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Why not do away with tenure? page 3
Mother’s grief fuels battle with gangsta life, page 4

FOCUS — in seven issues a year — is a publication of the faculty and staff of Carnegie Mellon University.
Volume 34, No. 3, February 2005

Unconventional thinking can change the world
Two more Tepper School faculty receive Nobel Prize for Economics

On Oct. 11, 2004, Finn Kydland and Edward Prescott were awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences. Kydland is a Tepper School faculty member and Prescott is an alumnus. Prescott is a Ph.D. alumnus and former Tepper faculty member.

The pair was recognized by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for “their contributions to dynamic macroeconomics—the time consistency of economic policy and the driving forces behind business cycles.” With this honor, Kydland and Prescott became the fifth and sixth scholars to receive the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

Prescott earned his Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon in 1968, while Kydland completed his in 1971 as an assistant professor. Kydland, who earned his bachelor of science degree from the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration in 1968, came to Carnegie Mellon in the early 1970s as a doctoral student in economics. It was the only Ph.D. program he applied to.

Kydland recalled, “I was incredibly lucky to be a student at Carnegie Mellon. I came from a business school environment; exposed to research as even an under- graduate.” At Carnegie Mellon, “the lack of boundaries between disciplines and focus on research training—and the focus on learning to write papers early on—really fit my background and interests.”

Prescott, too, has good memories as a student at Carnegie Mellon. In addition to the multidisciplinary program, “when I was there as a student, there were many excellent minds.” Among others, he points out Allen Newell and Herbert Simon, two academic luminaries who contributed to the formation of academic disciplines such as management science, computer science and artificial intelligence.

Simon received a Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1978. “The freedom and lack of reward was keen,” he said. “It was forward-looking. There was an enthusiasm in the teaching of MBAs.”

“The freedom and lack of required courses was key,” Edward Prescott said of Carnegie Mellon. “It was that sense of freedom. That was an enthusiasm in the teaching of MBAs.”

Kydland explained, “Methodology Finn and I developed all the way up to theory to answer questions.” Because of this, “Economics has become a more unified science. It’s not anymore. Tools developed for macro are having implications in all fields.”

This is the first part of an essay by Eifigen Heiniksen, Ph.D. candidate in economics at the Tepper School of Business: Stephen Sproul, professor of economics in the Tepper School.

“For in the early 1970s, when we wrote papers early on—really fit my background and interests.”

Prescott described it in his Nobel Banquet speech, Dec. 10, 2004: “One of the great joys of research—whether it be in economics, physics, chemistry or any other academic discipline—is the act of discovery, those moments when we are surprised by what we have found, when our original ideas are turned upside down and we suddenly have to rearrange how we view the world. This is precisely what happened to Finn and me when we were working on the two papers for which we have received this award.”

Both papers, as result, provided insights into economics that contradicted the predominant views of the time.

From Kydland’s perspective, “in some sense, the most important thing we are coming up with research important enough to build on and is affecting future researchers. And, if it’s the case that these ideas affect government policy, in the end it ought to benefit society as a whole.”

Kydland is modest. The work he and Prescott accomplished has had significant ramifications. Among other things, their research has established macroeconomics as a scientific discipline.

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For the Tepper School of Business
Response to "Faculty Fence"

In the last issue of Focus, the first of our new "Faculty Fence" items appeared, in which "Backbender" argued that he is not a policeman but a researcher and teacher. As such, he does not feel responsible for involving himself in issues of student cheating. We've received the following reaction:

Backbender's idea is that it's "a lot of work" to deal with cheaters in his class. I say you are failing your students and those who will be harmed later by the cheater's actions. People really need to learn from the consequences of their actions. We have a society of litigation and non-acceptance of fault that allows people to say, "It's not my fault" too often, even as adults. Your actions are a reflection of yourself — if you decide to cheat now on a homework or test, what will happen down the road when you are designing a bridge, or buying construction material or negotiating for workers' salaries? The student who cheats now will believe they got away with it, and continue to do it until caught. The penalty now might be a failing grade in a class — a painful lesson, but not fatal. The penalty later could be much worse. Think about the things your students will be involved in post-college — isn't it possible that you could be causing more problems later, to save yourself some "work" now?

Dear Editor,

I was disturbed by the photo and caption on the back page of the last issue of FOCUS that "assumes" that the Carnegie Mellon campus community was embarrassed and saddened by the re-election of George W. Bush. That assumption must not include the opinions of many unspoken conservatives who do live and work on campus but do not feel a need to paint the side of a building to tell everyone so. I believe it is not a common sentiment as you have portrayed it.

MELISSA STOEBE
Communications Design Group

Dear Editor,

I used to really enjoy getting my issue of FOCUS, until today. I turned to the back page and saw what Brian Connelly wrote about the graffiti done to Wean Hall following Election Day and took offense to his article. This is an example of someone taking advantage of his editorial status to express his own political belief. It would have been enough just to say there were some unhappy voters on this extremely liberal campus following the election results, but he went too far. There were more Bush supporters on this campus than you'll know, but we kept a low profile for fear of retaliation from the left. I personally know quite a few people who were harassed for their political beliefs on this campus, me being one of them. I am tired of being the silent majority; let me say that again MAJOR-ITY! President Bush won the election and he won pretty big, which speaks volumes to the people who live in this "God's Country." And I thank God every day for my freedoms and for proving to me that there were more than enough intelligent people in this country to make the right choice on Nov. 2. For those whose candidate lost the election, all I can say is that I sympathize with you and I know how you feel. I felt the same way eight years ago when Bill Clinton won his second term.

Dear Editor,

I hope everyone who threatened to move to Canada does just that. Oh, and you may also want to pack more than your "Kerry lost his bid for president" T-shirt, it gets cold there! It doesn't matter who your God is, this is still One Nation under God!

TRACY FARNBACHER
Administrative associate, CSD Education

Dear Editor,

Thanks for memorializing "Sorry World" in FOCUS. I'll probably frame it. I'm sorry I missed this in real-life.

MO DAWLEY
Senior librarian for art and drama

Dear Editor,

As a member of the Technical Staff at the SEI, based in our Washington Office, I consider myself a member of the CMU community. I enjoy getting my copies of FOCUS as I find it interesting and it gives me insights to what's going on back on campus.

While I understand that many of the articles in FOCUS express the opinions of individual members of the Carnegie Mellon community and are not necessarily representative of university policy, I was disappointed to see the half page article on the back of the December issue of FOCUS entitled "Blue State Special." Regardless of the outcome of the recent presidential election, I do not feel that either the United States or Carnegie Mellon owes the world an apology. We exercised our democratic electoral process in this election, a process of which all Americans, regardless of their political opinion, should be proud. I feel that the publication of this article and the accompanying photograph was a disservice to the integrity and impartiality of the university.

I just wanted the opportunity to express my opinion on this issue, the theater, film and TV worlds. Showcase programs give graduating students from all disciplines an opportunity to meet agents, casting directors, producers, directors, designers, playwrights and other established working professionals. For more on the Drama School’s Fund Raising Program see: www.cmu.edu/cfa/drama/showcase

Calendar girls

Carnegie Mellon School of Drama
Senior Showcase of New Talent

The Drama senior class has assembled a vintage pin-up calendar. This full-color, 3-month calendar is printed on high-quality, glossy paper. Buy one for home, the office or even a gift. The calendar is currently on sale in the Purnell Center for the Arts box office and coat check. You may also purchase the calendar by e-mail. Please contact cmashwcasc@yahoo.com to arrange a sale by mail. Sales from the calendar will support graduating student travel to both New York and Los Angeles to intersect with the theatre, film and TV worlds. Showcase programs give graduating students from all disciplines an opportunity to meet agents, casting directors, producers, directors, designers, playwrights and other established working professionals. For more on the Drama School’s Fund Raising Program see: www.cmu.edu/cfa/drama/showcase

Letters and Comments

Managing editor's note

This is my last issue as managing editor of FOCUS. I've had a wonderful time doing this job since 1994 and I'm grateful to all the kind and interesting people who gave their time to answer questions or let me follow them around with a camera. FOCUS at its best has a reputation as a solid read for anybody in, around or interested in Carnegie Mellon. I wish all the best to Lynn and the future of the paper.

BRIAN CONNELLY
Around two years ago, Larry Berger began thinking about the future of the Saturday Light Brigade. Berger, the creator and longtime host of the popular Pittsburgh Saturday morning radio show, noticed a growing disconnection between his show and the format developing on WYEP community radio, the show’s home since it began in 1978.

The Saturday Light Brigade (SLB), with its slogan of “acoustic music and family fun” didn’t seem to fit with the “adult acoustic alternative” (AAA) marketing format, which had come to dominate WYEP’s programming. Berger’s show, with its homey feel, corny sound effects and word games, is just not alternative in any hipster sense. On the Saturday Light Brigade, Berger and his wife, Rikki Berger, play songs like “If I Were a Moose” and “You’re My Little Potato,” while taking calls from families at breakfast and little girls who want to play violin on the air. WYEP had cut Berger’s show ending at 9 instead of 10 a.m. Berger felt the show was missing a large portion of its audience that tuned in after 9 a.m.

Berger began casting about for a new home. After considering several options, the SLB board hit on an unlikely host — Carnegie Mellon’s student station, WRCT. Best-known for ear-splitting punk, industrial and free jazz programming, WRCT has also over the years hosted a blend of news and talk shows.

For Berger, it was a bit of a homecoming — he graduated from CMU in 1983 with an engineering degree. “We fit right in,” he says. “It’s like I never left.”

SLB’s biggest problem was reaching its audience. WYEP has a powerful antenna whose signal can easily reach Butler County. WRCT can sometimes be hard to pick up, even from CMU which it is located on.

Berger has lots of ideas for the show in its new home — using the children’s stage next door for music or creating a kind of “on-the-air” coffee house. But wherever the show goes now, Carnegie Mellon will go with it.

Brian Connelly
Do the numbers add up for the Ownership Society?

continued from page one

"benefit principle" to determine who should be paying which taxes and receiving which benefits. However, whenever possible, taxes for public expenditures should be levied on those individuals who are likely to benefit from them. The simplest example of this principle at work is the way taxes on gasoline are used to pay for road construction. The benefit principle means that the public should fund the Defense Department. This leaves 30 percent of the government's $2 trillion budget, or about $600 billion of discretionary spending from which to cut.

We might argue that cutting funds for discretionary economic programs is as much of a subsidy as tax expenditures should be paid for by the beneficiaries of these subsidies ought to be paying. The benefit principle would have us ask what expensive public expenditures should be levied on those individuals who are likely to benefit from them. The simplest example of this principle at work is the way taxes on gasoline are used to pay for road construction. The benefit principle means that the public should fund the Defense Department. This leaves 30 percent of the government's $2 trillion budget, or about $600 billion of discretionary spending from which to cut.

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Bob Kail assesses the first semester in Qatar

**Freshman at Carnegie Mellon**

Freshman at Carnegie Mellon... is comparable to the students who have taught the Introduction to Business class several times in Pittsburgh, he taught the same here; they teach the same classes with the same set of grading and exams. I think there are certainly differences but the bottom line is that they are as up to the challenge as their fellow students in the US.

**Q: How did students fare in the first semester at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar?**

**A:** On average their grade point was a quarter of a point, half a point lower than their fellow students in Pittsburgh after the first semester. However, we only had two failures out of 203 grades (from a base of 41 students who take multiple courses), which comes in at a remarkable low of about 1 percent.

**Q: How did the university go about accommodating the cultural needs of this class?**

**A:** Students here come to us like students from the Pittsburgh campus; they have a history of backgrounds, but the diversity is more profound here. We have had to adjust some of our courses accordingly such as our calculus course and our English course, but essentially all of our courses are regular, approved Pittsburgh courses. We are small and as such are able to react to the unique religious aspect as well.

**Q: What kinds of classes are you offering in the spring semester?**

**A:** Basically we are running a total of 10 courses in the spring semester for 41 students. In addition to their required courses, students have a choice of three electives, in history, English, and economics/math, depending on their major. We have a wonderful distribution of our 41 students enrolled in these courses. In the history course, 18th Century European History, we have 13 students; in our English course, Effective Interpersonal Communication, we have 22, in our economics course, Principles of Economics, we have 20, while in our math course, Concepts of Mathematics, we have 23.

This time last year we thought we would be offering just five courses, whereas we have implemented our anticipated course offering.

**Q: What activities have the students undertaken?**

**A:** Our student government is up and running – they held elections the second week of the fall semester. Since then the students have hosted several dinners for the campus community and have been a number of charity fundraising events and movie night takes place every Thursday. If we look at the percentage of students who are involved in these activities and compare it to the Pittsburgh campus, our students are really involved here. While some events might just get 20 or so students, this is in fact 50 percent of our student base and back in Pittsburgh we would be happy to get 2-5-10 percent participating in anything!

**Q: What have been some rewarding moments for you while in Doha?**

**A:** I think that the fact that we ended our first semester with the same number of students as we had when we started the semester. I would be devastated if we lost any of our students, with such a small group we have a higher level of personal involvement so I would take this pretty personally.

What should not be overlooked is the bravery of this first class of students. Over half of our students here are Qatari who have chosen a co-educational, western education. There are trends setters and one of the things we all know is their journey will end.

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**From the Faculty Senate Chair**

**Faculty Senate hears president’s State of the University**

On Jan. 10, President Cohon presented the second of his 2004/05 academic year, State of the University addresses to the Faculty Senate. The following is a summary of his six main points with my occasional interspersed comments.

**Undergraduate: Undergraduate applications were above 14K but the yield from admitted students remains lower than desired (24 percent). The president restated his ongoing concern about our inability to improve diversity on the campus. Matriculation of minorities has remained unchanged and is currently at the same rate over the past three years. The president also presented these numbers and concerns to the campus during the Martin Luther King holiday observance, which is the downward trend in the number of women (40 percent to 37 percent) in the entering classes over the same period:**

**International Graduate Students:** While we continue to have good international representation in our graduate training, there has been a precipitous drop in international graduate applications over the past year. This is a national phenomenon and though we are doing better than the national average as reported in some areas (CIT dropped 21 percent compared to an engineering drop of 36 percent), the net effect is the same. Of greater concern are the reasons for the drop. The perception of a harassing environment for foreigners in the US and restrictions of free flow of information through Export Controls is not conducive to inviting foreign students to participate in our research enterprise. The president noted these and other possible reasons for the drop in applications and described his involvement in a number of national efforts to understand and possibly change the current environment.

**International Programs**

The president restated the important role of the first class at the Qatar campus. Thus far, the benchmarks suggest that everything is going well both academically and socially in a culturally mixed environment. All of the indicators, from academics to student organization and student affairs, suggest we are making the experience for the students at Qatar as similar as possible to a “Carnegie Mellon” experience.

The expansion of our efforts internationally is a concern not only of the faculty but also of the president and trustees. The president described the initiation of a plan to build an International Strategy. To examine the question of what we have as well as what we wish to have, he restated proposals made when the president has organized four committees to look at the globalization of Carnegie Mellon: Education (the impact on the needs of the students in Pittsburgh, co-chaired by Indira Nair and Dick Tucker), Research (chairs by John Hooker and Paul Goodman) and Benchmarking Other Universities (chairs by Lisa Krigel). The timetable for this re-

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by Lisa Kirchner, director of marketing and public relations for Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar.
Corrections to Benefits Information

Tuition Benefits
Q. Who should I contact about getting into a Carnegie Mellon academic program package?
A. Contact the Admission Office to get the process started. Once you’ve been accepted into a program, complete the Tuition Remission Application, available on our Web site, http://hr.web.cmu.edu, and submit to the Benefits Office, Whitteld Hall.

Benefits Negotiations
Q. What is the lag time between finalizing the contracts and presenting benefits materials to staff?
A. Especially in years when health-care plans have eliminated the use of social security numbers (SSNs). If you’ve displayed your SSN, contact that plan to request it be removed.

THANK YOU to all who participated in Carnegie Mellon’s 11th Annual Food Drive sponsored by Staff Council.

Another Food Drive Success

Kris Hutchings (CSD Education), the Food Bank driver, Ed Pikula (ECE) and Ron Delfine (Heinz School/MISM Career Services) take a break from displaying the non-perishable items collected in Carnegie Mellon’s 11th Annual Food Drive sponsored by Staff Council.

Facilities Open Forum
Open Forum - February 21, 2005

Hello! Questions about campus space issues? Campus construction projects? Then mark your calendar for Staff Council’s Facilities Open Forum being held at noon Thursday, March 10, in the Peter, Wright and McKenna Rooms (University Center, 2nd floor).

Maurice Altschul, university engineer, Chris Gabriel, vice president and CTO, and Russ O’Lare, special projects planning analyst will be the guest speakers.

Mother combats gangsta lifestyle

continued from page 4

Agnes has lost loved ones to homicide and encourages those who have witnessed crimes to come forward to police. Both Morrison and Dixon run the organization in their spare time, offering prayer vigils, holding press conferences about recent murders and helping families to get resources such as grief counseling. Since its inception in 2002, the organization has grown to include more than 70 families and has sponsored a variety of crime prevention initiatives.

The work of the organization has gained considerable attention among city officials, a number of whom took part in last month’s Pittsburgh Prevention and Intervention Ministries to support its many services. The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, District Attorney’s office, Center for Victims of Violence and Crime, and CeaseFire PA (an anti-gun initiative which includes the Good for Guns Program) are just some of the group’s collaborators. In addition, the ministry recently joined forces with the City’s Homicide Unit and Cold Case Detective Squad, a partnership that will help to bring even more unsolved homicides to closure.

Because many homicides involve gang members or are committed as part of an illicit activity, many victims’ families are unable to obtain the witnesses necessary to bring a murder case to trial. Throughout Pennsylvania, murder is a rare occurrence in Pittsburgh, a “code of silence” on the streets prevents Morrison and Dixon from bringing many homicide cases to closure.

The group’s proactive response to this is Prevent A Crime Before It Happens billboard campaign, which features the photos of unsolved murder victims and advertises a $5,000 cash reward for anonymous tips leading to the arrest of a murder suspect. The billboards have been featured on the John Walsh Talk Show (John Walsh is the host of America’s Most Wanted) and have lead to similar campaigns in Youngstown, Ohio, and Philadelphia. The billboards are also available through the organization’s Web site (www.divineinterventionministries.org), which provides a feature for users to submit tips anonymously. To date, the billboard campaign has resulted in four homicides arrests and eight drug arrests as well as taking several guns off the street.

The group’s billboard campaign and several other renowned activities for 2005 require significant support from the community. Morrison said that although they receive some money from the city and Allegheny County, it is not enough to make an impact on the community. Morrison said she hopes to raise significant funds for this year’s activities at a fundraiser set for February 18, 2005. Called Communities Helping and Healing, the event will be an evening of dining, entertainment and presentations by Mrs. Mary Beth Buchanan, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania; Dr. Stephen B. Thomas, director of the Center for Minority Health at the University of Pittsburgh; and Stephanie Walsh, director of the Center for Victims of Violence.

“We are hoping the community will turn out to help us support this important event,” she said. “Violent crime is an issue that affects everyone. If everyone could do just a little, we could accomplish a lot.”

Lauren Heinz
Team leader, marketing/communications, SEI

Stop the Violence – Heal the Hurting

A fundraiser dinner for the Divine Intervention Ministries was held on Feb. 14 at East Liberty Presbyterian Church, 116 South Highland Avenue.

This fundraiser will enable Divine Intervention Ministries to continue its work in the community to end violent crime and to help victims. Families get the support they need to put their lives back together. For more information, contact dtm@seu.cmu.edu or see www.divineinterventionministries.org.

Reimbursement Accounts
Q. Could one spouse use the reimbursement account to pay for something for the other spouse?
A. Yes. An employee can enroll in the Health Care Reimbursement Account at Carnegie Mellon and use those monies for eligible expenses the spouse may incur.

Q. Who determines what is reimbursable through the reimbursement accounts?
A. The Internal Revenue Service. They have made some changes, opening up the purchase of some over-the-counter medi-

For information about what is reimbursable, go to the following Web site: myshps.

You will be required to enter a password (which is your date of birth), and IDM (which is your social security number).

If you find you’ll have a balance near the end of the year, you can use those extra dollars on eligible over-the-counter (OTC) medicines can help reduce or eliminate any remaining balance.

You may put aside up to $3,000 in your account for medical, vision, co-pays or deductibles. This money is not federally taxed.

Another article in the December 2004 issue detailing the Benefits Open Forum included some inaccurate information. Here are the corrected answers.

Q. If I do nothing at Open Enrollment, will my 2005 selections default to my 2004 selections?
A. Yes, but we encourage review of your 2005 elections as some pricing has changed.

Extended Leaves
Q. What are the long-term disability/ family leave requirements?
A. These two leaves are related. Long-term disability is for those people who are out of work/discharged for six months or more (using their short-term disability first). The administration reviews each case, as they are usually very specific circumstances. Nancy Paperick handles these cases. Many situations are unique, except for maternity leave. FMLA allows 12 weeks on a 12-month rolling calendar basis (you must have 1,250 hours of work to qualify) and runs concurrent with short-term disability. You would use short-term if you are out up to six months.

Long-term disability must be approved; you cannot automatically slide from one into the other. FMLA is for health care issues for yourself or dependents. It is best to discuss your situation with Nancy.

Life Insurance
Q. If I want to obtain life insurance for more than two times my salary, am I required to see a physician?
A. Only life insurance elections over $200,000 require Evidence of Insurability (EOI), a short medical questionnaire. Our life insurance company, Minnesota Life, will send the EOI to you directly at your address/completed by you and returned to Minnesota Life, they, at that time, determine if further action by you (like seeing a physician) is required.

Identification Numbers
Q. Why do we need to use social security numbers?
A. Is there another way to identify issues?
Q. All of Carnegie Mel-

Pikula’s benefit plans have eliminated the use of social security numbers (SSNs). If you’ve displayed your SSN, contact that plan to request it be removed.

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Maurice Altschul, university engineer, Chris Gabriel, vice president and CTO, and Russ O’Lare, special projects planning analyst will be the guest speakers.

You may send questions in advance to jbugh@cmu.edu. Questions may also be asked at the Forum.

Donations and volunteers are always needed. For more information, contact jbugh@cmu.edu.

www.divineinterventionministries.org

Q. I would like to know the costs associated with modifying my health insurance options, such as changing benefit plans to spousal joint coverage.

A. Employee contribution costs are all listed in the 2005 Benefits Workbook available on the Human Resources Web site at: http://hr.web.cmu.edu Click on the link to Open Enrollment. The workbook can be found under the Open Enrollment Information Center.

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Q. I would like to know the costs associated with modifying my health insurance options, such as changing benefit plans to spousal joint coverage.

A. Employee contribution costs are all listed in the 2005 Benefits Workbook available on the Human Resources Web site at: http://hr.web.cmu.edu Click on the link to Open Enrollment. The workbook can be found under the Open Enrollment Information Center.
Afternoons perfecting irregular verbs with a book. Mireille’s English teacher in school It turns out to be a somewhat odd book, pleasure. That had to be worth a look. about French women, who apparently don’t in fat books about fat. It just seems wrong of the “most relevant” titles: 5,288 of them. with the word ‘fat’ in the title produces a list this crisis, due mainly to the poor eating seems to be her characteristic political depth, couldn’t send Monique because her parents of this book. We learn that French women eat more marimized in a lengthy list at the end of the fat, in gorgeous clothes. Hmmm. The come something of an attitude to French women, apparently it is self-evident: “How do we criticizing the style of living of French women, sum the need for the “most relevant” titles: 5,288 of them. The evidence for such claims is, well, could never represent France!” Probably it concluding that a daughter of Communists as fried lettuce, but is really a good thing. More pertinently, all we need in a scientific frame of mind perhaps, to see if Banks’s ravings were accurate. They were, so that Mireille doesn’t get it and the truth is that, but she does have some good advice. It tells us all she ever needed to know about obesity and just don’t enjoy themselves enough. French women, drinking water all the while, nevertheless manage to enjoy themselves: they make eating and drinking sensual and fulfilling events. Going marketing, Mireille claims, is in itself a crucual pleasurable indulgence that adds to creating a “most relevant” titles: 5,288 of them. the “most relevant” titles: 5,288 of them. Further, from a recent French government report: “France could match U.S. levels of obesity by 2020, a new parliamentary report has warned, urging the government to act before the nation’s steady overweight gain becomes a “social curse.” Corneux notes that, until recently, these French women suffered from discrimination, isolation, and misperception.” But, we thought they wouldn’t exist in the first place, because as French women suddenly become understanding of the fat ones? All one can safely conclude is that if French women were ostracized at any time, there have been at least some fat French women somewhere. Maybe none of these French women have been sent to the U.S. Corneux forces us to think that Mireille doesn’t get it and the truth is probably something like: fat women don’t get it.

Corneux extols the route taken by those previously ostracized fat French women, who now “want to be accepted in the fashion industry as well: they want to see fat women in ads; they want to be able to buy the lightest shade of foundation and the lightest of the ‘philosophical’ stuff from cooks it seems, and HF-W doesn’t really overdo it. The author offers excellent techniques for roasting, braising, stewing and so on. He explains cuts of meat, recommending that one buy a whole pig some time in order to cut it up oneself so as to understand things better. He explains how slow and fast cooking differ—but could use some advice from Shirley Corriher (author of Cookwise) on brining, and from Christopher Kimball (of Cook’s Illustrated) about slow cooking of beef (and Jacques Pe- about slow cooking (lamb, come to think of it). Anyway, a great contribution to cook- on about slow cooking (lamb, come to think of it). Anyway, a great contribution to cook- book that might also even have become a best seller if only it had been called W.H.F. English Men Don’t Get Fat. Or not.

Again, on the possible escape route from warnings against fat and food, one really has to give due credit to Tony Soprano, who has already made a particular kind of golf shirt a fashion essen- nial! Now The Soprano Family Cookbook may also become a source of recipes you don’t want to refuse. The book is amusing, and that’s probably enough, but in fact the recipes therein are very good. We haven’t tried a lot of them, but we did check out “The Saucecar with Garlic—what we will think of as fried lettuce, but it really escarole sautéed in garlic, a genuine treat. The recipe for Biscotta Regina is a must for biscoff lovers, it actually brought tears of nostalgia to the eyes of regular Cultural Corner members, recalling a long-gone Ital-ian grandmother who used to make them. A veritable Italian-American instance of Provustian mealmaking. We’ve been making it again and again. We have also to mention our escape from the straitjacketing confines of anti-carbohydrates and our release into the freedom of bread.
Hilary Masters: Would you like anything to read?

I have this reading habit—too late to break it now I suppose. So, I have been reading several books at once—a mix of fiction and non-fiction so they don’t all collide.

Russell Banks’s new novel The Darling dramatizes the very sad history of a woman caught up in the turmoil of the ’60s and ’70s who joins the Weathermen underground and then exiles herself (fleeing prosecution) to Africa where she marries and starts a family with a Liberian bureaucrat. Banks writes with a pitiless eye on the human waste caused by thoughtless or manipulated idealism (the protagonist also cares for chimpanzees), and as always in his work, the social commentary is fierce. He is master of place; the prodigious research he must have done on this era and the African politics and personalities of that period infuse and enrich the narrative so gracefully that not a seam of his labor shows.

Philip Roth’s new novel about the possibility of Charles Lindberg becoming president in the 1930s to institute a fascistic, anti-Semitic tyranny of Charles Lindberg becoming president in 1936, and the writing in this book is pretty clunky at that time. The quality of the prose suggests what he saw happening in Italy and Germany Lewis wrote in 1935 — wrote hurriedly I had visited this same territory 70 years ago. the 1930s to institute a fascistic, anti-Semitic ity of Charles Lindberg becoming president in

African politics and personalities of that period research he must have done on this era and the first rate. He is a master of place; the prodigious high toward the novel’s conclusion, some of the incidents and political situations he dreamed up 70 years ago have a currency that is a little disturbing. The short story form is a favorite, particularly for the peripatetic reading I seem to practice, and a recent collection of short stories from the University of Pittsburgh Press has seasoned my reading nicely. Darrel Spencer won the prestigious Sue Drue Heinke Literature Award for his Bring Your Legs with You. This collection is a series of linked stories concerning a professional boxer turned roofing contractor in Las Vegas, and some are told from his point of view while in others, the narrative is pulled back to view the man on the round — and in the ring too. Mr. Spencer writes with a unique flair for language and the idiosyncratic nature of his prose may not be to everyone’s taste. He establishes character and situation quickly — all important in the short story — and the voices create their own authenticity through time. Because aware of the author’s cleverness. But, a very satisfying assembly, and I think Mr. Spencer is a writer to watch.

For Christmas, my son gave me a book called The Island in the Center of the World by Russell Shorto. This is a very detailed account of the history, and the effect of that history, of the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam and surrounding territory, following the trip made by Henry Hudson up that waterway which bears his name. Mr. Shorto handles an enormous list of references and historical accounts adeptly though his scholarship/some times goes beyond my range of interest. But that is in fact. I think this book would be of particular interest to anyone who has some relationship with that part of the country or who wants to learn of the different personalities and events that appear on its map.

Also for Christmas, a daughter gave me a history of the boxing ring. This — richly illustrated — is okay for an idle perusal on a rainy afternoon but I found it disappointing in that nowhere in its pages is he described that I once rode full speed down the sharp descent of Roberts Street in Kansas City and then up the terrace of my grandparents’ house to come to a dashing halt at the bottom of the porch stairs. It even had a horn.

Earlier, my wife had given me Bill Clinton’s My Life. I never read books like this one — huge autobiographical efforts — from front to back, but by way of the index. I skim the appendix and come on a topic or a name that ticks my curiosity. Then I look it up in the text. Do enough of a book this way, and I gradually piece it out though the method does not favor any appreciation of the prose. In any event, it seems to me that Clinton was a better talker than writer. But, for an example of my technique, I came on an entry “McDonough Gym” 123 and this led me to Clinton’s account of the aftermath of King’s assassination in Washington, D.C., and how some National Guardsmen, called out by Johnson to keep order, camped out of King’s assassination in Washington, D.C., and how some National Guardsmen, called out by Johnson to keep order, camped out in the Georgetown University gym. Clinton was attending the law school. But on the same page of this account, he also talks of Bobby Kennedy campaigning in Indiana for the nomination and has a rally there about the assassination and how we should respond. Happily, Clinton quotes much of those remarks, mostly spontaneous, saying it was to be the great speech of RFK’s career, made only two months before his own murder, and I would add probably the best speech made by any Kennedy.

Finally, some poetry. A very engaging collection of poems about boxing featuring these authors could not remember their names and their technique, I came on a poem by my colleague Jim Prothero. I could not remember the names and their technique, I came on a poem by my colleague Jim Prothero. But for an example of my technique, I came on an entry “McDonough Gym,” 123 and this led me to Clinton’s account of the aftermath of King’s assassination in Washington, D.C., and how some National Guardsmen, called out by Johnson to keep order, camped out in the Georgetown University gym. Clinton was attending the law school. But on the same page of this account, he also talks of Bobby Kennedy campaigning in Indiana for the nomination and has a rally there about the assassination and how we should respond. Happily, Clinton quotes much of those remarks, mostly spontaneous, saying it was to be the great speech of RFK’s career, made only two months before his own murder, and I would add probably the best speech made by any Kennedy.

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