

# KELLY WRITERS HOUSE



2012 ANNUAL



## Dear Friends of the Writers House,



In the five years since Emma Morgenstern (C'10) pitched her idea for an undergraduate-led magazine of culinary arts, *Penn Appetit* has become a powerhouse. Its mouthwatering prose and luscious photos have helped feed a deep love of food and food writing here at Penn.

So we stepped it up this year. Our Kerry Prize winner Alex Marcus (W'12) organized the first-ever college food summit, a weekend-long series of events for the Penn community and delegates from the culinary clubs of colleges and high schools up and down the eastern seaboard. Food writers converged on our cottage for hyper-charged conversations about blogging, culinary culture on college campuses, the sustainability movement, and much more, all culminating in an *Iron Chef*-style cook off.

The culinary arts have a natural home here at Writers House; food draws our community together. Alumni of Max Apple's writing classes reminisce about the coffee breaks he holds in the Kane-Wallace Kitchen. Hub members gather around the green table late into the night, arguing over the finer points of literary analysis while awaiting fresh batches of chocolate chip cookies (topped with sea salt, à la Allison Wattenbarger, C'14). We try to outdo ourselves each spring with our end-of-year-party menu planning (this year: four trays of fried chicken, heaps of watermelon, and all our favorite Erin Gautsche-style salads).

But it's also true that food writing thrives at Writers House because ideas have a way of taking hold here — of finding fertile ground and flourishing beyond their initial conception. Cultivating creativity is central to our mission.

And students have engaged in remarkable creative ventures through Writers House this year. We supported several internships and mentorships to introduce young writers to professional opportunities, some of them quite unusual. Robinson Press coordinator Henry Steinberg (C'13) apprenticed with letterpress artists all over the country. Molly O'Neill (LPS'11) and Callie

Ward (C'13) assisted *Slate* editor Stephen Metcalf with research toward a book on 1980s pop culture. Arielle Pardes (C'14), co-curator of our Feminism/s series, interned at *Cosmopolitan*.

We encouraged undergrads to take lead roles in our projects: Isa Oliveras (C'14) and Rosa Escandon (C'15) presided over our Speakeasy open mic night. Alexa Bryn (C'13) planned a two-day series of events featuring the internationally-acclaimed Kashmiri writer Mirza Waheed, whose haunting novel *The Collaborator* highlights the atrocities of war. Jenny Chen (C'14) and Tim Miller (C'14) used a Creative Capital grant to transform furniture destined for the trash heap into whimsical new pieces. Their TV-turned-terrarium now graces our living room.

This was an exhilarating year — a year of creative risk-taking, heady ideas, and lots of fun — and it was made possible by a generous contingent of supporters dedicated to helping students fulfill their intellectual promise. Alumni mentors such as Lee Eisenberg (C'68, ASC'70), Zach Sergi (C'10), and Melissa Jensen (C'89, GPU'93) offered expert advice to students seeking guidance. Donors such as Paul Kelly (C'62, WG'64, Trustee 1997–present), who funded our unparalleled Fellows project (as he has each year for fourteen years), and Maury Povich (C'62) and Connie Chung, who endowed our journalism programming, inspired us with their generosity and vision. Penn programs and centers — such as the Jewish Studies program, the Center for Africana Studies, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Penn Design, and the Creative Writing program, among many others — partnered with us to pull off a number of truly amazing projects.

On behalf of the Writers House Planning Committee, thanks for everything *you* do to help make Writers House possible!

Jessica Lowenthal  
Director

Al Filreis  
Faculty Director  
Kelly Professor of English



# PEOPLE



Andrea Amanullah (C'12) and other staff members enjoy homemade Thai food during the annual staff dinner.

## HUB

At our annual end of year party, after salads, burgers, and fried chicken galore, our 2012 ArtsEdge Resident **Rolf Potts** described the Writers House as “an ongoing slumber party without the slumber” — because, indeed, the Writers House inspires never-ending conversations, fueled by caffeine and creativity. Members of our Planning Committee (also known as the Hub) are a constant source of outlandish ideas, fresh energy, new cookie recipes, and celebratory spirit.

Hub members hang out in the Kane-Wallace Kitchen to hash out their philosophies, often while cooking for one of our many food-centered events. For our edible books party, we re-imagined literary masterpieces as delicious (punning, fantastical) foods. Among the best entries were “Flan Quixote a la Plancha” by **Adam Pearlson** (C'14) and **Kim Schreiber** (C'15), “Jane Pear” by **Lily Applebaum** (C'12) and **Mohana Ravindranath** (C'12), and “In Search of Lost Thyme/Remembrance of Figs Past,” a fig, mascarpone, and rosemary tart by **Sarah Arkebauer** (C'11) and **Kristen Martin** (C'11). For our annual Hub Thanksgiving, community members shared their traditional family recipes. KWH Director **Jessica Lowenthal** roasted a turkey to go along with **Erin Gautsche's** vegan Tofurkey and all the Hub-member side dishes, which included sweet potato biscuits topped with cinnamon honey butter, roasted butternut squash, Chinese-style spinach, chickpea salad, two kinds of Brussels sprouts, and apple-cranberry cobbler.

It's not all creative cookery, of course. We featured several multi-reader events this year to showcase the writing talents and innovative energies of our Hub members. Our first-ever Dylanfest featured nine Dylanologists — including **Nina Wolpow** (C'14), **Pepi Ginsberg** (C'05), **Cecilia Corrigan** (C'10) and professors **Anthony DeCurtis**, **Al Filreis**, and **Greg Djanikian** — riffing on Bob Dylan songs. For our “Mind of Winter” program, held each year in the frigid depths of January, when no one feels particularly warm, seven Hub members — **Sam Apple**, **Kate Herzlin** (C'14),

**Diamond Irwin** (C'15), **Zoë Kirsch** (C'14), **Leslie Krivo-Kaufman** (C'14), **Rolf Potts**, and **Lindsey Todd** (C'12) — shared excerpts from their favorite wintry stories, reminding us that winter is only what we make of it. (Sam Apple read anthropological notes about the Eskimo diet that made many of us grateful for our “Mind of Winter” tradition of hot soup.) For our “7-Up on Isolation” program, which featured seven people talking about “isolation,” **Callie Ward** (C'13) performed a moving piece about geographic separations, putting into perspective the distances we've each traveled to call the Writers House home. Remarkably, dwelling on the idea of “isolation” drew us all together.

As always, Hub members took lead roles in various initiatives. **Lily Applebaum** (C'12) ran the **Brodsky Gallery**, introducing us to an impressive range of visual art, including a letterpress show that featured work by **Robinson Press** coordinator **Henry Steinberg** (C'13). **Kelly Diamond** (C'13) led a talented team of screenwriters, actors, and TV buffs to produce the one-of-a-kind sitcom *Classless*, which prompted some of this year's oddest (or most inspired) purchases, including ten foam Pharaoh hats, nine standard and one extra-fancy. Unsettled hearts were the subject of *Judy's Turn*, an original play written and directed by Hub member **Violette Carb** (C'11) that came to the KWH for an encore performance after its Fringe Festival debut. The cyclical one-act play delighted our audience with its hilarious, gender-bending love triangle and campy soundtrack of 1960s girl-group pop. And for our **Wexler Series**, **Alexa Bryn** (C'13) dreamed up “Jewish Writers You Wish You Knew,” which brought together seven speakers for short, inspiring talks about Jewish writers they love (and why we should love them too). **Kate Herzlin's** talk moved the audience to sing a spontaneous rendition of Avrom Goldfaden's lullaby “Rozhinkes mit Mandlen.” And **Al Filreis** gave a heartfelt analysis of Primo Levi's *The Periodic Table*, a central book in his *Representations of the Holocaust* class and one of his favorite books of all time.





## STAFF

The Pub Room (with its nifty Cooper-Shoulberg Fund computers) was the haunt of choice this year for many of our student staffers, especially Webmasters **Zach Burchill** (C'14), **Zach Carduner** (C'13), **Arielle Pardes** (C'14), and **Ali Castleman** (C'13); Flickr Wranglers **Gwen Lewis** (C'14) and **Ben Filreis** (C'15); Purchasing Librarians **Andrea Amanullah** (C'12) and **Erin Peraza** (C'14); YouTube Editor **Amaris Cuchanski** (C'12); Archivists **Violette Carb** (C'11) and **Hannah White** (C'14); and Calendar Designers **Jess Bergman** (C'14) and **Jack Nessman** (C'15). Other staffers hung out downstairs to greet guests, prepare receptions, sell books, organize the kitchen cabinets, and manage the AV, including Program Assistants **Andie Davidson** (C'15), **Victoria Ford** (C'15), **Emily Harnett** (C'13), **Diamond Irwin** (C'15), **Nadia Laher** (C'15), **Colleen Quinlan** (C'12), **Sarah Schwab** (C'14), and **Callie Ward** (C'13); Media Editor **Florentina Dragulescu** (C'12); and our trio of chefs, Vegetarian Breakfast Maker **Lindsey Todd** (C'12), Reception Captain **Ali Kriegsman** (C'13), and Friday Club Baker **Allison Wattenbarger** (C'14). Assistant to the Assistant Director for Development **Veronica Aguilar** (C'14) delved deeply into our databases. Green Initiatives Coordinator and Restorer of Old Furniture **Jenny Chen** (C'14) manned the compost pile and helped us maintain eco-friendly practices. **Sarah Arkebauer** (C'11) was chief copy editor of our online magazine *Jacket2* and several student staffers served as editorial assistants, including **Emily Orrson** (C'13), **Anna Strong** (C'13), **Kenna O'Rourke** (C'15), **Ben Filreis** (C'15), and **Kate Herzlin** (C'14). Kate also assisted in the director's office, working closely with Assistant to the Director, **Michelle Taransky**. Director **Jessica Lowenthal** presided over the Hub meetings, while Project Assistants **Max McKenna** (C'10), **Katie Price** (GAS'14), and **Peter Schwarz** (CGS'04, LPS'08) held down the Hub Office. **Amelia Robertson**, special projects envoy from Evergreen State College, shared with us her media editing skills and her great love of poetry. **Thomson Guster** (C'10) helped with the new Creative Ventures project, which was directed by Program Coordinator **Erin Gautsche** (CGS'06), who also served as *chef de cuisine* in the Kane-Wallace Kitchen. **Arielle Brousse** (C'07), our Assistant Director for Development, led our fundraising efforts. And **Kristen Martin** (C'11) and **Molly O'Neill** (LPS'11) assisted with special projects assigned by Faculty Director **Al Filreis** and his assistant **Jamie-Lee Josselyn** (C'05). Jamie-Lee coordinated the Writers House Fellows seminar one last time (after seven years!) before moving next door to CPCW to work more closely on recruiting and advising Penn students.

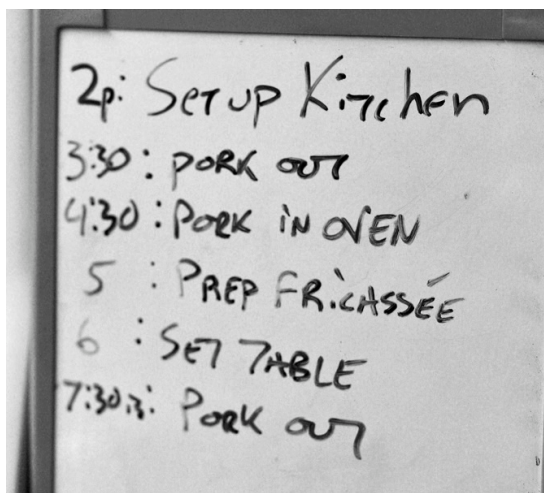
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Arielle Pardes (C'14) strikes a pose; Florentina Dragulescu (C'12) survives her roast at the end-of-year Hub party; despite an acute aversion to vegetables, Jack Nessman (C'15) serves himself Thai food.

## BASSINI APPRENTICES

For the sixth successive year, the **Bassini Apprenticeship Program** gave aspiring student writers hands-on access to the day-to-day work of professionals. Bassini Writing Apprentices get a crash course in the writerly work necessary for sustaining and completing serious projects — travel, transcription, archival research, permissions requests, idea-development, and reporting.

**Zoë Kirsch** (C'14) helped nonfiction writer **Jay Kirk** with research for his book-in-progress *Bartok's Monster*. Zoë acted as liaison with a professional violinist-informant, made allies of reference librarians, corresponded with experts at the Smithsonian, and conducted a solo, eight-hour interview of a research subject for the book. Jay marveled over the professional-grade transcription of Zoë's interview and has since hired her to transcribe a separate project. **Leslie Krivo-Kaufman** (C'14) assisted **Sam Apple** in developing a digital edition of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Leslie

researched file formats, digital platforms, and e-readers to help understand the available technologies and discover potential limitations. She also spent countless hours delving into source materials for the edition, which will include links to photos and maps of many of the places discussed in the novel. **Victoria Fiengo** (C'13) helped food writer and journalist **Rick Nichols** develop a book proposal on the life of Dr. F. J. Pound, the world's foremost cocoa expert in the 1930s. According to Nichols, Victoria's research was nothing short of heroic: "Even as final papers in her other courses were piling up — and while I had to be out of town — she put on a winter coat and headed to the wind-blown cocoa port (Pier 84) on the Delaware to report on the unloading of the last shipment of the season of cocoa beans from The Comet out of the Ivory Coast. Her dispatch was a masterful witnessing — of the flamboyant Cocoa King of Philadelphia showing off his collection of diseased cacao pods like so many shrunken heads, the 'ballet' of the longshoremen, and the sound and scent of spilled cocoa beans crunching underfoot."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Zoë Kirsch (C'14) and Erin Gautsche; Kate Herzlin (C'14) presents a platter of sweets; Writers House Fellow John Barth and Al Filreis; during a typical evening of reception-preparation, the refrigerator dry erase board might look something like this.







## HELED TRAVEL GRANT: Katie Sanders (C'12)

Despite growing up in a suburb the FBI has repeatedly named the “Safest City in America,” **Katie Sanders** has always been fascinated by prisons. **The Heled Travel Grant** enabled Katie to transform her unusual interest into an extended writing project by providing her with the means to visit prisons and spend time with some of the people most affected by mass incarceration. In northern California, Katie interviewed the former warden of San Quentin, the state’s oldest prison, which houses the nation’s largest death row. Later, New York City became her research hub as she followed several leads to develop a comparative analysis of the penal system. Katie is currently at work on a long-form magazine feature about a family of three high-achieving siblings from the Bronx whose mother has been incarcerated since 1999 and is not eligible for parole until at least 2023.

## KERRY SHERIN WRIGHT PRIZE: Alex Marcus (W'12)

Each year we honor **Kerry Sherin Wright**, the first director of Writers House, by awarding the **Kerry Prize** to a Hub member who proposes a project in keeping with Kerry’s communitarian vision. This year’s Kerry Prize went to **Alex Marcus** (W'12) for the Penn Food Summit, which he organized with help from **Sam Sharf** (C'12), **Kristen Martin** (C'11), and **Jenny Chen** (C'14). Alex and crew conceived the summit to bring together enterprising groups of students from nearby colleges and high schools and introduce them to culinary leaders, including food writers and reviewers, chefs and restaurateurs, and farmers and farm-to-table activists. Featured summit speakers included **Deb Perelman**, of the blog Smitten Kitchen (who was nearly mobbed by a pack of adoring fans); **Judy Wicks**, founder of White Dog Café (whose legendary ethos has helped put Philadelphia on the national food map); and **Rick Nichols**, Penn writing instructor and food columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (who has a room named for him at Philly’s famous Reading Terminal Market). Attendees participated in a roundtable keynote discussion about food matters critical to college students and capped off the summit with a fast-paced cooking competition judged by two local chefs. (Cornell’s pork tacos took top prize — sorry Penn!)



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Rachel Taube (C'12) at the end-of-year Hub party; the proud families of our graduating seniors raise their glasses in a toast at our Senior Capstone program; graduating seniors Amaris Cuchanski, Andrea Amanullah, Lindsey Todd, and Lily Applebaum.





FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: An admirer presents Karen Finley with a small token of appreciation; Violette Carb with family at graduation; Erin Gautsche enjoys some fresh air in the Writers House garden.

## ARTSEGE RESIDENT: Rolf Potts

Competition is fierce for the **ArtsEdge Residency**, our ongoing collaboration with Penn's **Facilities and Real Estate Services**. The residency offers a year of support to an emerging writer, with a subsidized apartment, free studio space, and close affiliation with Penn's writing community. We selected globetrotter **Rolf Potts** as our 2011–12 ArtsEdge Resident on the strength of his unusual project proposal: a travel book that explores the United States through the lens of its fan and fantasy cultures (think: hanging out with Trekkies on a Caribbean *Star Trek* cruise), an idiosyncratic approach to the American cultural landscape that seemed simultaneously new and part of a longer tradition dating back at least to de Tocqueville. And, indeed, **Rolf** brought ideas about culture and geography to the forefront at KWH. He participated in several talks about travel writing and place and gave a presentation about a little-known historical visionary (and fellow Kansan) named Emanuel Haldeman-Julius and his series of "Little Blue Books." Through Rolf, we met brilliant essayist **Pico Iyer**, as well as a panel of travel writers, including Penn alumna **Rachel Friedman** (C'03), author of *The Good Girl's Guide to Getting Lost*. During one of many discussions about travel writing in the twenty-first century, Rolf tried to convince us that "adventure is hard to come by these days" (much of the world is mapped and known, and images of almost any place imaginable are available instantly). But with Rolf around, we have come to believe that adventure is always imminent.

## NORA MAGID MENTORSHIP PRIZE WINNER: Jessica Goodman (C'12)

**Nora Magid** was an extraordinarily gifted and giving teacher of nonfiction writing at Penn from the mid-1970s until her death in 1991. During those years, she nurtured an astounding number of students — now fondly called the "Nora-ites" — many of whom went on to top jobs at magazines and newspapers and in publishing. Each year, the Nora-ites honor Nora and Nora-style mentoring by awarding the **Nora Magid Mentorship Prize** to a Penn senior who shows exceptional ability and promise as a journalist, writer, or editor of nonfiction. This year's winner was **Jessica Goodman** (C'12), a Creative Writing major who interned at *Rolling Stone* magazine and served as editor-in-chief of Penn's *34th Street* magazine and its blog, Under the Button. Jessica is a dogged reporter, a stylish writer, and a generous editor and colleague — both at *Street* and in her nonfiction writing classes. She clearly demonstrates the passion, professionalism, and curiosity that Nora Magid so valued in nonfiction writers and editors. Jessica began in journalism at Penn as a freshman copy editor at *Street* and later food editor, and she spent a summer at Estée Lauder working on a breast cancer awareness campaign. As a junior, she won a prestigious **RealArts@PENN** internship — allowing her to work at *Rolling Stone*, and to do research for author and *Inside Edition* TV producer Charles Lachman. As editor of *Street*, Jessica managed a staff of thirty and wrote feature articles, including "There's Something About Molly," an in-depth look at the use of the drug MDMA among college students.

## ALUMNI MENTORS

Organized by **Mingo Reynolds**, director of administration at Penn's Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing (CPCW), our **Alumni Mentors Program** pairs students with alumni who can provide professional guidance about writing-related careers. This year's mentor team included **Melissa Jensen** (C'89, GPU' 83), **Lynn Rosen** (C'83), **Cheryl J. Family** (C'91), **Lee Eisenberg** (C'68, ASC'70), **Zach Sergi** (C'10), **Jane Sussman** (C'09), and **Sarah Zhang** (C'11), who met informally with students and offered practical advice about networking, publishing, and building careers in creative fields. Other mentors led more formal "how to" mini-courses in our Arts Café. **Mark Rizzo** (C'92), writer and performer of the one-man show *Terror and Pity*, led a session about starting and sustaining a career in comedy. Funny-man **Lew Schneider** (C'83), the celebrated writer-producer of *Everybody Loves Raymond* (who says he majored in Mask and Wig at Penn), revealed some tricks of the TV writing trade. "If you love screwing around and you think you're great at it, sitcom writing might be the path for you," he joked to the audience (many of whom wore Mask and Wig-style feather boas). Book publishing professional **Lynn Rosen** (C'83) visited as part of our **Sylvia Kauders Series** to share insider-advice about the publishing world. And, with help from the Nora Magid Mentorship Prize committee and the people of the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, we invited a star-studded panel of alumni to lead an honest and informative discussion about careers in journalism. Panelists were **Randall Lane** (C'90), who recently left *Newsweek* to become editor-in-chief of *Forbes* magazine; *New York Times* reporter **Ashley Parker** (C'05); **Eliot Kaplan** (C'78), former *GQ* and *Philadelphia* magazine editor who now hires all the top editors at Hearst magazines; **Melody Joy Kramer** (C'06) of NPR's "Fresh Air with Terry Gross;" and moderator **Stephen Fried** (C'79), author and journalism professor at the Columbia J-School.

## WRITING SCHOLARS

<b>Kate Herzlin</b>	BEHRMAN SCHOLAR
<b>Florentina Dragulescu</b>	BEHRMAN SCHOLAR
<b>Gwen Lewis</b>	CATERFINO SCHOLAR
<b>Andrea Amanullah</b>	GOLDSTEIN PRIZE
<b>Emily Harnett</b>	EDWARD KANE SCHOLARSHIP
<b>Arielle Pardes</b>	NIR-BRAUFMAN FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

## RealArts@PENN

## 2012 Interns

RealArts@Penn Internships offer students real-world experiences working side-by-side with professional writers, editors, arts administrators, and business people at a variety of cultural institutions.



### NEW YORK CITY

<b>Jake Spinowitz</b>	VIACOM CREATIVE SERVICES
<b>Joe Pinsker</b>	ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE
<b>Greg Bonnem</b>	SHORE FIRE MEDIA
<b>Elizabeth Horkley</b>	THE JEWISH MUSEUM



### LOS ANGELES

<b>Elaine Ogden</b>	BROOKLYN FILMS
<b>Kelly Diamond</b>	ORIGINAL FILM
<b>Tim Delaney</b>	DAVID STERN AND STUART GIBBS
<b>Kirby Dixon</b>	NICKELODEON ANIMATION STUDIOS



### PHILADELPHIA

<b>Lalita Clozel</b>	THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
<b>Eillie Anzilotti</b>	PHILADELPHIA MAGAZINE



Kelly Diamond (C'13) speaks at the end-of-year Hub Party; Kelly received a RealArts@Penn internship with Original Film for the summer of 2012.

# a conversation with the editors of FILAMENT

We sat down with two of the founders of *Filament*, **Jess Bergman** (C'14) and **Allison Wattenbarger** (C'14), to learn more about one of the Writers House's newest and most ambitious publications. A magazine that focuses primarily on long-form nonfiction work, *Filament* is funded through the support of Penn parents **Judith Zarin** and **Jared Rosenfeld**.

**Q:** How did the idea of a literary magazine first come about?

**ALLISON:** Both Jess and I are interested in magazines: we read them, talk about them, love to edit and write and mess around with them. We like ideas. *Filament* seemed like the kind of thing Penn should have — my freshman year, I looked around to see where the magazine doing long-form journalism and nonfiction was, where the *Penn New Yorker* was. I didn't find it. Jess and I commiserated over that. We started joking about starting our own publication, our own "Penn New Yorker." After we'd been joking about it for a while, I said — you know, we can actually do this; are you actually serious? Jess said yes. We did it. We did it!

**JESS:** It also seemed like the perfect way to fulfill another oft-discussed goal that we shared: starting some sort of project here at the Writers House. While we had both independently thought about throwing a one-time event or running some kind of reading series here at KWH, starting this new publication ultimately won out as a really great way to fill this sort of journalistic void we'd observed and be our Writers House project at the same time.

**Q:** Why *Filament* and the lightbulb theme? What were some of the other names you guys considered?

**J:** We actually came up with the name *Filament* before we even thought about tying it all together with the lightbulb theme! *Filament* was chosen through a highly scientific, pain-staking think tank process (by which I mean, Allison, myself, and a group of other summer staffers opened a dictionary and started pointing at nouns we liked). We did seriously consider a few other names; I think probably the other biggest contender was *Broadside* or some variation on that. But *Filament* just sounded right to us. It's really as simple as that.

**A:** People have asked if it's spelled "Philament." Nope. Never. Sorry.

**J:** We're a little sensitive about puns.

**Q:** What are your goals for the magazine? Values?

**A:** We see people working on so many exciting projects at Penn and in Philadelphia. We want to write about, photograph, show off, and share those things.

**J:** We also want to provide a space where some of the truly amazing long-form journalism and nonfiction writing that's being produced here at Penn can be published!

**Q:** What makes this magazine 'Writers House'?

**A:** Excited people and people who know exciting people make *Filament* happen. These connections happen at and through the Writers House; the publication was born and grew up here, and our meetings have introduced new people to the House whom we hope stick around here.





**Q:** *Filament* is described as a New Yorker-style magazine. What makes *Filament* different from TNY? What is *Filament*'s unique identity?

**J:** Well, for one thing, we have no illusions about the fact that we are a student publication; we're not trying to actually oust or, you know, rival the *New Yorker*. It's really the form of TNY that we admire and take inspiration from — the proportion of nonfiction writing to fiction and poetry, the inclusion of short, snappy local interest pieces — as opposed to its voice. We'd like to think that the voice of *Filament* is original; that is our unique identity.

**Q:** What is your favorite part about putting together *Filament*?

**A:** I love seeing people converge: speaking to people who are interested in getting involved, hearing about people who have pieces perfect for us, talking friends and strangers into contributing. I like the proofreading, too: reading the issue over and over and over again with so much pride in all our contributors.

**J:** Although selecting which submissions we're going to publish and which ones we're going to pass on can be a tricky process, I think my favorite part of putting together this first issue was just looking through the many pieces submitted by students here at Penn and realizing how much enthusiasm for this project existed outside of just our small group of editors.

**Q:** What goes into putting together an issue? What's the hardest part?

**A:** We began our first issue by collecting submissions. From there — editing, layout, constant editing, constant laying-out. Printer details: paper samples! color decisions! length questions! Then boxes and boxes arrive at KWH.

**J:** The hardest part of working on *Filament* is probably just juggling those responsibilities with everything else that being an undergraduate student here at Penn entails.

**Q:** Who is your ideal guest contributor? Out of anyone in the world, dead or living, who would you have guest-contribute?

**J:** Well, I mean, if we're not taking reality into consideration here, then I would have to say my personal literary idol, the one and only Joan Didion.

**A:** I might go with someone like F. Scott Fitzgerald or Evelyn Waugh. I'd probably be exasperated and adoring; annoyed and proud.

**Q:** What do you foresee in *Filament*'s future? Will it end once you guys graduate?

**A:** *Filament* will probably live longer than either of us.

**J:** Absolutely! That is our hope and our goal.

**Q:** What's the best thing about working on *Filament*?

**J:** Seeing something that just began as an idea tossed around casually at the KWH kitchen table actually become a tangible reality!

**A:** YES. We did something we wanted to do, and we're so thrilled with it.

## STAFF

### Founding Editors

JESSICA BERGMAN  
ZOË KIRSCH  
ALLISON WATTENBARGER  
ROSALINE ZHANG

### Editorial Board

DAVID LOWELL CARPENTER  
ANDIE DAVIDSON  
ISAAC KAPLAN  
JACK NESSMAN  
MADELINE RANUM  
HANNAH WHITE  
AMANDA WOLKIN

### Design Editor

JACK NESSMAN



Allison Wattenbarger (C'14) and Jess Bergman (C'14), founders of *Filament*; copies of the magazine's first issue, hot off the press.

# Creative Ventures

There's a lot of buzz these days about how "the creatives" — storytellers, designers, inventors, artists — are driving emergent economies. As Daniel Pink puts it in *A Whole New Mind*, "the future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind — creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers."

This creative turn comes as no surprise to folks at Writers House. Since our founding, we have been a place for creative people to convene — a skunkworks where visual artists, foodies, dancers, urban

planners, designers, policy wonks, and other innovators come to mingle and exchange ideas.

Established through the generous support of **Marc** (W'80) and **Robin Wolpow**, the Creative Ventures program has allowed us to highlight and organize this deeply rooted creativity and to give it coherent, programmatic forms, through mentorships, workshops, seed grants, and presentations. Led by Program Coordinator **Erin Gautsche** with assistance from **Thomson Guster** (C'10), the Creative Ventures project has encouraged our most inventive faculty and students to explore various modes of creative expression, such as urban planning, gaming, cooking (and eating), movement, and greening initiatives.

Two Creative Ventures projects focused on urban space. **Kristina Ford**, the former city planner of New Orleans and author

of *The Trouble With City Planning*, spoke to a packed house of KWH regulars and new friends from **Urban Studies** and **Penn Design** about challenges, opportunities and responsibilities not only of city officials, but of citizens themselves. Using the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as an example, Kristina led us through the business of city planning — and urged us to make planning our business. Our conversation stretched late into the night over a New Orleans-themed feast of fried chicken, shrimp, biscuits, and grits.

*MOVE* bombing). Afterwards, Urban Studies Professor **Andy Lamas** led the players in a post-game debriefing that explored ideas about public space, the differences and similarities between politics and gaming, and notions of history as a contested narrative.

Creative Ventures allowed us to explore performance and movement as participatory and collaborative modes. Poet and dancer **Laura Neuman** conceived a program called "Material Construction: An Investigation in Text and Movement as Artistic Materials," which brought together co-directors of Philadelphia's Fidget Space **Megan Bridge** and

**Peter Price**,

dancer

**Meg Foley**,

and sound artist

**Bonnie Jones** to explore

the confluence of dance and

language — how words can be

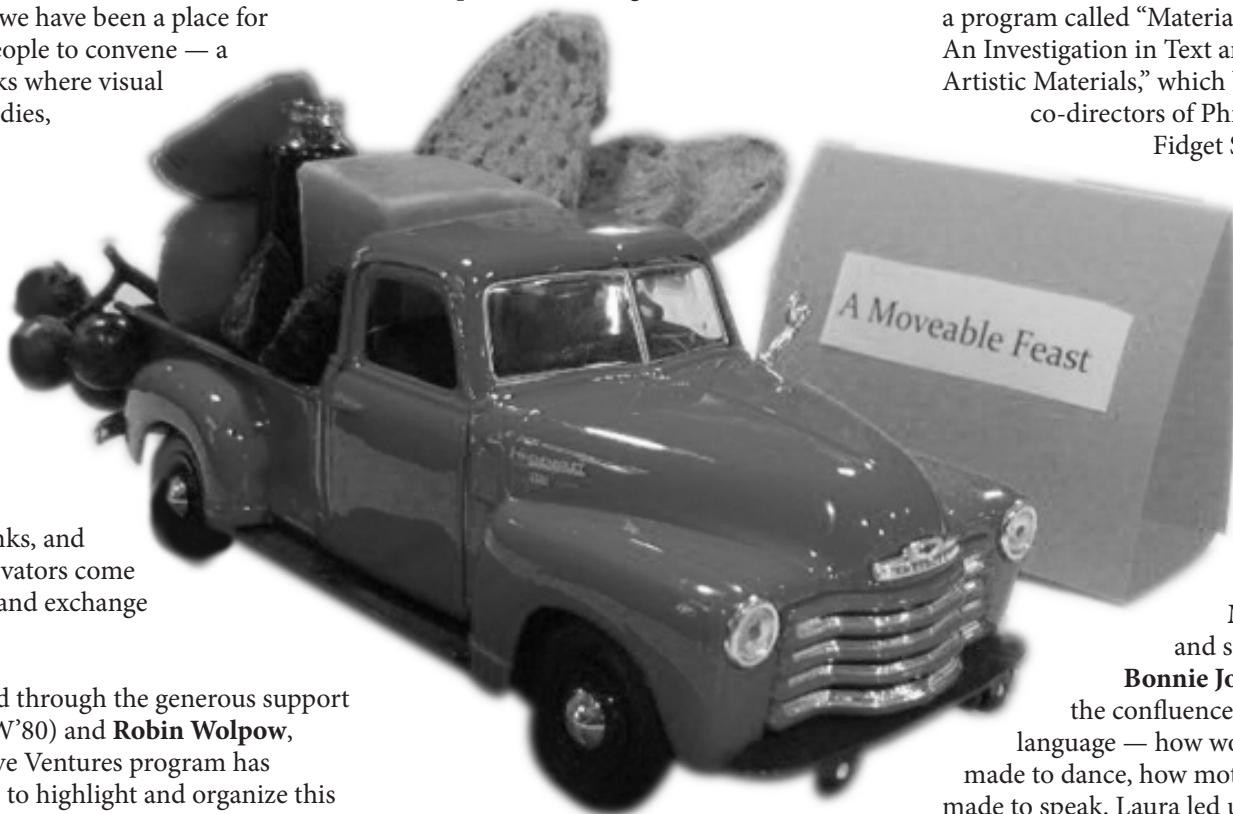
made to dance, how motion can be

made to speak. Laura led us through

a sequence of "micromovements," an exploration of dance at its most elemental.

Bonnie's audiovisual performance poetry concentrated our attention on the movements of her fingers as she composed a semi-improvised piece in real time. Meg encouraged us to move spontaneously, to treat our speech as a kind of motion, to find the courage to act outrageously and move through the Arts Café in unconventional and innovative ways. And Peter and Megan led us in exploring a choreographed performance/reading of Spinoza's *Ethics*, an ambitious and unlikely artistic combination that bore wonderfully strange fruit.

We partnered with the **Institute of Contemporary Art** and Penn's **Urban Studies** program to produce "Re:Activism Philadelphia," a citywide game in which teams ventured all over Philadelphia to historic protest and activism sites, where they reenacted or commemorated historical events. Over thirty players — students from Penn and other city universities, working professionals, life-long Philadelphians and recent transplants alike — gathered on a Sunday to "reactivate" our city's history in locations as far-flung as the Betsy Ross House (the location of a 1977 anti-war demonstration) and the 6200 block of Osage Avenue (site of the infamous 1985







FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Poster from “Re:Activism Philadelphia,” a Creative Venture that saw players tracing the paths of famous historical demonstrations throughout the city; Jenny Chen reveals a knack for hammer-swinging; From Jenny Chen and Tim Miller’s “Night of the Living Room,” the finished terrarium that furnishes the living room.

Creative Ventures encouraged student activities through **Creative Ventures Capital**, an initiative designed to support intellectual risk-taking and offer practical assistance (with funding and advice) through all stages of a project, from launch to development and realization. Through Creative Ventures Capital we supported a “furniture hack” by **Jenny Chen** (C’14) and **Tim Miller** (C’14). Jenny and Tim acquired damaged furniture pieces — an antique TV, a recliner — and repurposed them. Each restored piece was tagged with a QR code that linked to their website, Furniture Hack ([furniturehack.wordpress.com](http://furniturehack.wordpress.com)), at which they faithfully document the stories behind these broken pieces of furniture and the work that has gone into restoring them. At a capstone event called “Night of the Living Room,” the handy duo presented several of their pieces, including a terrarium fashioned from the old TV and a decorative wall light made from ornamental porch railing. We’re thrilled that the electric blue TV-turned-terrarium has found a home in the Writers House living room.

Creative Ventures found other ways to jumpstart community initiatives, too. Its support helped establish Bug Time Working Group, a roving ensemble led by **Thomson Guster** (C’10) with a rotating membership that convenes to create collaborative writings extemporaneously through constraint-based rituals and practices. The writing group held three meetings during the 2011–12 year, each time bringing aboard a different line-up of emergent local writers to serve as workshop leaders for the session’s experimental workshop exercises. Creative Ventures also sponsored the printing of *Philos Adelphos Irrealis*, a chapbook of writings that describe alternate versions of Philadelphia, spearheaded by **Max McKenna** (C’10) and printed by the Robinson Press.

Creative Ventures has affirmed the core ethos of the Kelly Writers House project. It has allowed us to encourage cross-campus collaboration, support off-the-beaten path projects, and nurture the creative ideas of our students.





# PROGRAM AND PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Erin Markey, dressed *à la masculine*, holds aloft a baby bundle during the “Sister Spit” program in April.

## THE BOB DYLAN SONG SYMPOSIUM

What started as an impromptu jam session in December of 2010 — **Al Filreis**, **Anthony DeCurtis**, **Greg Djanikian**, and **Max McKenna** (C’10) doing their best Bob Dylan renditions — quickly led to a plan for a seventieth-birthday celebration of rock & roll’s poet laureate: a **Dylan Song Symposium**. Our nine Dylanologists (who were allotted six minutes each to dissect a Dylan track) included friends, faculty, alumni, and current students. Their song choices acknowledged a few classics, including **Nina Wolpow**’s (C’14) brilliant discussion of “Don’t Think Twice.” But as often is the case when diehard fans are allowed to run the show, the selections were often as esoteric as Dylan himself, and so we savored deeper cuts, as well: **Anthony DeCurtis** on “The Groom’s Still Waiting at the Altar,” **Ralph Rosen** on “Idiot Wind,” and **Cecilia Corrigan** (C’10) on “Leopard Skin Pillbox Hat.” At the end of the night, guitar-slingers **Pepi Ginsberg** (C’05), **Max McKenna** (C’10), and **John Giannotti** led us in a rousing rendition of “I Shall Be Released.”

## LITERACY OUTREACH: “Write On!”

Every Friday, we welcome sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students from West Philadelphia’s Lea Elementary School. Organized with great energy and thoughtfulness by head writing coaches **Austin Levitt** (C’14, W’14), **Zach Lyons** (W’12), **Alex Marcus** (W’12), and **Allie Volinsky** (C’13), the “Write On!” project encouraged elementary school writers to explore creative expression through writing exercises designed by Penn students. Some of this year’s highlights included spine-tingling (and occasionally gruesome) ghost stories written to celebrate Halloween, and inventive restaurant proposals, with menu and decor designed by the kids. As always, “Write On!” focused on teaching the mechanics of writing and reading, while emphasizing the joys of imaginative work (and play). The importance of this combination was highlighted one Friday when a “Write On!” alumnus visited to describe his success performing as a slam poet at local open mic nights, inspired by last year’s “Write On!” session about spoken word arts.

## LIVE AT THE WRITERS HOUSE

Six times a year, we produce one of our most innovative and furthest-reaching series, “**LIVE at the Writers House**”, our radio show on WXPB 88.5. For each thematic show, series producer **Erin Gautsche** (CGS’06) transforms our Arts Café into a radio studio that broadcasts half a dozen talented local writers and musicians across the highways and kitchens of the Delaware Valley. Taped in front of a live audience, and hosted by the vivacious public radio personality **Michaela Majoun**, “LIVE at the Writers House” focuses on the spoken quality of the written word. This year’s shows featured contributors to *Philadelphia Stories* magazine, a First Person Festival preview, Leeway Foundation grant winners, Philadelphia’s up-and-coming young fiction writers (including former KWH-staffer **Sam Allingham**), and a showcase of writers from the Principal Hand Presents series, including alumni **Trisha Low** (C’11), **Cecilia Corrigan** (C’10), and **Steve McLaughlin** (C’08).

## MULTILINGUAL PROGRAMMING

The art of translation enjoyed something of a renaissance this year at Writers House. Sophomores **Alyssa Dickinson**, **Michael Josephs**, and **Ross Karlan** produced the second issue of their ambitious journal, *Doublespeak*, which publishes literary translations submitted by members of the Penn community. In our programming, we featured gifted translators working in a wide range of languages and genres. We gained insight into Soviet Bulgaria, for instance, when Slavic Studies professors **Vlad Todorov** and **Joseph Benetov** joined us for our first-ever program on Bulgarian noir. **Vlad** described the process of adapting his novel, *Zift: A Socialist Noir*, for the big screen (a kind of translation in itself), and **Joseph** talked about translating Vlad's shadowy Bulgarian prose into its hardboiled English equivalent. Another event focused on Bohemian-Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke's classic book of advice, *Letters to a Young Poet*, with a panel discussion anchored by Penn professors **Jean-Michel Rabaté** and **Eric Jarosinski**, with special guest **Mark Harman**. Our most translation-centric event of the year featured famed translator, **Edith Grossman**, and first-time translator, **Rosalie Knecht**, who led a discussion about English translations of Hispanic literature, from Cervantes to García Márquez and César Aira.

## POETRY PROGRAMMING

The book launch for **Julia Bloch's** *Letters to Kelly Clarkson* was bittersweet. With curator **Sarah Dowling** headed to Seattle for her first professorial gig, the **Emergency Poetry Series** made Julia (former series curator) its final reader. Julia returned from her new L.A. teaching gig to read her beautiful and witty poems before a roomful of old friends, in a fitting celebration of Emergency and its mission. Since its founding in 2005, the series brought an astounding roster of young and emerging poets to KWH.

We're proud to be a place where new and established poets alike can feel welcome. In the same semester that Pulitzer prize-winner **Stephen Dunn** read his most recent work before a full house (the rows of chairs extended all the way into the dining room), we also welcomed youth poets from the **Philadelphia Youth Poetry Project** and undergrads from Penn's **Excelano Project**. The young spoken word artists performed their work in this year's spectacular **Caroline Rothstein Oral Poetry** program, hosted by our own **Michelle Taransky**. With support from the **Bok Visiting Authors Fund**, several old friends traveled from afar to share their poems with us: from Arizona came **Charles Alexander**; from California, **Jerry Rothenberg** and **Norman Fischer**; and all the way from Hawaii, **Susan M. Schultz**. Of course, we hosted plenty of local poets here too, including **Eleanor Wilner**, **Brian Teare** (who has just joined the Temple faculty), **Frank Sherlock**, **Gordon Faylor**, **Susanna Fry**, **Michelle Taransky**, and **Ryan Eckes**, among others.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Bushra Rehman, Lily Applebaum (C'12), and Max McKenna (C'10) at the "Handmade/Homemade" program; Gwen Lewis (C'14) tries to keep a poker face; Al Filreis grabs a quick snack during a lunch reception.





FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Amina Gautier (G'04) speaks at a Cheryl J. Family Fiction program in November; Callie Ward (C'13) at Senior Capstone; Chris Million (C'11) plays guitar as a member of the fictional band, the Paranoids.

## FEMINIST PROJECTS AT KWH

Supported by the **Fund for Feminist Projects at Writers House**, the interdisciplinary program series **Feminism/s** explores how art, criticism, political action, and community-building can create structural and cultural alternatives to outmoded gender hierarchies. This year, the series welcomed two new undergraduate planning committee members, **Arielle Pardes** (C'14) and **Joshua Herren** (C'13), who joined **Erin Gautsche** (CGS'06) and **Trisha Low** (C'11) in planning a series of thought-provoking events. Our very own **Arielle Brousse** (C'07, SPP'12) introduced us to editors **Melissa Gira Grant** and **Meaghan O'Connell**, who presented revealing material about “the messy, awkward, hilarious, painful, and ultimately true side of sex” from their anthology *Coming and Crying*. Poets **Joyelle McSweeney** and **Kim Rosenfield** visited KWH to demonstrate their “gurlesque” poetics — a writing mode that bases its stylistic and ideological determinations in the smeared lipstick and polemic eyeliner-scrawls of third wave feminism. **Feminism/s** ended its programming year with a raucous show by members of **Sister Spit**, the legendary performance art collective based in San Francisco. Performers included **Brontez Purnell**, who kicked off the event with an improvised musical intro about “girl germs,” and **Michelle Tea**, who read a fast-paced piece comparing her addiction to designer brands with her adventures in fertility.

## ALUMNI VISITORS SERIES

We're thrilled to celebrate the achievements of alumni at Writers House and delighted when alumni visit us to share their work with students. This year's **Alumni Visitors Series** included **Alicia Oltuski** (C'06, G'06), who read from her (first!) book *Precious Objects*, a scintillating account of her family and their participation in the diamond trade. Professor **Max Apple** introduced Alicia by remembering her as an earnest (and somewhat awkward) freshman and then — like a proud papa — applauding her transformation into the poised and brilliant writer she is today. **Amina Gautier** (G'04) visited to share a selection from her award-winning collection, *At-Risk: Black, Young, and Under Duress*. Amina's stories explore the lives of African-American youth, all of whom might be described as “at risk” — a teen sent south after witnessing the murder of his best friends, two half-siblings dealing with a junkie father, and the story she selected to read for us, “Some Other Kind of Happiness,” which evoked all the exuberance and awkwardness of adolescence. We featured a panel of alumni “creatives” — including **Cheryl J. Family** (C'91), Writers House Board member and Senior Vice President/Brand Strategist of MTV Networks, and **Veronica Jurkiewicz** (C'04), Performance Coordinator in Penn's Department of Music and co-founder of Classical Revolution — for a discussion of the role of the “creative class” in emerging economies.

## POETRY COMMUNITIES & THE INDIVIDUAL TALENT

We hosted a two-day conference about the role of community in the ways poetry has been received, circulated, and understood in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. **Jonathan Fedors** and **Katie Price**, advanced graduate students in Penn's English department, invited four prominent poetry critics — **Maria Damon**, **Craig Dworkin**, **Brian Reed**, and **Steven Yao** — to deliver keynote talks. Other conference presenters shared research on various heady topics (such as conceptual poetry, the work of Gertrude Stein, and the Black Arts movement), leaving plenty of time for casual discussion over good food. We were especially pleased to have in attendance **Jacob Edmond**, who traveled all the way from New Zealand with help from our **Writers Without Borders Fund**; **Alan Golding**, a key thinker on the topic of poetry and community; and **Kathy Lou Schultz** (G'06), an old friend of the Kelly Writers House. It takes a lot of effort to pull off a conference like this — and Katie and Jonathan were grateful for professors **Bob Perelman** and **Charles Bernstein**, who helped guide their efforts, and financial assistance from the **Bok Visiting Authors Fund**, the **English Department**, the **School of Arts and Science**, **Bob Perelman**, the **Poetry and Poetics Graduate Group**, the **Office of the Provost**, the **Alice Paul Center**, and **Asian American Studies**.



## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMING: WRITERS WITHOUT BORDERS

Thanks to robust cross-campus collaborations, globally-minded students, and the incredible financial support of **Seth Ginns** (C'00), our 2011–12 **Writers Without Borders** roster included visitors from England, Israel, Kashmir, New Zealand, and South Africa. We were thrilled to play our part in a Penn-wide conference on the work of Israel-based writer **Aharon Appelfeld**, whose writing is recognized worldwide as among the most profound work about the Holocaust. **Jewish Studies** professor **Nili Gold** arranged for Appelfeld himself to visit Writers House and read an excerpt from his memoir *The Story of a Life* in the original Hebrew; **Al Filreis** followed with an English translation. Robinson Press coordinator **Henry Steinberg** (C'13) made a broadside to commemorate the occasion, featuring a devastating quotation from Appelfeld's memoir: "disaster defied utterance: there was nothing to say." For another important collaboration, we partnered with the **Center for Africana Studies** to host two readers in their **Brave Testimony** series, which celebrates poetry of the African Diaspora: award-winning Caribbean poet **Christian Campbell** and National Poet Laureate of South Africa **Keorapetse Kgositsile**. Other international visitors included Kashmiri novelist **Mirza Waheed**, British travel writer **Pico Iyer**, and New Zealander poetry critic **Jacob Edmond**.

## BLUTT SINGER-SONGWRITER SYMPOSIUM: Lou Reed

**Anthony DeCurtis** helped us host underground rock pioneer **Lou Reed** for this year's **Blutt Singer-Songwriter Symposium**, funded by **Mitchell Blutt** (C'78, M'82, L'84). Best known as the leader of the Velvet Underground — the noisy and blasé minstrels of the avant-garde scene in New York City in the 1960s — Lou is also a literary soul, having recorded narrative albums inspired by Edgar Allan Poe and German theatre. In a live interview with Anthony in the Arts Café, he told us that studying with poet Delmore Schwartz in the early sixties shaped his rock sensibilities, and he shared anecdotes about how Andy Warhol's mass-production approach to printmaking and painting just never seemed to work with songwriting. For five years now, the Blutt Symposium has offered our budding songwriters and music critics (many of them Anthony's star students!) an opportunity to meet legendary musicians and lyricists, observe Anthony's impeccable interviewing skills, and chime in with their own questions about life in the music biz. The list of past Blutt singer-songwriters is almost unbelievable: **Rosanne Cash**, **Steve Earle**, **Patti Smith**, **Suzanne Vega**, and **Rufus Wainwright**.

## MARATHON READING: *The Crying of Lot 49*

"Shall I project a world?" asks Oedipa Maas before diving into the bizarre underworld of conspiracies and counter-cultures that sets the scene for *The Crying of Lot 49*. Projecting a world is precisely what we did last March during our sixth annual marathon reading, when Oedipa's haunting quote became our mantra for the day, as well as the tagline on thousands of Post-It note post-horns we hid all over Philadelphia to advertise the event, mimicking the muted post-horn emblem that crops up throughout Thomas Pynchon's 1966 postmodern cult novella. More than thirty community members took to the podium to vocalize Oedipa's romp through paranoid-schizophrenic suburban California, including **Harry Saffren**, who holds the record for attendance at our marathon readings (he's been to every one). While **Shoshana Akabas** (C'14) and **Noa Bendit-Shtull** (C'14) crafted delightful cream puffs, and **Kristen Martin** (C'11) put out tray after tray of seriously glorious eggplant parm, **Thomson Guster** (C'10), **Lee Huttner** (C'10), **Chris Milione** (C'11), and **Max McKenna** (C'10) donned mod-palette black and white and took the Arts Café stage as the Paranoids, performing versions of the fictional rock band's songs.

## POVICH JOURNALISM PROGRAMS

**Maury Povich** (C'62) and his wife **Connie Chung** last year established an extraordinary fund that will support all journalism programs and events at the KWH forever. The **Povich Fund for Journalism Programs** at the Kelly Writers House has allowed us to do so much already: lunches in our Arts Café with working journalists, informal meetings between students and rock critics, and political insight from Washington insiders. The astounding list of visitors thus far includes:

<b>Ursula Cary</b>	EDITOR
<b>Richard Ben Cramer</b>	JOURNALIST
<b>Sabrina Erdely</b>	JOURNALIST
<b>Stephen Fried (C'79)</b>	JOURNALISM FACULTY
<b>Richard Galen</b>	POLITICAL STRATEGIST
<b>Elysa Gardner</b>	THEATER & MUSIC CRITIC
<b>Jessica Goldstein</b>	ARTS JOURNALIST
<b>Karen Heller</b>	JOURNALIST
<b>Christian Hoard</b>	MUSIC CRITIC
<b>Mara Hvistendahl</b>	SCIENCE & POLICY WRITER
<b>Eliot Kaplan (C'78)</b>	EDITORIAL SCOUT
<b>Bill Keller</b>	EDITOR
<b>Melody Joy Kramer (C'06)</b>	RADIO PRODUCER
<b>Randall Lane (C'90)</b>	EDITOR
<b>Jill Lawrence</b>	POLITICAL WRITER
<b>Ashley Parker (C'05)</b>	REPORTER
<b>Alan Light</b>	ROCK CRITIC
<b>David Maraniss</b>	POLITICAL BIOGRAPHER
<b>Alicia Oltuski (C'06, G'06)</b>	ESSAYIST
<b>Carrie Rickey</b>	FILM CRITIC
<b>Roger Simon</b>	POLITICAL COLUMNIST
<b>Allison Steele</b>	REPORTER
<b>Julia Turner</b>	EDITOR
<b>Michael Vitez</b>	JOURNALIST
<b>Steve Volk</b>	CITY REPORTER
<b>Stephanie Zacharek</b>	FILM CRITIC



Melody Joy Kramer (C'06), Associate Producer of NPR's "Fresh Air with Terry Gross," visits the Writers House thanks to the Povich Fund.

## WRITERS HOUSE ON THE ROAD

We love to see friends in other cities. So a few times a year, we take our show on the road and share KWH talent and enthusiasm with alumni, parents, prospective students, writers, and KWH fans all over the country. The family grows every year.

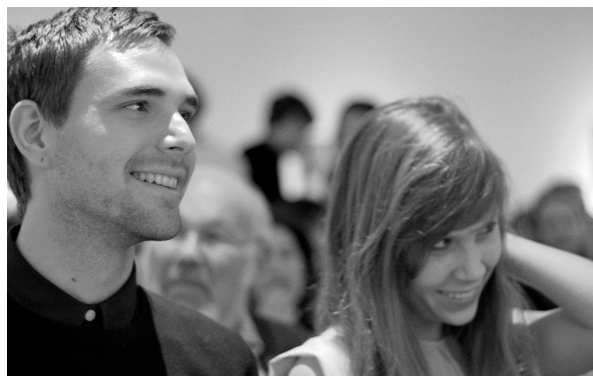
In September, **Harry Rosenberg** (W'79) and **Laurie Sayet** graciously hosted a soiree in their Westwood home for several of our Californian friends. **Zach Sergi** (C'10) had just sold a series of web-based choose-your-own-adventure books; he presented an excerpt from one of his latest, letting fellow partygoers decide the course of the story. **Gordon Bond** (C'06), who traveled all the way from Texas to join us, read from his original screenplay about a jazz lounge singer. Comedy writer **Law Schneider** (C'83), who has written for TV shows *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Men of a Certain Age*, shared an essay he'd originally performed at the L.A. storytelling series *Afterbirth: Stories You Won't Read in a Parenting Magazine*. **Jane Sussman** (C'09) read a short story about a relationship strained by isolation and change. And **Jon Avnet** (C'71), producer of such films as *Black Swan*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, and *Risky Business*, spoke to the gathered guests about the importance of the open, creative pedagogy that guides learning at the Kelly Writers House.

Amazingly, November marked the tenth anniversary of our annual Writers House New York event, sponsored by our good friends **Susan** and **Louis Meisel**. For a decade now, our fabulous hosts have opened up the wide, white center room of their SoHo art gallery to nearly one hundred of our New York friends. The event serves as a benefit in support of our Young and Emerging Writers Fund; but more than that, it affords us an opportunity to bring together friends for refreshment and revelry. This year's featured readers included Tisch School Performance Studies student and poet **Trisha Low** (C'11); Creative Writing faculty member, nonfiction writer, and *Kingdom Under Glass* author **Jay Kirk**; *34th Street Magazine* Food & Drink Editor **Nina Wolpov** (C'14); cooking enthusiast, fiction writer, and Columbia MFA candidate **Sanaë Lemoine** (C'11); and novelist, biographer, memoirist, and former Writers House Fellow **Susan Cheever**. Following the readings, **Al Filreis** engaged our attendees in a collective analysis of John Ashbery's "Some Trees," a poem describing the way meaning unfolds through relation: that is, people become important to one another not because of what they say or do, but because of the mere fact of their presence. As Ashbery says, "merely being there means something."

In March, we returned to New York for a salon hosted by Writers House Board members and dedicated friends **Gary** and **Nina Wexler**, marking the third time the Wexlers have welcomed us for such an occasion. Filmmaker and storyteller **Blake Martin** (C'01) delivered a poignant tribute to Whitney Houston with an essay about how her music taught him self-acceptance. Newly-appointed Google intern **Gwen Lewis** (C'14) read a profile of young fashion bloggers, an excerpt from a long-form journalism piece written for her course with *Rolling Stone* editor Anthony DeCurtis. **Kelly Diamond** (C'13), founder of Penn's first student-run sitcom *Classless*, took a more serious turn when she shared her investigative piece on eating disorders and the internet. Travel writer (and world traveler) **Zoë Kirsch** (C'14) showcased her fiction chops with an original story about an adolescent girl facing off with her granola-crunching mother. Penn English professor **Bob Perelman** read his poem "Chronic Meanings," written for a friend who had been diagnosed with AIDS. Then Al Filreis led us all in a discussion of William Carlos Williams' poem "Between Walls," and we lingered over lemon bars and brownies, chatting with friends old and new.

## VISUAL ARTS AT KWH

The **Brodsky Gallery** and the **Robinson Press** allowed our design-inclined Hub members to pursue ambitious visual arts projects: imaginary Philadelphias, letterpress booklets, broadsides, posters, curated art shows, and more. "Philadelphia Future Perfect," one of a half-dozen Brodsky Gallery exhibits to adorn our walls this year, featured theoretical maps of Philadelphia, including several drawings by renowned architect **Louis Kahn**, reproduced from archival documents in Penn's special collections. For the opening of "Future Perfect," Executive Director of PennPraxis (and Writers House Board member) **Harris Steinberg** gave a talk about the history of Philadelphia's urban design. Another gallery show, "Handmade/Homemade," focused on artist books and displayed a stunning collection of handmade broadsides, chapbooks, and posters, including work by Robinson Press Coordinator **Henry Steinberg** (C'13). Other book arts work this year included *Philos Adelphos Irrealis*, a collaborative project conceived by **Max McKenna** (C'10) and completed with help from **Kristen Martin** (C'11), **Amelia Robertson**, **Geeta Aneja** (GSE'17), **Isaac Kaplan** (C'15), **Henry Steinberg** (C'13), and Brodsky Gallery coordinator **Lily Applebaum** (C'12). Lovingly hand-bound, *Philos Adelphos Irrealis* collected speculative writings about (imaginary, unknown, would-be) Philadelphias, by a diverse group of writers, artists, thinkers, and poets. We celebrated its launch one sunny day in April by convening to chat about alternate histories and eat Philadelphia-themed snacks in the Class of 1942 garden.



James LaMarre (C'11) and Kaegan Sparks (C'10) at Writers House New York; Al Filreis and Kerry Cooperman (C'06) act out John Ashbery's "Some Trees."





# 2012 KELLY WRITERS HOUSE FELLOWS

2012 marked the fourteenth consecutive year of the unique **Kelly Writers House Fellows Program**, a project sponsored by Writers House Board chairman **Paul Kelly** (C'62, WG'64, Trustee 1997–present) that allows us to invite three eminent authors to the Writers House for transformative two-day visits.

We were honored to welcome this year's Fellows: trailblazing performance artist **Karen Finley**, renowned poet and critic **Ron Silliman**, and critically important and innovative novelist **John Barth**.

To prepare for each visit, **Al Filreis** led a seminar of brilliant undergrads in analyzing the work of each of our Fellows. "These intimate class discussions," one student explained, "shaped how I view and analyze literature, and became the benchmark from which I measure all other courses."

As Karen Finley's visit approached, Fellows Coordinator **Jamie-Lee Josselyn** (C'05) and Project Assistant **Molly O'Neill** (LPS'11) brainstormed with the Fellows students to hit upon the best way to honor Karen and her work. Their emphatic and unanimous choice: a donation in Karen's name to the AIDS advocacy organization Visual AIDS. The lead up to Karen's visit

required some serious muscle, too. Jamie-Lee (with the help of KWH Director **Jessica Lowenthal**) wrangled a piano up Spruce and down 38th, then through the KWH garden and into the house, to accommodate the instrumental requirements of Karen's one-night-only performance, written explicitly for our space.

The prep for **Ron Silliman's** visit required less brawn, but more counting: Fellows students arranged a Fibonacci-sequenced fruit and veggie platter as a nod to Ron's favorite integer sequence. We worked with Robinson Press genius **Henry Steinberg** (C'13) to create an abecedarian broadside inspired by Ron's epic work, *The Alphabet*. **Erin Gautsche** (LPS'06) rounded out the planning for our Ron-fest with a Greek-themed feast.

In a fitting end to another Fellows season, **John Barth** told us that his trip to the Writers House was likely his last public gig, after an extraordinary career spanning seven decades. To prove their fandom, Fellows students designed (and wore!) t-shirts themed on John Barth's massive allegorical campus satire, *Giles Goat-Boy*. **Kristen Martin** (C'11) cooked an exquisite meal à la Provençal with assistance

from a crew of diligent choppers, washers, servers, and leftover-eaters.

Throughout the spring, Writers House community members flocked to the house for each Fellow's evening reading, and returned the following morning for a brunch-time conversation masterfully moderated by Al Filreis. Jamie-Lee, Molly, the Fellows students, and our staff handled all the complex details: hotel and travel reservations, chair rentals and configuration for maximum capacity seating, expedited digital recording and archiving, mountains of books for sale and signing — the works! Thanks to our stellar team, everything went off without a hitch.

Following his visit, Mr. Barth's charming wife Shelly, who joined him in Philadelphia, remarked, "After almost five hundred readings and lectures over the decades, Jack's ready to call it quits on that score, though he's very much enjoyed his visits to all those campuses and other venues. The fact that the Kelly Writers House visit was especially lovely makes him feel very good; it meant a lot to both of us that he was able to bow out among so many warm and kind and generous folks. A fine time and a fine memory!"

KAREN FINLEY

RON SILLIMAN

JOHN BARTH



# SUPPORTING THE WRITERS HOUSE



Lou Reed, singer-songwriter and frontman of the Velvet Underground, poses with Cheryl Henderson and Mingo Reynolds. His visit to the Writers House was made possible by the Blutt Songwriting Symposium Endowed Fund.

## ENDOWMENT GIFTS

*It has been seventeen years since the efforts of a nascent community transformed this fourteen-room cottage into a home for writers and creative thinkers. If you've ever been to a program in our Arts Café, you'll likely remember our charmingly mismatched chairs — an intentional remnant of a time when we were scraping together every resource we could find to create the vibrant, inventive arts space we are today. Now that we've built up a mission, a community, and a presence, it's on to our next phase: permanence.*

*Endowment gifts are designed to provide ongoing funding for a specific project or program at the Writers House. They offer annual support in perpetuity, so that generations of students to come will benefit from innovative arts programming. Our ultimate goal is to secure the long-term viability of the Writers House project by endowing it piece by piece.*

*Donors can choose to fund and name an annual event, such as a screenwriting symposium or poetry reading; they can give gifts to name one of the fourteen rooms that make up this house; they can establish ongoing funds to support new initiatives, such as student publications; or they can provide permanent funding for staff positions, ranging from student internships to the directorship. Some donors choose to remain anonymous; others recognize family members, former professors, or friends by naming endowments in their honor. These are indelible tributes — gifts that provide enduring impact on our House and lasting memorials for loved ones.*

*If you want to find out more about endowment opportunities, contact Arielle Brousse (C'07), our Assistant Director for Development, at [brousse@writing.upenn.edu](mailto:brousse@writing.upenn.edu) or (215) 746-POEM.*

*We have been fortunate to receive generous endowment gifts from alumni, parents, and friends. We are grateful for their enthusiasm and encouragement and pleased to describe their gifts here:*

**BELTRAN FAMILY TEACHING AWARD FUND (NEW)** Our friends **John Paul** and **Lina Beltran** established this award to celebrate the phenomenal work of writing teachers, especially those who apply the communitarian ethos of Writers House to forge a pedagogical presence beyond the classroom. In addition to a stipend, the **Beltran Family Teaching Award** recipient receives funding to develop and host a special Writers House event. The inaugural Beltran Award was given to **Karen Rile** (C'80), a fiction writer who has supported and mentored a dizzying number of students over the course of her long tenure at Penn. Karen's Beltran Family Program — the presentation of a fine-letterpress printing of a short story written by a member of the KWH community — will take place at Writers House in the spring.

**SAYET-ROSENBERG FUND FOR YOUNG WRITERS (NEW)** For many years, **Harry Rosenberg** (W'79) and **Laurie Sayet** have been key in helping us expand the reach of our programming. This year, Harry and Laurie gave a gift that will enable us to reach young writers in two ways. Half of their gift will support a creative writing teaching internship at a summer camp where a current Penn

undergraduate will have the opportunity to work with children of all ages in a unique classroom setting. The other half of their gift will help support travel and other costs associated with our recruitment efforts, now being coordinated by **Jamie-Lee Josselyn** (C'05), who has recently been named our Associate Director for Recruitment.

**EVA AND LEO SUSSMAN POETRY FUND (NEW)** This brand new fund from Penn parents **Daniel** and **Miriam Morse** pays tribute to Daniel's grandparents, **Eva** and **Leo Sussman**. Eva and Leo valued arts, culture, and education; between working shifts to support his family, Leo wrote poems. Their daughter Naomi — Dan's mother — was herself a reader, writer, poet, and painter. The fund supports an annual event to be known as the **Eva and Leo Sussman Poetry Program**, which will translate the Sussman/Morse family's deep and indelible commitment to arts and culture into an opportunity for the entire Writers House community to experience the work of contemporary poets. The inaugural Sussman Poetry Program will be held in November 2012 and will feature **Nathalie Anderson**, **Elaine Terranova**, and **Joan Landis**.



**IRWYN AND LUCY APPLEBAUM FUND** Writing is an inherently social practice. We at Kelly Writers House honor the contributions of those who edit, curate, publish, and distribute the written word. It was with these values in mind that Penn parents **Irwyn** (C'75) and **Lucy Applebaum** established this fund, which allows us to host conversations with people who make their careers in book and magazine production. Penn writing instructor and novelist **Karen Rile** (C'80) hosted this year's **Applebaum Editors and Publishers Series**, which included visits by the editors of *Electric Literature*, an innovative digital magazine, and the venerable *Painted Bride Quarterly*, whose editorial committee includes a strong undergraduate contingent.

**BASSINI APPRENTICESHIPS FUND** We work hard to ensure that our students have access to mentorships, internships, apprenticeships, and other opportunities that introduce them to the day-to-day activities of working writers. A generous gift from Board members **Reina Marin Bassini** (C'72, GED'72) and **Emilio Bassini** (C'71, W'71, WG'73) enables the Writers House to sponsor three annual apprenticeships, pairing undergraduate students with professional writers associated with Penn's writing program.

**BLUTT SONGWRITING SYMPOSIUM ENDOWED FUND** **Mitchell Blatt** (C'78, M'82, L'84, Trustee 1998–2008) established this fund, which sponsors an annual symposium honoring the work of a legendary performer. This year's symposium featured the legendary **Lou Reed**: musician, photographer, principal songwriter for the Velvet Underground, and one of the most significant figures in experimental rock of the late twentieth century. Our own **Anthony DeCurtis**, a *Rolling Stone* contributing editor, interviewed Lou, encouraging him to open up about his life and career. An intimate dinner for twelve in our dining room followed immediately after.

**BOK ENDOWED VISITING WRITERS SERIES FUND** This fund was among our earliest (and most robust) endowment gifts, given by Board members **Roxanne** (C'81) and **Scott Bok** (C'81, W'81, L'84, Trustee 2005–present) to support the full range of contemporary writing at Writers House. **The Bok Visiting Writers Series** features every kind of writer — poets, novelists, translators, essayists, screenwriters, comedians, and more — and the **Bok Fund** allows us to pay honoraria to our visiting writers year after year. This year's Bok Series brought us many acclaimed poets, including **Susan M. Schultz** (all the way from Hawaii!), **Charles Alexander**, **Jerry Rothenberg**, **Alice Notley**, **Norman Fischer**, and **Eleanor Wilner**, among others. With help from the Bok Fund we celebrated the first book of **Alicia Oltuski** (C'06, G'06), the songs of Bob Dylan, and the art of translation. The fund also enabled numerous conversations, including a hilarious gig with funnyman **Lew Schneider** (C'83), writer of *Everyone Loves Raymond* and *Men of a Certain Age*.

**THE BRODSKY GALLERY FUND** Writers House isn't just for writing; we also support the visual arts and have become a gathering place for painters, sculptors, photographers, and other visual artists. Our first floor hosts a student-curated art gallery that exhibits all kinds of work by local and visiting artists. **Michael Brodsky** (W'88) and **Heidi Hookman Brodsky** (C'89) established the **Brodsky Gallery Fund** to name and support our gallery space and the work of the student curators. This year's **Brodsky Gallery** shows, curated by **Lily Applebaum** (C'12), included a series of Philadelphia maps for projects that were never undertaken, including work by **Louis**



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: "Write On!" mentors and mentees pose at their end of year celebration; Al Filreis and Meryl Zises (C'10); Kristen Martin (C'11) poses with a pork roast.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Henry Steinberg (C'13) works on the Robinson Press; Alumni showing their school spirit at the class of '62 program; Emily Harnett (C'13) and Sarah Arkebauer (C'11) during the end-of-year party.

**Kahn** (re-printed in large-scale format from smaller versions held in the library archives), and a collection of etchings and lithographs by European-Jewish refugee of the holocaust era, **Sigmund Laufer**.

**EISLER ENDOWED INTERNSHIP FUND** KWH Advisory Board member **Bonnie Eisler** (C'79) and her husband **Cliff** (C'79) established this fund to support our efforts in matching students with internships that will afford them glimpses into creative industries without stretching their budgets. Her gift allows us to grant stipends to students who are interested in taking unpaid or low-paid competitive internships at various arts and culture organizations around the country.

**CHERYL J. FAMILY FUND FOR FICTION PROGRAMMING** KWH Board member **Cheryl Family** (C'91) created this fund to support an annual program featuring an emerging talent in the world of fiction writing. This year marked our fifth annual **Cheryl J. Family Fiction Program**, a reading by award-winning short story writer **Amina Gautier** (G'04), introduced by professor **Herman Beavers**.

**FUND FOR FEMINIST PROJECTS** Thanks to the support of an anonymous benefactor, the Writers House now has an endowment fund for feminist programs and projects. Our **Feminism/s** series, which the **Fund for Feminist Projects** supports, features writers, performers, theorists, and other feminist practitioners, twice a semester. This year, the Feminism/s series hosted a reading by poets of the "gurlesque" — a new literary mode involving queer politics and grrrl-friendly poetics — as well as a tour stop by the phenomenal performance art group **Sister Spit**.

**TERRY B. HELED TRAVEL AND RESEARCH GRANT FUND** This fund, established by **Mali Heled Kinberg** (C'95) as a tribute to the memory of her mother **Terry B. Heled**, awards a grant to one undergraduate each year to defray the travel costs associated with conducting research for a long-form writing project. This year's award winner was **Katie Sanders** (C'12), who traveled to California and elsewhere in the U.S. to learn and write about our penal systems. Katie presented her findings at the Writers House in January.

**MICHAEL AND DANIELLE GOLDSTEIN ENDOWED PRIZE** Penn parents **Michael** and **Danielle Goldstein** endowed this prize, which allows us to award a stipend to an outstanding writing student associated with Kelly Writers House. The prize encourages a student writer to "get everything else out of the way" and spend the summer working on a writing project. The 2011–12 **Goldstein Prize** recipient was **Andrea Amanullah** (C'12), a four-year member of the KWH student staff. We announced the 2012–13 winner at our end of year Hub party: **John Valadez** (LPS'13), who accepted the award while his two young (and adorable) daughters joined us in applauding John's talents.

**WRITERS HOUSE JOURNAL ENDOWMENT FUND** Former KWH Advisory Board member **Harry Groome** (C'63) established this fund in the early days of Writers House to support *Xconnect: Writers of the Information Age*, a nationally-distributed literary journal with a significant online presence. *Xconnect* closed shop in 2008, but thanks to Harry's generosity, the **Journal Endowment Fund** now supports *Jacket2*, a revered source for writing about contemporary poetry. People from 187 countries have read *Jacket2* since we launched in April 2011, including Lesotho, Cuba, the Maldives, Laos and Yemen. Readers in the Philippines constitute our seventh-most-popular national readership, with India eighth, and Brazil ninth (after the U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, Germany, and France). There have been 700,000 visits to the *Jacket2* site — in which a reader read at least one article — since its launch.

**KANE-WALLACE KITCHEN FUND** The kitchen is the heart of the Kelly Writers House. We hear from alumni that their fondest memories of Writers House involve food in some way: making elaborate (or thematic) meals for literary



heroes, braving the crisp January weather for the homemade soup of our annual Mind of Winter gathering, or simply eating with friends at the old green table. A generous gift from **Ed Kane** (C'71, Trustee 1996–2000) and **Marty Wallace** named the **Kane-Wallace Kitchen** and continues to support our daily culinary efforts. Their gift ensures that visitors to the Kelly Writers House leave nourished — in more ways than one.

**SYLVIA W. KAUDERS FUND** Our friend **Sylvia Kauders** (CW'42) established this fund to support a series of intimate nonfiction lunch programs. This year, the **Kauders Series** supported a standing-room only discussion of “poetic symbiosis” with **Anne Waldman**, a talk on “How to Be a Famous Author” with publisher and literary agent **Lynn Rosen**, and a panel discussion on “Writing About Place,” moderated by Writers House’s own **Jamie-Lee Josselyn** (C'05).

**THE LEVIN ENDOWED FUND FOR AN ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BERNHEIMER** KWH Advisory Board member **Kate Levin** (GAS'96) established this gift in memory of Comparative Literature professor **Charles Bernheimer**, to pay tribute to his extraordinary work. The endowment supports our annual **Bernheimer Symposium**, which is developed and organized each year by the Writers House Program Coordinator. This year, our featured guest was famed essayist, novelist, and travel writer **Pico Iyer**, introduced by 2012 ArtsEdge resident (and fellow travel writer) **Rolf Potts**.

**KATE LEVIN COMMUNITY OUTREACH INTERNSHIP FUND** As one of our dearest friends, KWH Advisory Board member **Kate Levin** (GAS'96) had been to countless events and salons featuring Writers House talent. But when she attended our annual Writers House New York event in 2010, Kate was so moved by the presentation of our student Community Outreach Coordinator **Allyson Even** (C'13) that she asked if she could fund the position. Kate’s gift permanently endows the role of the Community Outreach Coordinator, ensuring the strength, commitment, and energetic renewal of our community service efforts.

**THE LIVE AT THE WRITERS HOUSE ENDOWMENT** One of our longest-running partnerships is with local public radio station **WXPN 88.5 FM** (xpn.org). Once a month, we transform our Arts Café into a sound stage, where we produce **LIVE at the Writers House**, hosted by radio personality **Michaela Majoun**. Supported pseudonymously by **BigRoc**, the **LIVE at the Writers House Endowment** allows our Program Coordinator to line up a showcase of local talent — writers and musical guests alike — to broadcast to a greater Philadelphia audience. Shows this year included writers whose work is featured in *Philadelphia Stories*, performers from the First Person Arts Festival, and recipients of Leeway Foundation grant awards.

**THE BOB LUCID MEMORIAL FUND** We credit beloved English professor **Robert “Bob” Lucid** with the visionary idea that inspired the creation of the Writers House. His illustrious thirty-two-year career at Penn was transformative for many of his students, and his early involvement with the Writers House project informed the ethos of this space. **Susan Small Savitsky** (CW'75) and **Ed Kane** (C'71) established the **Bob Lucid Memorial Fund** to support an annual fiction program in memory of Bob. Our fourth annual Lucid Program featured former Guggenheim Fellow and Lambda Award-winning novelist **Blanche Boyd**.

**ELISSA CATERFINO MANDEL ENDOWED INTERNSHIP FUND** Kelly Writers House friend and supporter **Elissa Caterfino Mandel** (C'83) is committed to making gifts that contribute directly to the student experience. She established the **Elissa Caterfino Mandel Endowed Internship Fund** to support a student intern who will get hands-on experience in the real-world practice of editing, a skill that will translate to opportunities in publishing houses, newspapers, literary journals, small presses, and university English departments. With help from this fund, we’ve hired Mandel intern **Emily Orrson** (C'13) as an editorial assistant for *Jacket2*.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: The “We All Feel Like Spoken Word” crew: Hannah Van Sciver (C'14), Michelle Taransky, Richard Thomson (C'13), Rosa Escandon (C'14), and Victoria Ford (C'15); *New York Times* business columnist Joe Nocera visited for our Weber Symposium; Sarah Dowling (G'12) and Bob Perelman reminisce at our end-of-year Hub party.

**PARKER PRIZE ENDOWED FUND FOR JOURNALISTIC**

**NONFICTION** As an undergraduate, **Bret Parker** (C'90) worked as a dedicated reporter for the *Daily Pennsylvanian*. Inspired by his love of journalism, he established the **Parker Prize** to award a student for a long-form profile, exposé, or other stellar work of investigative journalism. The 2012 prize winner of the prize was *Daily Pennsylvanian* and *34th Street Magazine* contributor **Ellie Levitt** (C'13), whose piece on WikiLeaks and social media appeared in *The Nation*.

**MAURY POVICH JOURNALISM PROGRAM FUND** This record-breaking endowment gift made by Penn alumnus **Maury Povich** (C'62) and his wife **Connie Chung** represents the single largest programming gift in our seventeen-year history. Inspired by the career of his father, *Washington Post* sports reporter **Shirley Povich**, Maury established this fund to support all nonfiction and journalism programming at the Writers House. The remarkable first year of Povich programming included readings and talks by working journalists, lunches with political insiders, and plenty of advice for aspiring nonfiction writers — all led by our key journalism faculty members, **Dick Polman**, **Anthony DeCurtis**, and **Paul Hendrickson**. Visitors included **Eliot Kaplan** of *Hearst* magazines (C'78), **Randall Lane** of *Forbes* (C'90), **David Maraniss** (who discussed his new Obama biography), **Jill Lawrence** of *Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast*; **Roger Simon** of *Politico.com*, and **Bill Keller** of the *New York Times*.

**THE HERMAN AND JEANNE ROBINSON LETTERPRESS**

**FUND** Six years ago, the Writers House partnered with Penn's Rare Books Library and the School of Design to co-found the Common Press, a printmaking studio featuring an eighteenth-century letterpress. Our students' work with the Common Press appealed to **Nina Robinson Vitow** (CW'70, WG'76), who established this fund both to support our press and to honor the memory of her parents **Herman** and **Jeanne**. The **Robinson Press**, our imprint in the Common Press, is managed by undergraduate **Henry Steinberg** (C'13), who plans upwards of a dozen press projects a year, including poetry broadsides, posters to commemorate art gallery openings, and book arts initiatives. The capstone project of Robinson Press this year was *Philos Adelpheos Irrealis*, a chapbook of imagined alternate histories of Philadelphia.

**THE CAROLINE ROTHSTEIN FUND IN SUPPORT OF**

**ORAL POETRY** When **Caroline Rothstein** (C'06) was a student, her commitment to making spoken-word poetry more visible and accessible at Penn was striking. Her parents, **Nancy** (CW'75) and **Steven Rothstein**, set up this fund in her honor, to pay tribute to Caroline's devotion, and ensure that oral poetry will have a lasting home at the Writers House. This year's **Caroline Rothstein Oral Poetry Program** was "We All Feel Like Spoken Word," a celebration that brought together members of Penn's spoken word group The Excelano Project, volunteers with the Philadelphia Youth Poetry Movement, the hosts of Writers House's ongoing open-mic series Speakeasy, and other local slam poets.

**ALICE COOPER SHOULBERG SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR THE SUPPORT OF STUDENT CREATIVE WRITING**

A stellar 1955 graduate of Penn's College for Women, **Alice Cooper Shoulberg** went on to a brilliant career as a Philadelphia public

school teacher. Established in her memory, the **Shoulberg Fund** supports the technological needs of our Publications Room, where students depend on computers and software to edit and publish their magazines.

**THE STACEY GILLIS WEBER (W'85) AND JEFFREY A. WEBER SYMPOSIUM FUND**

The yearly Weber Symposium, supported by this gift from **Stacey** (W'85) and **Jeff Weber**, features guest speakers who are acclaimed for written commentary, insight, and analysis relating to finance and economics. Our third annual **Weber Symposium** was a conversation with *New York Times* columnist, occasional NPR business commentator, and former *Fortune* magazine editorial director **Joe Nocera**, whose lucid, almost conversational prose demystifies even the trickiest financial subjects. Past visitors to the series have been equally remarkable: **Larry Summers** (economic advisor to President Barack Obama) and **Andrew Ross Sorkin** (author of *Too Big to Fail*).

**THE WEXLER FUND FOR PROGRAMS AT THE KELLY**

**WRITERS HOUSE** Gary and Nina Wexler, Penn parents and members of the Kelly Writers House Advisory Board, created this unrestricted endowment fund to support all kinds of programs and new student initiatives. The **Wexler Fund** allows students to think creatively about what can happen in our space.

**WEXLER FAMILY ENDOWED FUND FOR PROGRAMS IN**

**JEWISH LIFE AND CULTURE** When Gary and Nina Wexler's son **Freddy** (C'10) was a student, he took the Representations of the Holocaust course taught by **Al Filreis**, and was so powerfully affected that he invited his parents to attend a class. Gary and Nina were themselves so inspired that they created this endowment fund to support Jewish-interest programming. This year, the **Wexler Family Fund** supported a discussion with **Peter Filkins**, who translated **H.G. Adler**'s novel *Panorama*; a talk with Holocaust scholar **Alan Rosen** about survival, witness, and testimony; and a collaborative showcase of modern and contemporary authors, "Jewish Writers You Wish You Knew About."

**ZARIN/ROSENFELD ENDOWMENT FOR LITERARY**

**JOURNALISM MAGAZINE** Penn parents **Judith Zarin** and **Gerald Rosenfeld** created this fund to support a magazine of literary journalism at the Kelly Writers House. Until recently, the Zarin/Rosenfeld Fund covered the costs associated with printing the creative nonfiction periodical *The Green Couch*. This year, following the graduation of *The Green Couch*'s editorial staff, several students banded together to form a new publication of creative nonfiction in the style of the *New Yorker*, to feature long-form journalism pieces, reviews, essays, and thoughtful cultural criticism, as well as poetry and art. The first issue of their new magazine — *Filament* — was printed this past spring, thanks to the support of the Zarin/Rosenfeld fund.

**CLASS OF 1999 PARENTS PROJECT: BEYOND THE CLASSROOM — THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE**

In honor of the class of 1999, Penn parents elected to assist with three separate projects: the Kelly Writers House, the Ellen and Howard Katz Fitness Center, and Civic House. Their gift demonstrated that Penn parents support the university's emphasis on creativity, well-being, and social responsibility. Contributions from the **Class of 1999 Parents Project** were directed toward our General Endowment, an all-purpose fund that continues to support program development, student initiatives, and more.





Ben Filreis (C'15) puts the finishing touches on the place settings for the Joe Nocera dinner.

## OTHER SPECIAL GIFTS AND PROJECTS

*Endowment gifts are not the only way to make a significant financial impact at the Writers House. Many of our friends choose to support us with term gifts: donations designated for a specific purpose, to be used when and how the Writers House needs them. Term gifts afford the Writers House the kind of flexibility needed to pursue new initiatives, as well as the strong financial base to sustain programs which don't yet have permanent funding. We want to thank the following donors who have supported the Writers House with special gifts:*

**STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ACCESS FUND (NEW)** For years, we at Writers House have stewarded prospective Penn students through the college application process, recruiting strong writers the way a swim coach recruits a promising athlete. We are especially interested in reaching out to potential applicants who don't know about the strength of the arts at Penn and to those who think Penn is beyond their reach. This year, we're expanding our efforts and have created a new staff position: a recruiter — our own **Jamie-Lee Josselyn** (C'05) — who will visit college fairs, writing programs, English teachers, and arts projects in schools around the country, in search of talented writers. Our new **Access Fund** will help defray the cost of outreach events and travel, ensuring that our recruitment is as far-reaching as possible. We are grateful to **Joan Kim** (C'97, G'97, WEV'99) for making the inaugural gift to this much-needed new fund.

**THE CREATIVE VENTURES FUND** A generous gift from **Marc** (W'80) and **Robin Wolpow** has established the **Creative Ventures Fund** to provide dedicated support for inventive, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and beyond-the-literary initiatives. The innovations made possible by the Creative Ventures Fund enrich the possibilities here at Writers House. Creative Ventures programs and projects from the year included a panel discussion about creative problem-solving in the new economy; a talk with city planner **Kristina Ford** about the unique challenges of rebuilding New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; a staged production of *Judy's Turn*, an original play by Writers House archivist **Violette Carb** (C'11); a "furniture hack" by **Jenny Chen** (C'14) and **Tim Miller** (C'14), who repurposed old furniture and fixtures; and a collaborative, citywide game that allowed students to explore Philadelphia's history of activism.

**NIR-BRAUFMAN TERM FUND AT KELLY WRITERS HOUSE** **Daniel Nir** (C'82, W'82) and **Jill Braufman** established this general-purpose fund to support currently unfunded KWH projects, providing us with much-needed budget relief. The flexible **Nir-Braufman Fund** came at just the right time for supporting two major projects: *Jacket2*, our online, international journal of contemporary poetics, and

**PennSound**, our peerless digital archive of free, downloadable poetry recordings. The Nir-Braufman fund allowed us to hire and retain a stellar editorial staff for *Jacket2*, including several student interns who gained hands-on experience in everything that goes into publishing a daily magazine — copy editing, proofing, uploading of text and images, research, and correspondence with authors. For PennSound, similarly, we used this fund to help cover the real (ongoing) costs of maintaining and adding to our gigantic digital archive: equipment upgrades, wages for student interns who edit all the digital files, and honoraria for visiting poets who travel here to read their work. Support like this, which allows us to direct resources where they are most needed, enables us to sustain and grow crucial projects.

**JUNIOR FELLOWS PROJECT** **Randi Hutter Epstein** (C'84) and **Stuart Epstein** (W'84) graciously provided two years of funding for the **Junior Fellows project**, a competitive grant that supports the continuing creative work of young alumni affiliated with KWH. The Junior Fellow receives a small stipend to produce a program, project, or other initiative here at Writers House. This year's Junior Fellow was **Genji Amino** (C'10), who organized a series of discussions and talks on alternative pedagogy, using the Writers House itself as an object of study.

**MENTORSHIP SUPPORT** **Judith Zarin** has given a gift in support of our **Alumni Mentorship Program**, which helps students make important connections with alumni in publishing, editing, film and TV production, journalism, marketing, and other creative fields. Through our mentorship program, we host a series of informational lunches that allow casual conversations to develop into meaningful, productive relationships. We also arrange more formal presentations, through which alumni can give concrete advice about their areas of expertise. Alumni mentors this year included two comedians — **Lew Schneider** (C'83) and **Mark Rizzo** (C'92) — who led funny "how to" sessions for students in our Arts Café. Other go-to mentors were **Melissa Jensen** (C'89, GPU'83), **Lynn Rosen** (C'83), **Cheryl J. Family** (C'91), **Lee Eisenberg** (C'68, ASC'70), **Zach Sergi** (C'10), **Jane Sussman** (C'09), and **Sarah Zhang** (C'11).



Michelle Taransky as the Golden Mean and Arielle Brousse (C'07) as Carmen Sandiego at the "We All Feel Like Halloween" program.

**KELLY WRITERS HOUSE FELLOWS** Our Kelly Writers House Fellows Program, which has been generously supported by **Paul Kelly** (C'62, WG'64, Trustee 1997–present) for fourteen years, embodies the very mission of the Writers House. Paul's gift enables **Al Filreis** to teach an incomparable undergraduate course in which students study the work of three accomplished contemporary writers, preparing for intensive two-day visits by each Fellow. Central to each visit is a three-hour seminar-style session for students in Al's course. The Kelly Writers House Fellows Program thus enacts the core of our mission: students and emerging writers have opportunities for meaningful one-on-one contact with accomplished writers and critics. This year's Fellows were **Karen Finley**, **Ron Silliman**, and **John Barth**.

**THE KERRY SHERIN WRIGHT PRIZE FUND** It was with a peerless devotion to literary communitarianism that **Kerry Sherin Wright** led the fledgling Writers House as its first director. We established the **Kerry Prize** in her honor, to pay tribute to her pioneering, innovative spirit. The prize is awarded annually to a Hub member who proposes a program or project in line with Kerry's aesthetic capaciousness. This year's **Kerry Prize** winner was **Alex Marcus** (W'12), who organized the university's first food summit. The weekend conference featured a series of panel discussions with restaurant critics, food bloggers, and sustainability experts. To support the Kerry Prize (which is funded collectively by anyone who wants to contribute to it), contact Arielle Brousse, our Assistant Director for Development at [brousse@writing.upenn.edu](mailto:brousse@writing.upenn.edu) or (215) 746-POEM.

**GORDON WALLS '38 CREATIVE VENTURES FUND** Thanks to the generosity of the Bond family — **Bill and Sandy Bond** and **Gordon Lane Bond** (C'06) — the **Gordon Walls '38 Creative Ventures Fund** allows us to support fresh initiatives and ideas, especially the creative (and sometimes outlandish) dreams of our Hub members, who constantly revitalize the KWH project with proposals for new publications, outreach programs, literary celebrations, and other community-driven projects.

**REALARTS@PENN INTERNSHIP FUNDS** Our RealArts@PENN project establishes and pays stipends for summer internships at leading organizations in the arts, including the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Original Film, *Philadelphia* magazine, The Jewish Museum, Viacom Creative Services, *Rolling Stone* magazine, Brooklyn Films, Nickelodeon Animation Studios, screenwriters David Stern and Stuart Gibbs, and Shore Fire Media. The RealArts project ensures that there are substantive internship opportunities available to creative-minded students, that interns will get real-world work experience, and that no student offered such an internship will have difficulty affording it. Generous Penn alumni and faculty — including **David Stern** (C'89, ENG'89), **Stuart Gibbs** (C'91), **Cheryl Family** (C'91), **Jon Avnet** (C'71), **Anthony DeCurtis**, and **Dick Polman** — lent us their expertise and their connections at these and other arts organizations. The RealArts@Penn project is supported by three funds: the **Paul and Ossi Burger RealArts@PENN Internship Fund**, established by **Paul** (W'76) and **Ossi Burger**; the **RealArts Internship Fund**, created by **Dirk Wittenborn** (C'72) and the **Cape Branch Foundation**; and the **RealArts Fund**, established by **Alan and Phyllis Berger**. Together these funds ensure robust internship experiences for talented Penn writers.

**ANONYMOUS FAMILY FOUNDATION FUND** Established by a family who wanted their contribution to have a direct and immediate impact, this fund supports general operating costs associated with developing and running Writers House projects. Many critical aspects of Writers House fall outside of traditional university budgets — handmade paper, antique chairs for our Arts Café, state-of-the-art digital equipment — and this fund allows us to be flexible and responsive to real operational needs as well as the steady stream of ideas from our vibrant Planning Committee.

**CPCW/ICA SEMINAR FUND** Collaboration is central to the Writers House mission, and it makes good sense that we have partnered with the most cutting-edge peer arts organization at Penn: the **Institute of Contemporary Art**. With the ICA, we offer an unparalleled yearlong undergraduate course led by conceptual artist and poet **Kenneth Goldsmith**. We are grateful to **Dirk Wittenborn** (C'72) and the **Cape Branch Foundation**, whose support of the **CPCW/ICA Seminar Fund** makes this extraordinary course offering possible. This year, the course focused on the "visual language" work of contemporary graphic designer **Stefan Sagmeister**. Students explored his themes, interviewed Sagmeister himself, and responded with their own creative works. At the end of the semester they collected their writings into a book called *39 Difficult Questions for Stefan Sagmeister*.

**SETH GINNS FUND FOR INTERNATIONAL WRITERS** This gift from **Seth Ginns** (C'00) provides ongoing support to **Writers Without Borders: The Provost's International Writers Series**. The program series allows Writers House to bring poets, essayists, and novelists from around the world to read their work (sometimes in their original languages) here in the Arts Café. This past year, Writers Without Borders sponsored several events, including an evening of Bulgarian noir with author and cultural politics scholar **Vladislav Todorov** and translator **Joseph Benatov**; a reading by South African poet **Keorapetse Kgositsile**, whose work is considered to have bridged the gap between South African poetry and American Black poetry; and a conversation with Kashmiri novelist **Mirza Waheed**.



**FACULTY DIRECTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND** This discretionary fund enables Writers House Faculty Director **Al Filreis** to seek out, encourage, and invest in student talents and interests, especially those of-the-moment project proposals for which there seems to be no other outlet or resource. **Reina Marin Bassini** (C'72, GED'72) and **Emilio Bassini** (C'71, W'71, WG'73), **Martin Bienenstock** (W'74) and **Barbara Meisel-Bienenstock** (C'77), and **Seth** (WG'86) and **Deanne Lipsay** have all chosen to support the **Faculty Director's Discretionary Fund** and help us in our mission to serve as a creative incubator where students can develop ambitious writing and art projects. This year, Al directed resources from this fund toward summer internship projects, including support for **Emily Harnett** (C'13), who edited a memoir by Sudanese refugee **Dau Dut Jok** (C'14), **Callie Ward** (C'13), who assisted *Slate* editor **Stephen Metcalf** with research for a book on pop culture, and **Henry Steinberg** (C'13), who worked with letterpress artists all over the country.

#### KWH ALUMNI ONLINE BOOK GROUP TERM FUND

Since the inception in 2000 of the **Alumni Online Book Groups Program**, we've hosted sixty-four lively ten-day and month-long book discussions for alumni around the globe. We are grateful to KWH Advisory Board member **David Roberts** (W'84), whose ongoing support made eight new book groups possible this year. Faculty member **Sam Apple** led a discussion of the dark humor in three David Foster Wallace essays. Poet and Critical Writing Assistant Director **Susanna Fry** organized a ten-day group to explore the relationship between motherhood and writing. Penn admissions officer **Patrick Bredehoft** led an analysis of Bob Dylan's "talkin' songs."

**ESTHER T. SAXON TERM FUND** **Jerilyn Perman** (C'91) and her husband **Brian Perman** (W'90) established this fund in honor of Jerilyn's grandmother to support community outreach programming at Writers House, extending our impact into local public schools. The fund allows us to conduct service projects, including "Write On!" a literacy outreach project that invites middle-schoolers to the Writers House for creative writing games; WriteCorp, a program that sends teams of Penn students into area classrooms to lead writing workshops tailored to fit individual class needs; and *The Blacktop*, an online literary magazine that publishes the work of K-12 writers.

**RONCA-BAIRD DISCRETIONARY FUND** Generously established by Penn parents **Jim Ronca** and **Deborah Baird**, this "rainy-day" fund allows us to support exciting new projects and opportunities as they emerge. The **Ronca-Baird Discretionary Fund** could be made available to help fund the travel expenses for a student's research project. It might help pay for scenic dressing to outfit an underground theater operation. It could help offset the production costs for a student-run TV show. The Ronca-Baird Fund is a flexible fund designed to help us identify and encourage great ideas.

**SUPPORTING ART AND POETRY** In honor of his favorite niece on her birthday, **Stuart Applebaum** made a gift in her honor to support her favorite kinds of programs: those that have to do with art, poetics, or (especially!) the creative intersections of the two.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Nadia Laher (C'15); Ali Kriegsman (C'13); Jamie-Lee Josselyn (C'05).



## FRIENDS OF THE WRITERS HOUSE

*Everything we do at Writers House is made possible by the efforts, involvement, ideas, energy, and support of our community members. Friends of the Writers House — people like you — pitch in with contributions of all sizes, gifts that allow us to sponsor new collaborative programs, buy coffee and creamer to fuel late-night poetry discussions on the famous green couch, or purchase books for our library and paper for art projects. The gifts of our Friends lay the foundation on which we build this community. Thank you, Friends, for your efforts to protect, nourish, and sustain this unparalleled creative enterprise.*

Matthew Algeo; Rosa Almoguera; Nathalie Anderson; Gina Arlen; Tali Aronsky; Derek Arthur; John Ashbery; Lisa and Robert Atkins; Robert Badal; Sylva Baker; EJ and Jennifer Baldino Bonett (in honor of the Di Bruno families); Sean Basinski; Karla Bays; Herman Beavers; Susie and Arthur Becker-Weidman; Jay R. Begun; Craig Behrenfeld; Batsheva Ben-Amos; Evelyn Bender; Stephen Berer and Nancy Micklewright; Barry M. Berger, MD; Edward Bergman; Barbara Bernoff Cavanaugh; Charles Bernstein and Susan Bee Bernstein; Cara Bertron; Bernardo Beyer; Rikki Binder; David Biro; Rachel Blau Duplessis; Julia Bloch and Allison Harris; Allison Blum; E. David and Vivian Blum; Megan Bly; Bill and Sandy Bond; Gordon Lane Bond '06; David Borgenicht and Suzanne Simons; Merle Born; Anthony and Eileen Breslin; John Brockman; Ellen Brooks; Loren Brooks Mendell; Eric Brotman; Meredith Broussard and David Grazian; Jackee and Denis Brousse; Deborah Alyse Brown; David and Ann Brownlee; Alexis Brunswick; Robert Brylawski; Lauren Buckalew; Mary Ann Burdett; Nathalie Burg; Tracylea Byford; Elaine Calabrese (in memory of Ruth Ebert); David Caruso; Lenny Cassuto; Janine Catalano; Patrick Joseph Cawiezell; Sandra Chaff; Sam and Shanna Choi; Linda Chung Quarles; Leah and Peter Cianfrani; Beth Cohen; Chuck Cohen; Rachel Cohen; Blayne Colmore; John Colwell; John Conley; Leah Conley Beggs; Joyce Cook (in memory of Ruth Ebert); Jack Cooper; Bernard and Esther Cooperman; Kerry Cooperman; Randall Couch; David Cowen; Jill Crair; Allan Cramer (in honor of Paul Kelly); Pam and Mike Crane; Gia Anita Croce; Susan R. Croll and Paul Monasevitch; D. Michael Crow; Starr Cummin and J.C. Bright; Joyce Cummings; Jean Curcio (in memory of Ruth Ebert); Ashley Curran-Morris; Vinnie Curren and Julie Preis; Colleen Davis; Anthony DeCurtis; David Deifer (in honor of Richard J. Deifer); Cliff and Jill Denker; Vincent and Shirley DeSantis (in memory of Ruth Ebert); Tom Devaney; Paul Deveney; Kimberly and Scott Diamond; Gerard and Michele Breault DiCanio (in memory of Ruth Ebert); Alice Dimler (in memory of Ruth Ebert); Greg and Lysa Djanikian; Howard and Paula Donsky; Charles Downey; Judith Drasin; Murray Dubin and Libby Rosof; Debbie Ducoff-Barone and Dennis Barone; Andrew Dulberg; Philip Eager and Marielle Carter; George Economou and Rochelle Owens; Sarah Eisen Nanus; Kimberly Eisler; Jane and Leonard Epstein; Ellen Ervin; Daniel Evans; Cheryl Family and Ken Saji; Robert Faunce; Harvey Feldman and Carol Kosik; Billy Fenrich; Alberto Fernandez; Kalyani Fernando; Al Filreis; Jean Findlay;

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Charles Bernstein's class takes advantage of good weather by meeting under a blossoming tree in the Writers House garden; Alice Godfrey presides over a staff meeting.

Miller; Michael Miller; Suzanne Maynard Miller; Melissa and Steve Moritz; Milton and Barbara Moritz; Deborah and Kevin Murphy; Sara Murphy; Panna Naik; Peggy and Bob Natiello; Allison Nazarian; Aaron Nelson and Margaret O'Connor; Neal and Jackwyn Nemerov (in honor of Ali Nemerov); Cory Newman; Alexander Newmark; John Norton; Bob Numerof and Robert Shepard; Janet and Peter O'Neill; Andrea and Bob Oley; Alicia Oltuski and Uri Pasternak; Vivian Onwuzuligbo; Mark Osele; Louis and Trish Palmieri (in honor of Brooke Palmieri); Rachel Pastan and Daniel Cohen; David and Cynthia Pelton (in memory of Ruth Ebert); Kevin and Erica Penn; Ruth Perlmutter; Arthur Pier; Linda Pizzi; Neil Plakcy; Irene and Richard Plotzker; Elizabeth Porth Polizzi; Dick Polman and Elise Vider; Mark Poster (in honor of Tovah Poster); Josh Rabinowitz; Evain Raine; Binhma Rajsombath; Michael Ratner and Karen Ranucci (in honor of Jake Ratner); Michael Rauch; Hillary Reinsberg; John and Lori Reinsberg; John Reiss; Dominique Renda and Hunter Horsley; Monica Restrepo; Nola Ridl; Marla Rieders; Lee and Hadley Davis Rierson; Jennie Ripps and Max Brockman; Kit Robinson; Andrew Robinson; Rick Rofman; Peter Rogers; Jody Rosen Knowler; Matt Rosenbaum; Lindsey Rosin; Steven Roth; Dan and Barbara Rottenberg; Caryn Karmatz Rudy and Lee Rudy; Nancy Ruskin; Karen Rutzick; Ruth Sackner; Harry William Saffren; Vicky Sakr; Howard and Joan Sandick; Phil Sandick and Ariel Djanikian; Michael and Ellen Sandler; Robert and Barbara Sandler; Cindy and Robert Savett; Dan and Harriet Saxon; Jim Schaffer; Karen Schaller and John Puckett (in memory of Ruth Ebert); Susie Orman Schnall and Howard Schnall; James Schneider; Daniel Schorr; Lawrence Schwartzwald; Liz Seeley; Lois Segel; Annette Seidenglanz and Chuck Bowes; Helen Sewell Johnson; John and Karen Shea; Doro Shin; Carol Shlifer Clapp; Henry and Talie Siegel; Katharine Silvasi; Elizabeth Silver; Paul and Sue Silverman; David Simon; David Slarskey; Stephen Smith; Karen Rile Smith and Laurance Smith; Barry and Judith Solar; Viroj Songsiridej (in honor of Alyssa Songsiridej); Kaegan Sparks; Joan Specter; Gail Spiegel Cohen (in honor of Stephanie Cohen '13 and Jonathan Cohen C'09); Nick Spitzer; Ben Stanger; Audrey Beth Stein; Peter Stein; Harris and Jane Steinberg; Eric Stern; Sarah Stern; David Stern and Kathryn Hellerstein; Hilary Steuer Grasso; Julie Bright Stewart; Byron and Janet Stier; Sebastian Stockman; Eric Stone; Mary

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the center for programs in contemporary writing

Please don’t hesitate to write, call, or visit us.  
We would love to hear from you!

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Designed by Zach Carduner  
Photos by Arielle Brousse and WH Staff





THE  
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