent, based on the quality of their past work. Wendell will use the award to compose a cantata based on *God's Trombones*, a collection of poetry by James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938), composer of "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Wendell will compose his piece for orchestra, solo singers, and choir. Nanette will continue her work on current projects, including one using video that she will execute this summer. She'll exhibit some of this work at Hyde Gallery in California in August. Carter has many projects in mind and will choose among them in the next few months. • **Miles Mauney**, emeritus professor of fortepiano, was featured in a story published in the March 28 *Island Packet*, a newspaper on Hilton Head Island. The article profiled five pianists, Miles among them, who were scheduled to perform for an event called Celebrity Keyboard at the Westin Resort Hotel April 1. Miles joined Oberlin in 1963 as an assistant professor and retired to Hilton Head in 1985. • **Scott McMillin**, assistant professor of English, gave a paper May 8 at the annual conference of the International Association for Philosophy and Literature. The essay, "Interpretation in the Margins of the Preposterous," dealt with prob-



lems of time and the nature of reading. • In March **Catherina Meints**,



teacher of viola da gamba and baroque cello, performed in Chicago on the viola da gamba with oboist Alex Klein '87. In a review of their performance—of *The Passion According to St. Matthew* by J. S. Bach—the *Chicago Tribune* recognized their playing as providing outstanding obbligatos to the solo voices. • **James Morris**, associate professor of religion, was in M a r r a k e c h , Morocco, May 6-11, when he was the American representative to the fifth annual Sufi Mawsimiyat, an international colloquium on the intellectual and spiritual heritage of the Master Ibn 'Arabi. Jim delivered a public lecture in Arabic and French, the English title of which was "The Reception of Ibn 'Arabi in the New World: The Visible and Invisible Process of Transmission." On May 2 and 3 Jim contributed to the international colloquium on the philosophic thought of Henry Corbin organized by the Centre national de la recherche scientifique and the Institut d'études iranniennes in Paris, lecturing



in French on Corbin in the Far West and the reception of Corbin's thought in America. • **Lynne Rogers**, assistant professor of music theory, has received a grant from the Paul Sacher Foundation, which holds the Stravinsky Archives. The grant will help pay her living expenses in Basel, Switzerland, from January through April 1999, when she will be at the archives working with Stravinsky's sketches and drafts for his late works. Lynne is seeking to uncover Stravinsky's methods for creating and organizing harmonies in the works. • **George Sakakeeny**, professor of bassoon, has released a recording of the Villa-Lobos *Duo pour Hautbois et Basson* with oboist Alex Klein '87. The recording is included on a new Crystal Records CD, *International Double Reed Society's 25th Anniversary*. Viennese composer Alexander Blechinger has written a bassoon concerto for George. The 25-minute piece, *Fagott Konzert*, is scored for solo bassoon with string orchestra, harp, and percussion. George will give the world premiere of the work, a major contribution to the bassoon repertoire, July 17 at the New Hampshire Music Festival in Plymouth. Two more performances are planned for the fall: October 1 in Vienna at the Musikverien as part of the Harmonia Classica series, and October 4 at the Kiev Festival. George will record the concerto with the Kiev Camerata for a disc to be released in 1998. • **Haskell Thomson**, professor of organ, played a concert to a capacity house on the Trinity Organ Recital Series in Akron April 11. • The *Journal of Chemical Education* published "The Thermodynamics of Drunk Driving" by

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**Robert Thompson**, professor of chemistry, in its May issue. In the article Rob acknowledges **Norman Craig Biggs** Professor in the Natural Sciences, for "extremely

helpful discussions of the solution-vapor-ethanol equilibrium and thermodynamics." • **Timothy Weiss**, assistant professor of wind conducting, conducted the Cleveland Institute of Music's New Music Ensemble in concert April 23. • **Gene Young**, Edgar Distinguished Visiting Artist in



Conducting, conducted the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble in a performance of Darius Milhaud's Concerto for Percussion and *Creation of the World* for the Cleveland Darius Milhaud Society at the Cleveland Institute of Music March 3. • **Grover Zinn**, Danforth Professor of Religion, appeared with the Vermeer Quartet in a performance of Franz Joseph Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ* at the University of Chicago March 28. Zinn delivered one of the meditations accompanying the quartet's performance of Haydn's musical interpretation of the Crucifixion. Radio station WFMT broadcasted the concert.



## Spring R&D Grants Fund Research on Worker's Politics, Love Poetry, Rock Powders, and Explosives Residues

The College Faculty Research and Development Committee has funded all 11 requests received for spring grants-in-aid. Granted amounts range from \$510 to \$4000 and total \$22,454.95.

**Marc Blecher**, professor of politics, will go to China this summer to continue his research on worker's politics. He will spend four weeks at Nankai University in Jianjin, where he will meet with his research assistants to resolve questions about interviews they have been conducting. He will explore new issues and broaden the sample size by conducting a second round of interviews himself. And he will launch a survey project that makes use of Q-methodology, a quantitative approach designed to unearth discourses, rather than opinions, of workers' politics in China. Blecher will meet with a director at an electric-pump corporation, hoping to further chances of arranging a stint of factory work during which he might engage in participant observation. He will also consult with Chinese political-science colleagues on the Nankai faculty and spend a few days at the China Trade Union Federation in Beijing. His project is *A World to Lose: Chinese Workers and the State in Crisis*.

Assistant Professor of East Asian Studies **Pauline Chen's** project—*From Eroticism to Romance: The Birth of Chinese Love Poetry*—explores the birth of love poetry in the Tang dynasty (618-907) from the conventional and erotic treatments of women in poetry from earlier periods. Chen's research investigates how the development of love poetry reflects a shift away from the conception of women as mere sensual diversions towards a recognition that, in their ability to inspire passionate feeling, women have the power to threaten social order despite their lowly status.

**Michael Fisher**, professor of history, will extend his research on early South Asian immigrants to Britain. In his project—*Asian Seamen as Immigrants into British Society, 1750-1850*—Fisher will study the lowest socio-economic class of Indian male immigrants: Asian sailors who entered British society despite official efforts to isolate them and send them back to India. His preliminary research indicates that many Indian seamen became included in British society through their marriage to European women, and that the progeny of these marriages apparently merged into British society. If his research substantiates the evidence, says Fisher, "it would deeply question prevailing ideas both that imperialism meant a one-way imposition by European men over a 'feminine Orient' and that English society was somehow 'purely' White at this time."

In her project, *My Father's War*, **Erika Leppman**, visiting assistant professor of art, will work on a photo-based multimedia installation about family, public and private memory, and the men who spent time in the World War II internment camps of eastern Canada. In the summer of 1940 over 11,000 male refugees, prisoners and displaced persons of Austrian and German descent living in England, were shipped to internment camps in Canada and Australia. Leppman's research

will include trips to photograph and videotape what remains of eight sites in Canada and to conduct interviews with surviving internees and their children, including her father and siblings.

The project that **David Miller**, associate professor of biology, will carry out is a continuation of ongoing research designed to demonstrate that finely ground rock powders can be a valuable source of mineral nutrients for plant growth. A variety of such powders have been shown to increase nutrient content and yield of plants, stimulate microbial activity in composts, and stimulate a soil mold growing on growth media lacking specific micronutrients. A key missing link in the research has been an accurate measure of the elemental composition of the different rock powders. The project, to be executed with Peter Dahl, a geologist from Kent State University, will allow such an analysis to be done of two plant macronutrient and six micronutrient elements.

For The Dartmoor Project—An Artists' Perambulation, **Richard Povall**, associate professor of computer music and new media, will travel in June to Dartmoor National Park in Devon County, England, for six weeks of research. The resulting artworks will open to the public in 1999. Povall and his collaborator, Oberlin-based visual artist Nancy Sinclair, will focus their research on the contemporary people, places, ecology, culture, and political and social boundaries of the 356-square-mile park, the largest and wildest area of open country in southern England. They will begin their research with a reenactment of the original perambulation of Dartmoor, carried out by the Sheriff of Devon in 1240 to determine the boundaries and note the significant physical features of the 50-mile circumference of the park. "The finished artworks," says Povall, "are likely to be quirky, personalized, unconventional—neither documentary nor social science but, instead, artists' interpretations rooted in the essential humanity of the people and their place."

**Augusta Rohrbach**, visiting assistant professor of English, will spend the summer at Harvard University's Houghton Library, where she will pursue materials related to her manuscript "Riddles of Identity: Slavery and the Origins of Realism in the United States." She expects with her research to improve her argument that slave narratives exerted significant pressures on white mainstream writers. "This research will help me reposition the traditional view of how realism developed in the United States," says Rohrbach. "Rather than consider the genre's European roots, I examine the impact of slavery and the slave narratives on the American literary scene. By considering the relationship of the slave narratives and the cause of slavery itself as an important factor in the development of realism, this project offers insight on the development of realism in strictly American terms."

The grant to **Sarah Schuster**, associate professor of art, is to support a May 1998 one-person exhibition in New York. The show, at the Ceres Gallery on Broadway, will be of three multipanel paintings that will deal

with notions of longing and desire. One of the paintings, "Flower Bed," will cover 70 five-by-seven-inch wood panels. Each of the other two paintings, "If I Had Wings" and "Slip Cover," will be executed on 60 panels, each five-by-five inches and six-by-six inches, respectively. The grant will help pay for the material and an assistant to help build the panels.

**Robert Thompson**, professor of chemistry, will look into solid-phase extraction of explosives. Thompson learned on his recent sabbatical at the FBI Laboratory that traces of explosives from bombing sites are difficult to detect because the residues are spread over a large area and are in small amounts. The use of solid-phase extraction (SPE), which can concentrate explosives from a large amount of bomb debris into a small volume for analysis, is one possible solution to the problem. Thompson's project focuses on the preparation and testing of solid-phase sorbents (substances that take up and hold other substances by absorption or adsorption), that might better capture energetic compounds. Thompson will compare the recovery efficiency of his sorbents to that of commercial sorbents now used for explosives-residues analysis.

With his project *The Identity Dilemma, Class, and Intergenerational Dynamics in the Chinese-American Community of the 1920s* **Benson Tong**, visiting assistant professor of history, will travel to archival institutions in northern California, including ones at Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley, and the Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco. There he will examine the contrasts and shifts in cultural conflicts and personal identity between middle-class and working-class Chinese Americans of the second generation. He will look for the internal and external forces that shaped the working-class consciousness, and examine the degree to which continuity or discontinuity between the first and second generations was more marked. Tong plans also to write an article on the relationship between intergenerational dynamics and personal identity across class lines as the basis of a larger work on identity in the Chinese-American community of the 1920s and early 1930s.

Funding for her project, *Feedback and Outreach for the Museum CD-ROM Catalogue*, will enable **Jenny Wilker**, catalog editor for the Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM), to travel to the Louvre Museum, in Paris, where she has been invited to demonstrate the AMAM CD-ROM to several hundred museum professionals from around the world at the Fourth International Conference on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums. The CD-ROM, *Masterworks for Learning: A College Collection Catalogue*, which Wilker produced with Oberlin students, addresses two audiences: the international scholarly community and current and prospective Oberlin undergraduates. (Each student on campus will receive a copy of the CD-ROM in September.)

## Postdocs . . .

*Continued from page 1*

women's studies. In applying for the program, eligible departments and programs will specify the classes or range of courses the postdoctoral fellow will teach; the faculty members to be partially released from their regular teaching duties as a result; and the ethnic-minority or international-content curriculum-development projects they will undertake.

Fellows will teach one course each semester and devote the remainder of their time to research. They will teach introductory, intermediate, and advanced classes to gain experience with various levels of learners, enrollments, and curricula. Each fellow will be paired with a faculty mentor of the host department.

Applications to host a postdoctoral fellow beginning fall 1998 will be available at the Office of Sponsored Programs this coming September 1 and will be due later in the month.

## Marxism . . .

*Continued from page 12*

older Chinese workers about the 1950s, when pay was more equal, when shop-floor party officials actually worked harder for less pay than ordinary workers, and when working-class morale was much higher than it is today—all findings Marxism would also predict.

The last program was a talk by Eric Mann, director of the Los Angeles Labor/Community Strategy Center. Mann taught a module in Oberlin's Environmental Studies Program and Department of Politics last spring. He has been active in building several social movements. One kept General Motors from shutting down its Van Nuys Assembly Plant for 13 years. Another sought to hold Texaco responsible for the pollution and damage caused to a poor neighborhood by an explosion at one of its Los Angeles refineries. Most recently Mann has helped organize the Los Angeles Bus Riders' Union, which just won a nationally reported lawsuit. The suit requires the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority to divert the vast sums it is spending on subway construction that serves a small number of suburbanites to improving the bus system used by hundreds of thousands of Los Angeles's poorest people.

Mann showed how Marxist analysis as well as the organizational strategies and tactics of Lenin, Gramsci, and Mao helped him do his political work despite vast historical and geographic differences, and despite the fact that the others were engaged in armed revolution while he is not.

The range, energy, and coherence of the theoretical and practical work—and human experiences—described in the *Marxism and... series* demonstrates *prima facie* that Marxism is alive at Oberlin and beyond, that it is growing out of and away from its long and problematic association with revolutionary state socialism, and that it has the power to motivate and to assist critical intellectuals and activists on many fronts. Nurturing such critical thinkers and doers is what Oberlin has always been about.

*Marc Blecher is professor of politics and East Asian studies.*

## Looking Back and Looking Ahead

By Joseph Snider

The measurement of the shift in frequency of electromagnetic radiation that is produced by the earth's and sun's gravity was a central preoccupation of my life both before and during my time at Oberlin. It gave me great satisfaction to be able to build a solar telescope and associated apparatus here, with the help of students, to test one of the three original predictions of Einstein's theory of general relativity. Out of that work came a unique portable spectrometer, which students helped me build and transport to Kitt Peak and Mount Wilson Observatories. With it we were able to measure the solar rotation rate and study oscillations of small areas of the sun's surface.

My greatest enjoyment in research has come from making apparatus I can understand and control, then using it to measure some physical quantity not known before. I think of this as probing an actual external world and learning something about it that is independent of us and valid for all time. How exciting it is to be the first person in the world to know something about that world!

Yet I have gradually realized that my most significant contribution at Oberlin would be to help students understand what is known, rather than to discover new things. From the start of an academic career there is constant tension between the demands of making original contributions to one's field, whose quantity rather than quality often carries most weight, and the equally insistent demands of preparation and presentation associated with teaching. Perhaps our competitive, publicity-driven, commercial society is responsible for this atmosphere, or perhaps its origin lies within each of us. One consequence of such a climate is that, without realizing it, we deny ourselves and our colleagues much of the sense of achievement that is rightfully ours as we engage in our classroom teaching.

I look back with great pleasure on my years of teaching. It has been a privilege to introduce others to beautiful, powerful concepts as well as to experimental apparatus and techniques.

In recent years my interests and outlook have been changing. The history and philosophy of science have become more attractive to me. In another direction, I have become increasingly interested in contributing to the improvement of precollege science education. Some of my efforts so far have been teaching in a National Science Foundation (NSF) program held at Mills College for people who had given up their former careers to become high-school science teachers; inventing a simple device that shows how the sun appears to move across the sky at any time of year, now being produced commercially for use in the classroom; and teaching a two-week summer course in astronomy for high-school teachers at the College of the Atlantic.

Perhaps I can help in small ways to improve our appallingly poor system of precollege science education. The longest and most significant phase of my life is ending, but a new one is just beginning.

*Joseph Snider, professor of physics, is retiring this year. This piece is an edited excerpt of remarks he delivered at his recent retirement celebration. The entire manuscript is an electronic link from this issue of the Observer.*



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

**Joseph Snider began teaching at Oberlin in 1969; George Andrews '54 in 1962; Nathan Greenberg in 1956; Dewey Ganzel in 1958; Jere Bruner in 1967; Stuart Friebert in 1961; and Ira Steinberg in 1961. Fernando Arrojo, not pictured, began in 1976. Alice Chalifoux is retiring from the conservatory as teacher of harp this year. She began teaching at Oberlin in 1971. See "Faculty Meetings" for a few more words about her retirement.**

## 8 Members of the A&S Faculty End Their Teaching Careers

They have taught their last classes, and soon they will have graded their last exams and read their last student papers. Eight members of the College of Arts and Sciences are retiring this year. Last week the *Observer* asked seven of them—the eighth, Fernando Arrojo, is in Spain—to come together for a photograph in Rice Faculty Lounge and to answer one question. The question was, "What will you remember most happily about your time at Oberlin?"

"If you had asked me that question before May 12, I would have responded, 'the academic year 1992-93, when both Chris (our son) and I were members of the Department of Mathematics and occupied adjacent offices on the second floor of King,'" answered George Andrews, Delaney Professor of Mathematics. "However, now I must report that the event that I will remember most happily about my years here is the wonderful retirement dinner arranged for me by my departmental colleagues. The warmth and love I felt that evening, May 12, will always be an extremely happy memory." (See "Andrews at the Board.")

"I think the time I'll remember most happily," said Jere Bruner, associate professor of politics, "is when my wife, Katharina, and I and our daughter, Ziska, lived in Harkness. We lived there for 11 years and made some wonderful

friends. That was from 1972 to 1983."

Stuart Friebert, professor of creative writing, said the things he would remember most happily were "too many to name," then added, "just the privilege it's been—how lucky we are to have this life and all the dear people—what a place."

"The Oberlin students, who made my work easy, and my colleagues, who made it fun," was the response from Dewey Ganzel, professor of English.

First answering, "No one particular thing," Nathan Greenberg, professor of classics, had a second thought: "What I liked was the first day of class—when you still had all your illusions."

"I will remember most happily," said Joseph Snider, professor of physics, "three things: first, my sharing with students a sense of the beauty and mystery of the universe, and of how its underlying nature can be at least partially understood through the concepts, apparatus, and techniques of physics; second, the particular occasions in office, lab, and observatory when together we learned something new about the universe; and third, the changes in myself that the richness and challenge of these years at Oberlin have brought about." (See "Looking Back and Looking Ahead.")

"Probably the friends I made soon after getting here, many with whom I'm still close," answered Ira Steinberg, professor of philosophy.

Several of the soon-to-be-emeritus professors stayed in the faculty lounge after the photo had been taken, and reminisced. Ganzel and Greenberg remembered teaching eight classes a year when they first came to Oberlin; Steinberg said the course load had dropped to six by the time he started.

Ganzel drew sympathy from the others when he said he taught eight o'clock classes six days a week for five years. The group seemed to temper its commiseration, though, when many recalled the good old days of students' showing up for eight o'clock classes. "Now nine o'clock is a problem," they said, shaking their heads, at least figuratively.

They remembered when the mathematics department was in Peters Hall, and when Steinberg's office was where the bowling alley is now. They remembered when classes met in College houses, Ganzel recalling one house with black walnut floors an inch and a half thick. They remembered the stir on campus in 1964, when *Leadership in a Small Town*, by former Oberlin professor Aaron Wildavsky (now deceased), was published—naming names.

When Ganzel remembered he still had papers to grade, the group broke up, its members appearing glad to have had another chance to congregate as professors, but eager to move on.

## Andrews at the Board

By Susan Colley

(with gratitude and profuse apologies to Ernest Lawrence Thayer)

It looks extremely rocky for Oberlin Math this day;  
Our senior ranks depleted since one fewer wants to stay—  
So when Quenell announced his leave and Bosch and Walsh did the same,  
A pallor wreathed the features of the teachers who remained.

Those straggling few got up to go, leaving there the rest  
With the hope that springs eternal within the human breast.  
For they thought: "If only Andrews would replace that motley horde,  
We'd be OK a few more days, with Andrews at the board."

Now Sam preceded Andrews and likewise so had Vance,  
In the role of Department Chairman, a job full of romance.  
And on that pair of faces a knowing expression sat:  
"Surely you realize, George, that retirement's where it's at."

But George worked on in King there, to the happiness of all,  
With a smile, a quip, a helpful tip, as he would amble down the hall.  
And when the dawn had risen and we saw what

had occurred,  
There was Andrews with his integrals and committee work so absurd.  
And from the gladdened multitude went up a joyous yell—  
It rumbled in the mountaintops, it rattled in the dell;  
It struck upon the hillside and hit a wondrous chord;  
For Andrews, mighty Andrews, was coming to the board.

There was ease in George's manner as he stepped into his place,  
There was pride in George's bearing and a smile on George's face;  
And when responding to the cheers, he flashed a big grin forward.  
No student in the class could doubt 'twas Andrews at the board.

Some sixty eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with chalk,  
And thirty tongues were wagging when he started in to talk;  
Then when the first equation he did at last begin to solve,  
A hush grew over the classroom, as they observed his calm resolve.

At once a well-graphed sphere came hurtling

through the air  
And Andrews stood computing its tangent plane with care.  
Close by a nerdy freshman scratched his unwashed head;  
"What's the value of that factor?" "Minus one," George Andrews said.

With a smile of Christian charity George Andrews's visage shone;  
He stilled the rising tumult, he made the class move on;  
He signaled to his students and once more the questions flew  
About graphs of conic sections—you know, curves of degree two.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright,  
The band is playing somewhere and somewhere hearts are light;  
And somewhere colleagues are laughing and students are inspired.  
But there is no joy in Obieville—  
Professor Andrews has retired.

*Susan Colley is professor of mathematics. This poem is part of the memory of his retirement dinner that Delaney Professor of Mathematics George Andrews will remember. See "8 Members of the Faculty End Their Teaching Careers."*



**Junior Kristen Sandstrom stops at the Peters Hall exhibit in the main library. Peters Hall was named for Richard G. Peters, a former Oberlin academy student and a Michigan timber baron who underwrote much of the original construction. To protect the items from excessive illumination, the exhibit will come down June 9, but Archives staff will re-mount it in September. A brochure accompanies the exhibition.**

## Exhibit about Peters Hall Celebrates 110 Years of the Building's History

Anticipating the September rededication of Peters Hall—and extra College visitors at commencement time—College Archives has put together in the first-floor open area of the main library an exhibition to commemorate the 1887 dedication of the landmark building. Items on display show the varied uses of Peters Hall as campus space between 1900 and 1960. They also show the prolonged struggle to save Peters Hall as a central campus building and the enduring presence of Peters Hall as an image and symbol of Oberlin College.

"This is an Oberlin story of many friends coming together and of an institution preventing the vandalization of its own history," says Archivist Roland Baumann, who directed the exhibition project with staff support from Assistant Archivist Ken Grossi, secretary Tammy Martin, and junior Sarah Williams.

Most of the documents and objects in

the exhibit are from the holdings of the Oberlin College Archives, but several College departments and individuals as well as outside organizations contributed objects, and several others helped mount the exhibit.

Staff and faculty who collaborated on the work in some way include Midge Brittingham, executive director of the Alumni Association; Geoffrey Blodgett, Danforth Professor of History; Sam Carrier, associate professor of psychology; Jane Dawkins, director of public programs; Leo Evans, assistant director of facilities planning; Joseph Gargas, assistant preparator at the Allen Memorial Art Museum; Michael Holubar, preparator at the Allen Memorial Art Museum; Rick Sherlock, art director in the Office of Communications; Joseph Snider, professor of physics; Betty Walden, administrative assistant in the Division of Operations; and Betsy Wieseman, acting director of the Allen Memorial Art Museum.

are supposed to be a break from work, but she often spent them in classes that were "much more intense" than her paid work. Preparing for classes was intense, also; for some she read a novel a week—in French—and wrote papers. She also attended evening study groups.

"It really makes you manage your time," and she says it took two years before she learned to do that. "I tried to do everything at first—to read all the books on reserve and see all the films at French House."

Ignagni earned her three winter-term credits in five Januarys, studying saxophone and fencing, among other subjects. To meet the quantitative-proficiency requirement she took statistics, where some of her fellow students admitted to not having studied mathematics in three or four years. For her, it was more like 15 years, but she ended up liking the

## Peggi Ignagni . . .

*Continued from page 1*

a big pay cut" from the paralegal position she had in Cleveland to become an administrative assistant in the career-development office. The following September she enrolled as a special student in a French course taught by Associate Professor Nelson de Jesus. After assuring herself that she could do both course and job work, she applied for admission to the College and was accepted. De Jesus was a "huge help," she says, in figuring out a schedule for filling the requirements both for her French major and for graduation, one course at a time.

All her courses taught "stuff I'm interested in—nothing painful," she says. Otherwise, she might not have persisted through the nine years it took to earn her degree. Lunch hours

## Commencement 1997: Here Are the Facts and Figures

**By Betty Gabrielli**

Some 630 students are expected to participate in Oberlin's 1997 commencement ceremony, which will feature an address by Minnesota State Senator Allan Spear '58, at 9 a.m. Monday, May 26, on Tappan Square. The ceremony will be held in the Heisman Field House if it rains; tickets will not be required.

Of those graduating, 504 will receive the B.A. degree; 34 both the B.A. and B.Mus. degrees; one an M.A. degree; 76 a B.Mus. degree; one an M.M.T. degree; one an M.M. in Historical Performance degree; and four an M.M. in Opera Theater degree. Three will receive Performance Diplomas, and six will receive Artist Diplomas.

Among the students marching in the procession will be Cleveland Edward Buatois. His family tree includes 28 Oberlin graduates whose matriculation spans five generations dating back to the Civil War. His great-great grandparents are Joel Partridge, Class of 1864, and Aurelia Chapman, Class of 1865.

Honorary-degree recipients include molecular biologist and biophysicist Philip Hanawalt '54 and Canadian soprano Edith Wiens '75. Oberlin Chief of Police Robert "BJ" Jones will receive the Award for Distinguished Community Service. Journalist Carl Rowan '47

will receive the Alumni Medal during the weekend.

Some 5000 visitors will converge on Oberlin during the commencement and reunion weekend, Friday, May 23 through Sunday, May 26. Highlights include a 10th-anniversary gala of the Grand Piano Extravaganza at 8 p.m. Friday; a three-evening performance of Show Stoppers—A Broadway Revue at 8:00 p.m. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; music from all eras performed by Oberlin's renowned a capella groups at 9 p.m. Saturday; a tribute to 1996 Pulitzer Prize-winning composer George Walker '41 at 4 p.m. Sunday; and the Campus Illumination and Band Concert at 9 p.m. Sunday.

Other activities include symposia, demonstrations, and concerts. Tours will be given of the James F. "Bill" Long Pyle Road Nature Preserve, the Frank Lloyd Wright House, the College's Conservatory of Music, and Allen Memorial Art Museum, as well as of campus gardens and the town's historic homes.

A complete schedule and ticket information may be obtained from the office of the Oberlin Alumni Association.

*Betty Gabrielli is senior staff writer in the Office of Communications.*



**"We're crazed," said administrative assistant Twila Conley (far right) Monday as the Alumni Association office was in overdrive making preparations for commencement-reunion weekend. She, Kim Kosonovich, and Kathy Ward, also administrative assistants, were madly assembling packets for reuniting alumni. Margaret Erikson, director of on-campus activities, took a phone call in the thick of it.**

course. Her other courses included Italian and psychology. Ignagni matriculated before the College established its present distribution requirement—nine hours in each of the three divisions—but she's come close to meeting it. She found she gained confidence with each successfully completed course, so that this semester she ventured to take geology, a heretofore "unknown interest." Her confidence carries over to her library job, encouraging her "to investigate things I don't know about."

She'll use her geology on her next trip to a national park, she says, and she's already used her Italian: last summer she and her husband, Anthony, visited his relatives in a remote Italian village. Utility, however, is not the chief value of her studies. Rather, it is "personal enrichment," she says. Earning her

Oberlin degree has "made me an interesting person to myself."

*Carol Ganzel is emerita editor of the Observer.*

## Relative Degrees

Graduating Monday with circulation-desk supervisor Peggi Ignagni are two children of employees: Maria Black, daughter of reference assistant Helen Black, and Matthew Losneck, son of secretary to the president Linda Losneck. Sarah Nelson, daughter of Professor of Electronic and Computer Music Gary Lee Nelson, graduated in December.—CG

## Carol Lasser Goes to the White House; Shakes First Lady's Hand

By Carol Lasser

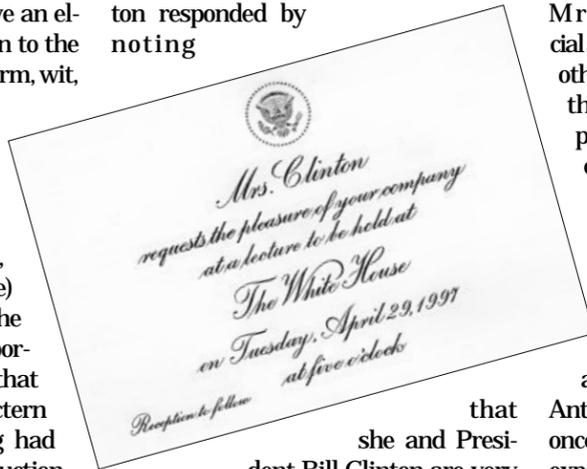
On April 29 I attended, by invitation from the First Lady, a lecture at the White House by Carl Sferrazza Anthony, "Jacqueline Kennedy: How a Timeless Woman Shaped a Modern Role." The invitation had surprised me; I'm not an FOB (Friend of Bill's), and couldn't even imagine what to wear! But the visit seemed an unusual opportunity, and I promised many Oberlinians a report. So here it is.

Hillary Rodham Clinton gave an elegant and eloquent introduction to the speaker, demonstrating her charm, wit, and sense of humor. The First Lady reflected on the importance of the activism of First Ladies. She cited the model provided by Eleanor Roosevelt (with whom, she said, she had spoken the day before) and reminded the guests that the remarkable Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington that hung next to the East Room lectern from which she was speaking had been saved from British destruction by Dolley Madison (who, she said, had also been investigated by Congress).

Anthony, who has written two books on First Ladies, praised Mrs. Clinton's approach to her public role before turning to his main topic. His book on

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, *As We Remember Her*, a collection of appreciative memories of the former First Lady, was just released by HarperCollins.

The lecture was followed by a reception in the State Dining Room, where about 150 guests had the opportunity to speak with the First Lady and Anthony. I shook the First Lady's hand, and thanked her for the public visibility she had brought to the First Ladies and to American history; Mrs. Clinton responded by noting



that she and President Bill Clinton are very interested in history, and had just hosted filmmaker Ken Burns to talk about his recent production on Thomas Jefferson. Other guests included well-known historians Arthur Schlesinger, Nancy Cott, Mary Beth Norton, Betty

Boyd Caroli '60, and Edith Mayo, who had served as curator of the First Ladies exhibits at the Smithsonian; journalists Helen Thomas and Cokie Roberts; Senators Claiborne Pell and George McGovern; and several members of the Kennedy White House staff, most notably Letitia Baldridge, Mrs. Kennedy's social secretary. Several

other rooms in the East Wing—with their elegant decor and precious paintings—were open for viewing during the reception.

At the conclusion of the reception, guests were given copies of Anthony's book, and strolled out through the East Gardens into a perfect Washington evening.

Why was I invited? I had been added to the guest list by a friend of Anthony's, Meredith Burch, who had once asked me to serve as a scholarly expert for a video production on First Ladies for which she was seeking support and funding. Burch is a fascinating person who was a member of the White House staff under President John Kennedy, and is now an independent producer.

I regret that while I had the opportunity to speak with her, I did not ask Mrs. Clinton to help restore funding levels for the National Endowment for the Humanities to demonstrate her

love of history. I also regret that I did not ask the First Lady what she thought of her husband's signing the Welfare Reform Act, which, I think, was a victory for the

Republicans, who can now pit the working poor, who suffer through this bill, against former and present welfare recipients (adults, and particularly children) who will be substantially hurt by this new approach to ending welfare without ending poverty.

Indeed, at the close of the evening, as the string quartet of the Marine Band played a medley from *Les Miserables*, I thought of the contradictions of history and politics. And if you're still wondering, I wore what I call my bar mitzvah dress: a two-piece outfit with a long tunic and almost ankle-length knife-pleat skirt in neutral brown/green—with a tasteful scarf.

Carol Lasser is associate professor of history.

## Faculty Meetings

### Poetry and Debate Mark the Last Faculty Meetings of the Year; General Faculty Accepts Long-Range-Planning Document

Ending with her poem "Stopping by Cox on a Salary Evening," Susan Colley, professor of mathematics, delivered a report of recent College Faculty Council actions—largely salary decisions—May 13 at the last meeting for the school year of the College Faculty. The poem, which drew enthusiastic applause, is linked to the electronic version of this issue of the *Observer*.

Clayton Koppes, dean of the college, read an admissions and financial-aid report prepared by Director of Admissions Debra Chermonte, information from which is reported elsewhere in this issue. In the report Chermonte thanked the faculty for their participation in the admissions process.

"Many of you have taken time out of your schedules to talk with families in our lobby, write letters, place phone calls, and even travel to a variety of admitted student events around the country," she said. "Your support has added tremendously to the success of this admissions cycle."

The main item on the College Faculty agenda was a motion to establish a concentration in International Studies. As chair of the Educational Plans and Policies Committee (EPPC) Suzanne Gay, associate dean of the college, made the motion, which passed by voice vote. Earlier in the meeting Robert Geitz, professor of computer science, moved to divide the motion so that the college could consider independently whether to establish the structure of a concentration and whether to advance international studies in the curriculum. The motion to divide failed by voice vote. A concentration, as opposed to a major or a

minor, will allow multidisciplinary interest on the part of the student. The Concentration Oversight Committee will be administratively less cumbersome than a department: it will have advisory and curricular functions like a department, but not personnel and budgetary functions, Gay said. Oberlin already offers a well-stocked collection of pertinent courses across the curriculum, said several members of the faculty who were on the subcommittee to look into the concentration. The EPPC will review the international-studies concentration at the end of three years.

#### Conservatory Faculty Change Procedures

The Conservatory Faculty also met May 13 for its last meeting of the year. Michael Manderen, director of conservatory admissions, gave a brief report, the information in which is reported elsewhere in this issue.

In her report on recent Conservatory Faculty Council action Karen Wolff, dean of the conservatory, reported on several searches for new faculty, on-going and completed. She also outlined the system for salary increase used by the council this spring. Wolff presented a motion from the council that members of the faculty with the title of teacher be given voting privileges in Conservatory Faculty as well as divisional and departmental meetings. The motion passed by voice vote.

Chair of the Educational Policies Committee Kathryn Stuart, associate dean of the conservatory, brought several motions to the faculty. The

first, which passed with amendments, acknowledges that students "must occasionally be absent from campus for professional reasons" and spells out how teacher and student should handle such absences and make-up work. A motion to change the composition of jurors for the final round of the concerto competition failed. The change would have reduced the number of jurors to four (from seven) and used outside judges as the three voting jurors. A minor procedural change in the concerto competition rules passed; the change describes how the possible number of opportunities for student soloists to perform with orchestra will be announced.

#### General Faculty Accepts Document after Discussion

By voice vote the General Faculty (GF) voted May 20 to accept the final report on the Oberlin College planning process.

The motion, read by Daniel Merrill, professor of philosophy was:

"The General Faculty of Oberlin College accepts with appreciation the report, *Broad Directions for Oberlin's Future*.

"The General Faculty urges the administration and faculty committees to develop appropriate and timely strategies for realizing the goals laid out in the summary report."

A motion to amend the motion by eliminating the second paragraph failed.

Earlier in the meeting Richard "Dick" Michaels, professor of athletics and physical education, read a memo-

rial minute for the late Barbara "Bonnie" Calmer, emeritus associate professor of physical education.

The make-up of GF standing committees was accepted by voice vote after Root Director of Libraries Ray English pointed out an oversight. As a result of English's comment, the name of John Bucher, director of computing, will be added to the membership list of the Educational Technology Committee, on which Bucher serves ex officio.

Clayton Koppes, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, delivered a salute, in the form of short biographies, to the eight members of the arts and sciences faculty who taught their last classes during the 1996-97 school year. (See "8 Members of the A&S Faculty End Their Teaching Careers.") Karen Wolff, dean of the conservatory, read a brief tribute to retiring Teacher of Harp Alice Chalifoux. Students and former students of Chalifoux gave a concert in her honor last week, Wolff said, at which \$23,000 was raised to buy a new harp for the conservatory.

Danforth Professor of Religion Grover Zinn, chair of the Long Range Planning Committee moved a change in committee membership to add the deans of the conservatory and the college. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Charters for eight new student organizations were approved by not being removed from the table.

The faculty adjourned to the Rice-King buildings courtyard for refreshments in honor of their retiring colleagues.

## 12 Faculty Members Receive Support from McGregor-Oresman Scholar Program for Student Researchers and Teaching Assistants

With \$75,000 received in a grant from the McGregor Fund, matched by Donald Oresman '46, the College has created a new program to promote close intellectual collaboration between faculty and students. During the coming summer and/or academic year 12 members of the Oberlin faculty will receive from the McGregor-Oresman Scholar Program support for student researchers and teaching assistants. Additional competitions for the student positions will occur over the next three academic years as part of the four-year project.

With McGregor-Oresman support this summer Albert Borroni, visiting assistant professor of neuroscience, will lead a research project in which a student will help him develop a better understanding of the role of the hippocampus in learning and memory. In the fall a teaching assistant will develop the web page for Borroni's learning and memory course and help set up experiments for the course's lab.

Sam Carrier, associate professor of psychology, will have the research help of a student this summer and next academic year as he develops the information technology for an archaeological excavation in Poggio Colla, Italy, that is codirected by Susan Kane, associate professor of art. Meanwhile, Kane will have a student assistant develop a database and record the physical characteristics of ceramic artifacts excavated during the 1995, 1996, and 1997 field sessions at the site.

The 1997-98 academic-year project of Gary Kornblith, associate professor of history, to develop a World Wide Web site ([www.oberlin.edu/~EOG](http://www.oberlin.edu/~EOG)) on the history of Oberlin, College and town, will have production help from a student under the McGregor-Oresman program. Over the summer and during next school year Augusta Rohrbach, visiting assistant professor of English, will have a student assistant collect and analyze data on the development of realism in the U.S. The assistant will also prepare an index for materials that appeared in the *Liberator*, the longest-running abolitionist paper.

Next school year, with a McGregor-Oresman student, researcher James Tanaka, associate professor of psychology, will design and prepare an experiment to investigate factors involved in face recognition; a student will help Robert Warner, Longman Professor of Natural Science, to calculate the total probability for two atomic nuclei to change into other nuclei when they collide with each other; and a student working with David Young, Longman Professor of English, will provide production help during the publication of two poetry books by the Oberlin College Press.

Benjamin Schiff, professor of politics, will have a teaching assistant this summer to help develop a reading list and research bibliography for a new seminar he will teach this fall on the in-

ternational politics of the environment. Ann Cooper Albright, associate professor of theater and dance, will have a teaching assistant this summer to help develop a new course on queer theory and performance. Albright will introduce the course, which will be cross-listed in women's studies and theater and dance, in the fall.

A fall teaching assistant will help Daniel Styer, associate professor of physics, lead discussions and review problem sets and other assignments for two single-credit classes for general audiences, *Einstein and Relativity* and *The Strange World of Quantum Mechanics*.

The next McGregor-Oresman program application deadline—for support during the spring 1998 semester—is fall 1997. Applications will be due in spring 1998 for student researchers and teaching assistants for summer 1998 and academic year 1998-99. Awards are open to faculty in the conservatory and the college. Any full-time undergraduate Oberlin student is eligible for selection in the program; faculty applicants identify their own suitably qualified student assistants. While the research or teaching projects receiving awards are of central interest to the faculty mentor, they also meet the intellectual needs of the student.

For more information on Oresman's gift, see the *Observer* of May 25, 1995.

## Alumna Receives NSF Award

Catherine Leaf Chappel '91 has received a National Science Foundation (NSF) Minority Award to study for her Ph.D. degree in linguistics at Stanford University.



**Chappel** at Davis, she expects

to focus during her doctoral studies on nonstandard dialects of English, including Black English, some Hispanic dialects, and Creole. An English major at Oberlin, Chappel minored in dance; after graduation she taught English for three and a half years to high-school students and fifth graders in Kentucky and California.

Oberlin alumni receiving honorable mention in the NSF regular fellowship competition this year are Noah Fierer '95, to study ecology; Seth Findley '84, biochemistry; Michael Heithaus '95, ecology; Marcus Schneider '94, social/other; Valarie Simon '96, zoology; and Margaret Zerriffi '95, political science.

## Students and Faculty Pair Up for McNair and Mellon Summer Projects

The College has awarded 17 internships to Oberlin students under the second year of the three-year Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, and 10 fellowships to students under the first

year of the renewed Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship Program. Both programs sponsor summer-research collaboration between students and faculty and aim to encourage the students' later enrolling in

Ph.D. programs and then entering research, teaching, or other careers that require the doctorate. (See *Observers* of September 28, 1995, February 2, 1989, and May 10, 1996.) McNair collaboration emphasizes

the student as an intern with a faculty researcher while the Mellons stress student-initiated research with faculty mentors. See the chart below for who's working with whom this summer.

### McNair and Mellon Faculty-Student Research Projects, Summer 1997

	Area of Interest	Research Title	Faculty Member	Student and Class Year
<b>McNair</b>	Music Education	Kodaly Based Curriculum Development	Joanne Erwin	Aisha Ahmed '98
	Sociology	Comparative Study of European and American Youth Culture	Daphne John	Melissa Calivis '98
	Politics	Societal Facts in Constitutional Theory and Law	Ronald Kahn	Susan Dennehy '99
	Expository Writing	Developing Rhetorical Flexibility in College Writing (and Beyond)	Leonard Podis	Nkem Dike '99
	Biology	Cultural Practices for Non-pesticidal Control of Cucumber Beetles and Squash Bugs	Yolanda Cruz and David Miller	Amie Ely '99 and Sarah Schupbach '00
	African American Studies	Society and Politics in Africa	James Millette	Nneka Emenyonu '99
	English	Explorations in Transcendentalism	Scott McMillin	Charna Kieber '98
	Sociology	Generation X, Family and the Work-Family Nexus	Daphne John	Shayla Mitchell '99
	African American Studies	Slavery and Freedom in the Western Hemisphere	James Millette	Adeola Oshodi '99
	Education	Active Learning on the Fourth Grade Proficiency Test	Gloria White	Sarresa Richardson '99
	Biology	Molecular Genetic Analysis of the Protein Switch Controlling Muscle Contraction	Taylor Allen	Kathryn Roberts '99
	Expository Writing	Rhetoric and Composition in a SocioLinguistic Context	Leonard Podis	Samantha Sanservere '98
	Art	Weaving through the Genres of Installation and Performance	Nanette Macias	Pentiss Slaughter '98
	Chemistry	Catalytic Properties of Hemoglobins & Myoglobins	William Fuchsman	Jessica Taylor '99
	German	Terrorism and Literature in Germany of the 1970s	Steven Huff	Jamie Trnka '98
	Politics	Social Science, Social Facts, and the Rights of Subordinated Groups	Ronald Kahn	Abel Zamora '98
<b>Mellon</b>	African American Studies	African American History and Literature	Adrienne Jones	Jada Eccleston '98
	Sociology	The Mexican and Mexican-American Struggle: A History of A Lost People	William Norris	Gloria Gonzalez '98
	African American Studies	The Effects of Public Policy on Public Education in Mississippi, 1619-Present	Adrienne Jones	Nakisha Heard '98
	English	Black Literary Imagination: Beyond and Within Experience	Augusta Rohrbach	Kiese Laymon '98
	English	The Struggle for Position— Women in African Literature, and African Writers, Defying Labels	Katherine Linehan	Vayram Nyadroh '98
	English	Depiction of Social Differences in the Black Communities of Toni Morrison	Phyllis Gorfain	Rashida Phillips '99
	Women's Studies	So the Silence is Broken: Speaking out on Self-Definition and Community	Anna Agathangelou	Nicole Pierce '99
	History and Sociology	Latino Identity in Northern New Mexico	Steven Volk and William Norris	Isabella Quintana '99
	African American Studies	African Religion and Spiritism in Puerto Rican Culture	James Millette	Richard Santiago '99
	Romance Languages	Technology in Education	Nelson de Jesus	Claudia von Vacano '98

## Percussion and Organ Students Recognized

David Schotzko, a first-year percussion student, has been named an Avedis Zildjian Percussion Scholar by the Avedis Zildjian Company. The award is given to a promising freshman percussionist based on the recommendations of percussion teachers and ensemble conductors at leading music schools. He received a \$1000 check from the Zildjian Company and a pair of Zildjian cymbals. Schotzko, from Aitkin, Minnesota, is a student of Michael Rosen, professor of percussion. Schotzko performs with the Oberlin Orchestra and Wind Ensemble, and has played frequently with the Heartland Symphony Orchestra in Brainard, Minnesota. He is also an accomplished set drummer and has performed as a freelance musician throughout northern Minnesota.

Damin Spritzer, a senior organ major from LaCenter, Washington, won first prize in the local American Guild of Organists (AGO) Young Artists Competition sponsored by the Cleveland Chapter of the AGO April 12. She studies with Professor of Organ Haskell Thomson. Spritzer received a cash prize of \$650, and will compete at the next level during the Region V Convention in Evansville, Indiana, June 21. She plans to take graduate work in organ at the Eastman School of Music this fall.—L.H.

## OJE Makes 'Outstanding' Impression

The Oberlin Jazz Ensemble (OJE), directed by Wendell Logan, professor of African-American music, was recognized with several awards after they performed at the Tri-C JazzFest at Cleveland's Cuyahoga Community College April 18. OJE was named Outstanding Band, and Logan Outstanding Director.

Several of the band's members were also given Outstanding Soloist and Outstanding Instrumentalist awards; they were: first-year student Allan Baker, piano; junior Greg Glassman and sophomores Kevin Louis and Farnell Newton, trumpet; first-year student Tom Bencivengo, sophomore Jermaine Lockhart, and sophomore Burny Pelsmajer, saxophone; junior Jonathan Arons and sophomore Andy Chappell, trombone; first-year student Jason Brown, drums; sophomore Zack Pride, bass; and junior Joe Friedman, guitar.

OJE also participated in the April 12 Ohio State Jazz Festival, where the band received another Outstanding rating from the judges.—L.H.



## Eighth Blackbird Wins Coleman Competition

By Larry Herman

The mixed chamber ensemble eighth blackbird, whose members are recent graduates and a current student of the conservatory, has been awarded top honors in the 51st Annual Coleman Chamber Ensemble Competition, held in Pasadena April 26. Eighth blackbird took the Coleman-Barstow Award for Woodwinds and Brass, which carries a \$3500 cash award.

Members of eighth blackbird are Molly Barth '96, flute; Michael Macafferri '95, clarinet; Matthew Albert '96, violin; Nicholas Photinos '96, cello; Lisa Kaplan '97, piano; and Matthew Duvall '95, percussion. Their coaches have been Timothy Weiss, assistant professor of wind conducting, and Gene Young, Edgar Distinguished Visiting Artist in Conducting.

One of the nation's major chamber ensemble competitions, the Coleman Competition is open nationally to chamber ensembles whose average age does not exceed 25. Fourteen ensembles from throughout the U.S. were invited to compete in the finals for a total of \$11,200 in prizes. The *Los Angeles Times* review of eighth blackbird's performance of Schönberg's Chamber Symphony in the

April 27 Winners Concert said, "these players showed an unremitting intensity in the intricate kinetic landscape and a professionally assured technique in the most demanding situations."

Oberlin's Die Räuber Trombone Quartet was also invited to play in this year's Coleman Competition. Members of the quartet are C. Michael Palmer '97, bass trombone; Philip Brown '97, tenor trombone; Paul Fleischman '98, tenor trombone; and Ka-Yiu Ho '99, bass trombone. Their trip to Pasadena was funded in part by the Getzen Company and by Milton Stevens '64, principal trombonist of the National Symphony.

Last year the conservatory's Mirò Quartet took the Coleman's top prize for strings, the Coleman-Barstow Award. Mirò and eighth blackbird also swept the top prizes in last year's Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. It was the first time in the history of the Fischhoff that the two top winning ensembles were based at the same school.

Eighth blackbird is an instrumental sextet that specializes in performing works written in the 20th century. Their uncommon grouping of instruments is known as a Pierrot

Sextet, referring to Arnold Schönberg's suite for chamber ensemble and voice, *Pierrot Lunaire*. The addition of percussion to the core quintet of that work (flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano) completes the instrumentation of eighth blackbird. Members perform as a whole and in smaller combinations—quintet, quartet, trio, duo, and solo. Eighth blackbird was formed in fall 1994. In January 1996 the group recorded Professor of African American Music Wendell Logan's piece for sextet, *Moments*, for an as-yet-unreleased CD of Logan's works.

The ensemble has commissioned works from composers Burton Hatheway, Visiting Assistant Professor of Composition and Music Theory Pieter Snapper, Thomas Albert, and Alan Tormey. Future plans include a graduate residency in chamber music for the fall and a recording for the CRS label. Eighth blackbird performed in a recital by the Chicago Composers' Consortium featuring works by Bernard Rands in December 1996, and plans to give its own full recital in Chicago this November.

The name eighth blackbird refers to the eighth stanza of the poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," by Wallace Stevens..

## Junior Claudia von Vacano Awarded Rockefeller Fellowship

Claudia von Vacano, a junior from Alexandria, Virginia, has received one of the 25 fellowships awarded this year by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to minority students seeking to enter the teaching profession. Fellows receive up to \$18,100 beginning in their junior years and continuing until they begin public-school teaching. They receive \$2500 stipends for the summer between their junior and senior years and stipends of between \$9000 and \$12,000 while in graduate school. They may re-

ceive \$1200 annually during their first three years of teaching to offset education-related loan repayments.

Oberlin is one of 25 schools chosen by the foundation to participate in the program. Choices were based, according to a foundation press release, on the schools' "record of commitment to the education of minorities" and their "stated goal [to improve] teaching in the public schools."

This summer von Vacano will work on two projects related to her Rocke-

feller fellowship. With Lorain County public-school children in the At-Risk Academic Program coordinated by Booker Peek, associate professor of African-American studies, she will tutor students and, if funding is available, take them on field trips. Through the Center for Service and Learning she will help adults who are learning English as a second language work toward their General Education Diplomas (GEDs). The GED class meets in an Elyria factory.

Nelson de Jesus, associate professor of French, is von Vacano's mentor for the fellowship. Mentors provide guidance and advice during the fellows' senior year, especially in choosing a graduate-education program.

Besides the Rockefeller, von Vacano has been awarded a Mellon Minority Fellowship (see "Faculty and Students Pair Up for McNair and Mellon Summer Projects") and a Middlebury College-Mellon Foundation internship

*Continued on page 10*

## Rockefeller . . .

*Continued from page 9*  
(see "Middlebury Project to Benefit Oberlin Students and Faculty").

Von Vacano hopes her Rockefeller fellowship will offer opportunities to further explore her personal interest in helping more people from working-class backgrounds attend private colleges and universities. One of her goals is to help reverse what she believes is a disturbing trend—private institutions' recent turn away from need-blind admissions.

The triple-honoree is used to working for causes. Her full-page résumé includes descriptions of volunteer work teaching battered children from the inner city of Washington, D.C. (summer 1993); teaching homeless children in Bolivia, where she was born and raised (summer 1994); and traveling to Nicaragua to assess the progress of a rotating loan of the Oberlin Student Cooperative Association (Winter Term 1997). From 1992 to 1996 she was an instructional assistant for the Arlington (Virginia) Public Schools, first part time in the English as a Second Language program, then full time in special education.

A transfer student from the Parsons School of Design and the New School for Social Research, von Vacano is double majoring at Oberlin in Spanish and art, and minoring in Third Stream Computing.

She combined her artistic talent with her sense of social justice when she entered the 1991 Amnesty International poster competition. (She took first place in the nationwide contest for her poster for women's rights.) She combined her artistic talent with her teaching ability to reach the Bolivian homeless children in 1994.

"I developed course work that . . . included the fundamentals of drawing and encouraged the students to explore their emotions and their memories," she wrote in the personal statement that helped secure the Rockefeller Fellowship. "It became a cleansing process by which the children expressed their creative energy and received loving attention."

More recently von Vacano has added verbal expression to her artistic interests. In 1995 Semiotext(e) Press published an autobiographical piece of hers in an anthology of women's writings. Aided by what she is learning through her computer-science minor she is now exploring multimedia art.

Martina Davis, a junior from Chicago whose Rockefeller mentor would have been Rudd Crawford, associate professor of mathematics, and Michele Hines, a junior from Severn, Maryland, whose mentor would have been Joanne Erwin, assistant professor of music education, were semifinalists in the competition.

## Middlebury Project to Benefit Oberlin Students and Faculty

Two Oberlin students have been awarded internships under Middlebury College's Project 2001. The project trains and compensates student interns to help technical specialists support faculty members' language-technology projects.

This summer junior Spanish major Claudia von Vacano and first-year student Motofumi Tohda will attend a two-week intensive workshop on multimedia technology at Middlebury's Center for Educational Technology. In the fall they will serve a supervised internship on the Oberlin campus under the direction of four faculty members and the language-lab intern.



von Vacano

They will develop multimedia materials, and/or deliver technology-enabled curriculum materials.

The workshop is funded by Middle-

bury and the Mellon Foundation, and Oberlin College will receive a mini-grant to support the academic-year internships.

Working with Ana Cara, professor of Spanish, next year von Vacano will give technical support to a project in retrieving folklore, which incorporates cultural materials used in Cara's course on South American folklore. The multimedia project includes photographs and related texts with corresponding music and dance from various traditions. Collaborating with Nelson de Jesus, associate professor of French, von Vacano will create a hypertextual reading of French literary history from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution.

Tohda will work with Davida Gavioli, director of the language lab and lecturer in Italian, next year to develop the Italian web page at Oberlin, which includes language exercises for the Italian 101 and 102 classes. With Gavioli he will also develop video segments for the current Italian textbook. He will collaborate with Ann Sherif, associate professor of East Asian studies, to develop two web projects for the Japanese curriculum. In the first project he will work with Sherif and other faculty in East Asian studies to create a web site for syllabi, faculty infor-

mation, and teaching materials. In the second project he will work with students to create personal web pages in Japanese. The students will use the web pages to introduce themselves to their host family

(should they study abroad), pen pals, and other Japanese-speaking students in the Ohio Five Consortium. He will work with Sherif to develop interactive software for a Japanese television program used in the intermediate and advanced language classes.

Tohda and von Vacano will also help train students to use instructional technology for future projects. Michael Heller, lab intern at the Cooper International Learning Center in Peters Hall, will supervise both students with advice, counsel, support, and additional technological knowledge.



Tohda

## What Will They Be When They Grow Up? OC Staff Helps Langston 6th-Graders Explore Careers

Office of Communications staff writer Anita Buckmaster talked about media careers with members of Becky Beal and Mickey Walzer's Langston Middle School sixth-grade class Tuesday, May 13. The students toured the Oberlin campus and talked with several College staffers about the work they do. Besides Buckmaster, they spoke with Diana Roose, assistant to the president; Julia Nieves, assistant dean of student life and services; and Hilary Greer, community services coordinator at the Center for Service and Learning.

Three of the students' parents who are College employees—Keith James, director of safety and security; John Appley, project director in the Office of Communications; and Nusha Martynuk, associate professor of dance—accompanied the group and talked about their work at the College, too.

The Oberlin public-school students are participating in nine weeks of school-to-work activities with the help of Middle School Explore, an initiative of the Lorain County School-to-Work System, itself part of a national program to

prepare youth for successful entry into the workplace. The students were the second group from Langston to visit the College through a partnership between the Oberlin College Center for Service and Learning and the Lorain County-based Center for Leadership and Education, which administers the School-to-

Work System.

The sixth-grade visitors now will develop a presentation highlighting what they learned during their exploration. This coming Wednesday the students will present their findings at a banquet for parents and community partners, including Oberlin College.



Anita Buckmaster, top row far left, John Appley, top row far right, and Nusha Martynuk, middle row, far right, are some of the College employees who talked with these Langston School sixth-graders about their work at the College. Hilary Greer, right of Buckmaster, squirmed the kids around campus.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

## Board of Trustees Elects Harry Stang '59, Expert in Labor Law

Harry Stang '59 has been elected to the Oberlin College Board of Trustees. The Pacific Palisades, California, resident is a partner in the international law firm Bryan Cave LLP.

A government major at Oberlin, Stang earned his law degree at Stanford University. The term of his board service is 1997-2003.

He is a member of his firm's executive committee and the national leader

of the firm's Labor and Employment Client Service Group. He has chaired the Labor Section of the Beverly Hills Bar Association, and served on the executive committee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Labor Section.

He has also been a member of various committees of the Labor Section of the American Bar Association and the Labor Lawyers' Advisory Committee.

Oberlin's newest trustee has lectured nationally and published several articles on labor-management matters.

He is a member of the Founders of the Los Angeles Music Center, the center's Fraternity of Friends support group and the John Frederick Oberlin Society.

Stang is married to Marta Chaffee Stang, an artist. The couple has two daughters, Aandrea '90 and Alana.

The Observer  
will resume  
publication with the first  
issue of the 1997-98  
school year  
August 29.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN SEYFRIED

Ed Thompson considers the gardens in front of the Oberlin College Inn among his best work. The flower beds were between episodes of glory last week, but the flowering fruit trees couldn't have been more luxuriant.

## Andy Evans Accepts Laurels for Oberlin

Oberlin College has received the Arthur Ross Award in the category Landscape Architect/Gardener. The award honors the College for "turning to horticulture, the ancient instrument for giving life to the community, in embellishing the town of Oberlin and the Oberlin campus." Oberlin's former director of grounds and land planning, Edward Thomp-

son, nominated the College for the award.

Andy Evans, vice president for finance, accepted the honor—bestowed by Classical America, a society that encourages the classical tradition in art—during a May 5 ceremony at the National Academy Museum in Manhattan. The honored guest who presented the award was

Lady Soames, daughter of Winston Churchill.

At the reception that followed the presentation Evans met Thompson and introduced him to the other honored guests as "the creator of Oberlin's landscape transformation." Thompson is now the arboretum manager at Haverford College.

Evans also met and talked at the

reception with William McNaught '68, a Master of Arts graduate who is the director of the American Museum in England.

Before leaving, Evans noticed the book that the museum store displayed prominently in the front window: *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, Professor of Art William Hood's 1993 work.

## How the Class of 2001 Looks from Here

As of May 13 Oberlin's total enrollment target of 800 had been exceeded—at 816. The College of Arts and Sciences had received enrollment deposits from 625 first-year, 37 transfer, and 42 double-degree students. The new Conservatory of Music class was larger than expected (112) and accounts for a significant portion of the overage beyond the undergraduate enrollment target. The class will continue to grow in the weeks ahead, helping to compensate for anticipated losses over the summer months, says Director of Admissions Debra Chermonte.

Oberlin has admitted 62 percent of the first-year candidates who applied to the College of Arts and Sciences, compared to 65 percent in 1996. The selection rate has moved from 72 percent to 62 percent over the course of the past two admissions cycles.

"The selection may rise slightly if we find it necessary to add a few to the class from the wait list to counteract the 'summer melt,'" says Chermonte.

The conservatory's admission rate is 30 percent, the lowest since 1973, says Director of Conservatory Admissions Michael Manderen. The yield rate has also improved: just over 50 percent. It had hovered between 43 and 47 percent

over the last 10 years. Most impressive, says Manderen, is that the conservatory has achieved the best coverage across program areas.

"In certain areas where we can't count on meeting the mark—like oboe, bassoon, and organ—we've hit it and exceeded. That's cause for celebration." The number of new organ students—five—is the highest in 10 years; that achievement, says Manderen, was "doable, but only if fortune smiled greatly."

The new class (in both divisions) contains 138 students of color, compared to 132 a year ago—44 African Americans, 33 Latinos, 54 Asian Americans, and seven Native Americans. Twenty-one international students plan to join the new Arts and Sciences class and 30 internationals have enrolled in the conservatory.

"We will continue to focus on the diversity element of the class in the weeks ahead," says Chermonte. Many of the students of color and foreign students who have been offered admission have yet to respond.

The quality of the enrolling class as indicated by SAT I results is comparable to a year ago—669 Verbal and 640 Math.

## \$25,000 Gould Foundation Grant Will Permit Three-Week Winter Term Tour

The Florence J. Gould Foundation has given \$25,000 to fund a three-week study tour in which Oberlin conservatory students will study the historical harpsichords and organs of France.

The January 1998 tour will include primary stops in Paris, Toulouse, and Strasbourg and trips to Lyons and Poitiers.

Throughout the itinerary, 10 students and two faculty members will have the opportunity to play important historical French organs and harpsichords; learn about the instruments' construction, sound, and context; and gain a better understanding of the historical and cultural environment that generated the music they are studying. Students will have access to exceptional instruments in collectors' homes, museums, churches, and instrument-building workshops. The rich educational and cultural experience will enhance the Americans' understanding and performance of French music, as well as lay the groundwork for future cooperation between dedicated musicians in the two countries.

Lisa Crawford, professor of harpsichord, will direct the project. Crawford organized a similar study tour in 1996 with Dominique Serve, a French organist knowledgeable about historical French instruments. Serve accompanied the 1996 group and will provide similar assistance in 1998.

"After the 1996 trip we realized that in the short two weeks we were in France, we had musical and cultural experiences which few people are fortunate enough to have in a whole lifetime," says Crawford. "I'm thrilled that we will be able to give another group of students a similar opportunity, thanks to the Gould Foundation."

The Florence J. Gould Foundation Grants Program provides support to U.S. and French nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations to promote Franco-American friendship and understanding.—L.H.

Observations

# Marxism and . . .

By Marc Blecher

This past fall faculty colleagues Anna Agathangelou, Chris Howell, Sonia Kruks, Francesco Melfi, James Millette, and I got together to share our concerns about Marxism. Each of us has been profoundly influenced as scholars, teachers, and citizens by the fundamentals of Marxist theory: its way of analyzing the world based on the organization of production, its attention to class divisions, the links it draws between ideas and material forces, its insistence on the inseparable connection between theory and practice, and its liberatory message. These values have found reflection in our professional work as scholars and teachers, our political activities as citizens involved in labor, women's, and national-liberation movements, and our personal lives.

Lately, Marxism, both as theory and as political practice, has been in crisis. State socialism, which claimed Marxism as its theoretical basis, has been giving way to capitalism. In capitalist countries, the right has been advancing almost everywhere, burying Marxist critiques of the corrosive and alienating effects of the market, the deadening of the human spirit by the acceleration and barrenness of work, and the inhuman and inhumane inequalities between those who have to sell their labor and those who buy it.

As if the triumphalism of the right were not disheartening enough, Marxism has also found itself under attack on the left, from postmodern theories that dismiss it as a Eurocentric modernist narrative privileging class over race, gender, nation, and ethnicity. This noun concerned us, as citizens whose own politics draws inspiration from Marxist analysis and aspirations, as scholars who continue to find Marxism useful in fashioning our inquiries, and as teachers who fear that our students' intellectual and civic education is impoverished by blithe and ideological dismissal of a venerable and potentially valuable body of theory and practice.

Marxist theory has, to be sure, been a vibrant and popular part of the Oberlin curriculum. But course work is an insufficient and, in some respects, an inappropriate way to convey to students how something as controversial as Marxism had profoundly affected us and could possibly affect them if they so chose. To this end we conceived a series of four public programs for the spring semester, titled Marxism and.... Their purpose was to let us share with the campus some of the ways in which Marxism has contributed to our work as scholars, teachers, and citizens, and even how it has shaped our development as human beings.

The programs, held on four evenings in King 106, attracted large audiences. Associate Professor Harlan Wilson, Chair of the Department of Politics, moderated and introduced the first forum February 27.

"These forums have been set up to show what it is like to live Marxism, to incorporate Marxist ideas into one's life and work," he said. "For Marxism is more than a method, an approach, or even a theory. It is a form of intellectual and political practice that can have fundamental influence on how you see the world and do your work. In a society which, as you know, is unusually hostile to any suggestion of the influence of Marx or Marxism, it takes courage to announce publicly the importance of that influence in one's work."

Fortunately, Oberlin still takes academic freedom seriously enough that none of us felt particu-

larly intrepid. Indeed, Oberlin, with its historical commitment to "Learning and Labor," seems to us an especially appropriate place in which to explore the issues raised by Marxism.

The subject that evening was Marxism and Feminism. Danforth Professor of Politics Sonia Kruks began by explaining how Marxism helps her understand many of the roots of patriarchy.

"Though Marxism does not offer us a total explanation of the subordination of women, I cannot imagine a society in which capitalist relations would continue to flourish and in which forms of subordination by gender—or, for that matter, race or ethnicity—would cease to exist. Capitalism requires the multiplication of relations of subordination."

Specifically, she said, capitalism subordinates women by paying them less than men in the labor market, extracting profits from them indirectly through their unpaid household labor, commodifying their bodies for men's sexual pleasure, encouraging women's self-alienation for this purpose, and excluding women from equal participation in the public sphere, including political life. For Kruks, feminism has fragmented into what Wilson termed various "feminisms," each focusing on one of these forms of oppression. Marxism, with its emphasis on the interconnections of different aspects of oppression and subordination, helps her by providing an overarching framework to tie these separate strands together.

Visiting Instructor in Women's Studies and Politics Agathangelou spoke about the ways in which Marxist theory helps her understand ethnic conflict in Cyprus, a central concern not only of her research but, as a Cypriot, also her personal life. By highlighting the global economic roots of the competition between Greeks and Turks, it provides a way to refute the common view that the conflict is nothing more than a dispute between uncivilized nationalists. She noted that the earliest stages of capitalist accumulation depended heavily on extracting surpluses from women and subordinate races. Finally, Agathangelou spoke about the ways in which feminist struggles in specific localities such as Cyprus reflected human resistance to the global structures analyzed by Marx.

On March 25 the subject was Marxism, race, and nation. Professor of African American Studies James Millette argued that though New World slavery is generally perceived as the expression of the oppression of one racial group by another, race alone does not explain the phenomenon. The class struggles in France, in the context of the French Revolution, created the operational space within which the Haitian Revolution could occur.

Only then could racial antipathy between blacks and whites drive the revolution in St. Domingue (Haiti after 1804) to its logical conclusion. The emergence of this new racial reality, characterized by its own class contradictions, led to the emergence of Haiti, a nation state with its own peculiar sociological mix: a large black underclass dominated by a self-perpetuating aristocracy of blacks and coloreds.

In short, Millette argued, Haiti provides one of the best examples of the Marxist theory of revolution at work, even though the Haitian revolutionaries did not consciously apply Marxist theory. Millette also asserted that history has taught that all racial and national struggles must inevitably confront the question of class.

Assistant Professor of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies Francesco Melfi complemented Millette's presentation by offering an autobiographical account. Why would an Italian Catholic from a lower-middle class background be attracted both to Marxism and to Jewish Studies? He spoke eloquently about his family's struggles against fascism, and how the Italian Communist Party, as the country's leading antifascist organization, drew them to Marxism. Antonio Gramsci, a brilliant Marxist who languished in a fascist prison for most of his brief, ruined adult life, became a personal hero.

Meanwhile Professor Melfi began to be interested in Jews when, as a young churchgoer, he learned that Jesus was a rabbi. As he began to mature intellectually, his doubts about Christianity, the appeal of Marxism, and Italy's vexed relationship to the rest of Europe culminated in an increasingly critical approach to the Enlightenment. Since Jews were participants in the Enlightenment but also its black sheep, Professor Melfi began to understand the history of Eastern European Jews as a window on the Enlightenment's contradictions.

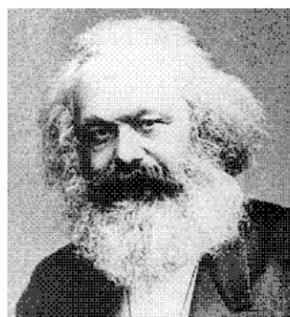
For example, the Jewish Sabbath stood as a profound challenge to the logic of modernity and capitalism, which sought to rationalize life and extend work everywhere. Echoing a theme suggested by Kruks and Agathangelou, Melfi uses Marxism to broaden the historical and analytical context for approaching Jewish Studies, rejecting the standard approach to it as a self-contained arena.

On April 8 Assistant Professor of Politics Stephen Crowley and I spoke on Marxism and state socialism, trying to convey how a Marxist approach helps him understand the former USSR and helps me understand China. Based on research reported in his newly published book *Hot Coal, Cold Steel*, Crowley showed how Marxism can explain the puzzle of why heavily subsidized Russian miners would welcome the mar-

ket. Like Marx, they saw it ideally as a place where equal exchange takes place; it would, they naively thought, get them a fair day's pay, while also undermining corruption. (Marx's preoccupation, by contrast, was to show systematically why capitalist markets do not operate in this ideal manner.) Crowley also described in grizzly detail the economic ruin that capitalist "shock therapy" brought to Russia, a crisis that Marxism would predict.

I spoke about my new research project on Chinese workers, in which I have found that the adoption of capitalist forms such as piece-rate wages have produced adaptations on the shop floor similar to those that American workers have developed for decades. I contrasted this with statements from

*Continued on page 4*



## MARXISM AND ... &

Faculty and Activists Talk About Marxism's Influence on Their Work

**Marxism and Feminism**  
**Profs. Anna Agathangelou and Sonia Kruks**  
**Thursday, February 27**

**Marxism, Race and Nation**  
**Profs. Francesco Melfi and James Millette**  
**Tuesday, March 25**

**King 106**  
**7:30 PM**

**Marxism & State Socialism**  
**Profs. Marc Blecher and Steve Crowley**  
**Tuesday, April 8**

**The Future of the US Left & The Future of Socialism**  
**Eric Mann, Los Angeles Labor/Community Strategy Center | Thursday, April 24**

FOSTER BY MARC BLECHER