When people have asked me lately what I’ve been reading, I have always said, “My wife’s new book.” Kathleen’s new police procedural, “Afterimage,” has just been published by St. Martin’s but I’ve been privileged to read its creation from the opening gambits, and it has been quite an adventure. Clearly, I am married to a woman with a criminal mind.

As in her first two novels “Taken” and “Fallen,” Richard Christie, Head of Pittsburgh Homicide, calls his group together once again to solve two murders seemingly unrelated. One of them has “occurred” in the park near our house on the Northside. This time around, their efforts are abetted by the appearance of rookie detective Colleen Greer.

I thank each of you who have just spoken, and all of those who have been involved in this decision. It means a lot to me that you have decided to award this Chair to me.

In particular, since I am a teacher, I thought that I might be able to say something that would, at the least, be of interest to the grad students, and something that would, at the least, be of interest to the grad students, and even the younger faculty in this room about the kind of academic life gives back a lot, it has a wonderfully rich and varied reward system. We all kind of know about it, but we don’t talk about it much.

But the second, and more important, thing I want to tell you is that this focus on my contributions gives a one-sided view of the nature of academic life. It makes my career -- indeed any long academic career -- sound like a life of giving. And what I want to add, to fill out that picture, is to tell you that, in addition to the giving, there is the receiving. Because academic life gives back a lot, it has a wonderfully rich and varied reward system. We all kind of know about it, but we don’t talk about it much.

In particular, since I am a teacher, I thought that I might be able to say something that would, at the least, be of interest to the grad students, and the post docs, and even the younger faculty in this room about the kind of rewards that I, and many other old-timers here, receive from this business.

I will start with the private rewards: there are three parts to my comments: One part is about the private rewards, the other parts are about two kinds of public rewards: those coming from outside the university, and those coming from inside the university.

There are three parts to my comments: One part is about the private rewards, the other parts are about two kinds of public rewards: those coming from outside the university, and those coming from inside the university.

In the 1999-2000 academic year, Carnegie Mellon began providing a PAT bus pass to each student and to any faculty and staff member desiring a pass. Today, the cost is covered mostly through student fee assessments, with the remainder borne by the University. The annual cost to Carnegie Mellon is shown in Table 1. For 2007-2008, the cost is $811,000.

Since the introduction of the program in 1999, ridership on PAT buses by the Carnegie Mellon community has steadily increased, with the total number of annual rides almost doubling since the inception of the program (Table 1). Ridership is greatest during the academic year, with declines over the end-of-year holidays and during the summer as would be expected.

As members of the Green Practices Committee and its Transportation Subcommittee, and as dedicated Port Authority Transit (PAT) bus riders ourselves, we would like to share with the campus community some data on PAT bus use by the Carnegie Mellon community. It’s a success story that we expect to continue and grow in importance for the campus.

I thank each of you who have just spoken, and all of those who have been involved in this decision. It means a lot to me that you have decided to award this Chair to me.
Expensive Entropy

The research gets pushed into the clear illustrates the problems at the economics of stem cell re...

2. I have students in my course look prominently bio-ethicists who believe... Bush Administration has chosen not... cell research is not illegal. The... I would note that embryonic stem... research must be pursued ethically, the use of embryonic cells.

3. As for the question of whether this research and the technology it promises is evil, I would simply offer the following quotation from Sen. Gordon Smith, a conservative, pro-life Republican from Oregon, in testimony before the Senate sub-committee that oversees federal-

To the Editors:

In response to Prof. Timothy Shime-all’s letter in the last issue of Focus regarding the paper on the economics of stem cell research done by 4 students in my Spring ’07 Econo-

mics of Ideas course, I would like to make the following comments:

1. While I agree completely that research must be pursued ethically, I would note that embryonic stem cell research is not illegal. The Bush Administration has chosen not to provide federal funding for basic research into this promising medical technology, but the research itself is perfectly legal. Indeed, there are prominent bio-ethicists who believe the research is completely ethical.

2. I have students in my course look at the economics of stem cell research because it is a topic which clearly illustrates the problems that occur when basic scientific research becomes politicized and the research gets pushed into the private sector, where the results of research frequently end up locked behind intellectual property walls, rather than being openly accessible. I have the students focus... of my life, I have not been a stranger to hospitals and trying to provide care and comfort... and returns frequently to, mark... in an issue that features not only pages, and scenes from the recent Drama Department productions reviewed by Jean Alexander on p.8.

Cindy Limauro agreed to try to give us some understanding of just what the life and work of a lighting designer is like, by keeping a di-
ary of sorts for a week or so, and by giving us some illustrations of lighting projects she has done.

We’re looking for more ‘weeks in the life’ of our colleagues, so please send recommendations.

For the record, Steve Spear’s review of “Against Intellectual Monopoly” in our last issue drew the following enthusiastic response from one of the authors, David K. Levine:

“Wow - that is much more than a review: a beautifully, well-written introduction to a topic that took us an entire book to explain! What is the copyright status of the review and can we reproduce it? We need to post the latest, and hopefully, last version of the book; I’d like to put a copy of the review with a link on the page with the revised chapters, then do a blog post linking to it. (self-promotion is always good - but from the comments, I think a lot of our blog readers would both enjoy and get a lot out of your exposition).”

Permission to reprint was granted of course, and there is now a link to the review as posted on the FOCUS website.

See you in the funny papers.

- the editors

This is the only honey that Entropy offers. Giant Eagle sells Frosted Flakes for $3.09

Earlier in the semester, Entropy, our friendly local food market, made the switch to a new location in the University Center. Along with the physical move came more extreme changes, including the Parkhurst company taking ownership, accepting DineEx as a form of payment, and the prices of most items zooming up. Most younger students don’t mind the price rise, as they pay with their meal plan. I wonder what mom would think if she knew they were paying $7 for Peanut Butter?
Pat Bus Use..., cont’d from page 1

Month by month data for the first five years of the program are shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Annual Carnegie Mellon PAT bus ridership 1999-2007, and annual cost to Carnegie Mellon:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (Jul-June)</th>
<th>Total Rides</th>
<th>Carnegie Mellon cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>746,556</td>
<td>$567,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>1,031,568</td>
<td>$567,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>1,140,996</td>
<td>$612,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>1,215,468</td>
<td>$612,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>1,207,896</td>
<td>$661,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>1,270,764</td>
<td>$695,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>1,324,560</td>
<td>$729,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>1,460,829</td>
<td>$766,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Port Authority Transit

Table 15. Top 15 Carnegie Mellon PAT bus routes in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Route Number</th>
<th>Avg. Weekly Rides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>61C – McKeesport-Homestead</td>
<td>3611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>61A – East Pittsburgh-Wilkinsburg</td>
<td>2436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>61B – Braddock-Swissvale</td>
<td>2131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>59U – South Side Works-Oakland Waterfront</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>71D – Hamilton</td>
<td>1552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>500 – Highland Park-Bellevue</td>
<td>1452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>71A – Negley</td>
<td>1193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>71C – Wilkinsburg-East Liberty</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>61D – Summerset</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>28X – Airport</td>
<td>826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>54C – North Side-Oakland-South Side</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Port Authority Transit

In June 2007, the Port Authority cut some routes and reduced service on others to reduce operational expenses. Only one of the top 15 routes used by the Carnegie Mellon community was eliminated: the 501 Manchester-Wilkinsburg. According to PAT, two bus routes provide alternative service for this eliminated route: the 61A East Pittsburgh-Wilkinsburg and the 16D Manchester. Some of the top 15 routes experienced reduced service. Of the other routes eliminated in June, none except for the 501 Manchester-Wilkinsburg had more than 12 rides per week from Carnegie Mellon riders. Thus, the Carnegie Mellon community was not greatly impacted by the June 2007 route eliminations.

It is clear from the data presented that an ever-increasing proportion of the Carnegie Mellon community is taking advantage of the PAT bus available to all. Your friends and colleagues on campus are using the bus, and we encourage all FOCUS readers to take advantage of the bus service that PAT provides to and from campus. It will save you money and usually can save you stress as well.

In a 2006 study of transportation options for the campus that was performed with support from the Steinbrenner Institute, a survey of commuters to and from campus was conducted and yielded 1269 responses, including 912 from parking permit holders and 357 from non-permit holders. The study was conducted by Deanna Matthews, Cliff Davidson, Scott Matthews, and Michael Griffin of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and the Green Design Institute. Among other findings, the survey revealed that 65% of automobile commuters with parking permits have used alternative transportation, primarily PAT bus service. The availability of the bus service is clearly of value even to holders of parking permits. For all respondents, when queried about why they did not take the bus regularly, wait time and trip time were cited as the two most important reasons. About 600 respondents provided written comments with their responses, and 525 of these included something about buses in their comments. There were various suggestions for changes that could be made to improve service and convenience, but the most common comment was an expression of thanks for the university support of the bus passes.

For individuals who live far from campus, say more than 10 miles, a bus trip can be considerably longer than automobile travel due to the frequent stops made by buses. From some locations at the edges of Allegheny County, there are limited-stop “flyer” buses, though most of these go to the downtown business district rather than to Oakland, necessitating a transfer to Oakland.

If you live closer than 10 miles to campus, as do most Carnegie Mellon commuters, you should give the bus a try. It has been our experience that the buses usually run on time. There are, of course, occasions when the buses get behind schedule because of traffic and/or weather conditions, but the same situations develop for all of us as individual drivers as well. If you study the schedule, you usually will not be waiting long. Also, for many destinations, there is more than one bus route option. Schedules for all routes are available at the PAT web site: www.ridegold.com . The PAT web site is easy to navigate and includes useful trip planning features.

The Carnegie Mellon community uses many of the PAT bus routes, but usage is concentrated in a small fraction of the total routes offered by PAT. In Table 3, the top 15 routes utilized by Carnegie Mellon riders are listed, based on 2006 data.

Table 2. Carnegie Mellon PAT bus ridership by month for January-August 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Rides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>1,120,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1,129,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1,134,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1,132,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1,113,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1,091,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1,095,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1,135,416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: R. Grove, Port Authority Transit

The Carnegie Mellon community uses many of the PAT bus routes, but usage is concentrated in a small fraction of the total routes offered by PAT. In Table 3, the top 15 routes utilized by Carnegie Mellon riders are listed, based on 2006 data.
Day 1:  Teaching at Carnegie Mellon

6:30am
The alarm goes off and it hardly seems like a full night has passed. It’s dark when I leave in the morning and dark when I get home late at night. Ironic perhaps. Or maybe just appropriate for a lighting designer.

8:15am
I walk into my light lab to set up for my first class of the day. The class is comprised of senior and second year grad lighting designers. In addition to taking creative risks while exploring the latest lighting technology, they must also make budgets for equipment and labor. This will give them a better understanding of how expensive it is to produce a design.

11:00am
Class is over and I meet with a student who is currently working on the design for one of the Drama productions. He is showing me his color key in the light lab. As a designer starts to visualize light, he translates these ideas into visual images of angle, color and intensity. Is he trying to create a realistic interior on a sunny day or does the script delve into the psychological mind of a character, creating a more abstracted world? The student’s project has two colors that are very similar in hue coming from the same position. I question whether this will give him enough contrast, and so he undertakes to experiment with other ranges of color.

12:30pm:
Back to the light lab to prep for my afternoon class. An Introduction to Lighting Design, with lots of hands-on lab exercises exploring angle, color, intensity, and movement of light. Today we will cue to an edited version of Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons* so I am setting up a sculptural arrangement in each of the four works stations for them to use in their lighting design.

4:30pm
Back in the office to meet with several more students, eat dinner at my desk, and catch up on e-mail.

8:30pm
I meet with the students doing the architectural lighting design mock-ups. They have put together an equipment package of theatrical fixtures, architectural LED fixtures, and miles of cable. We have scoped out where to draw power from each of the building sites. While each group of students begins to experiment with light, I run back and forth from the Stadium, CFA, and Baker Hall to check on their progress and offer feedback about their design ideas. We attract a lot of attention from students and faculty passing by. They ask if the lighting will be permanently installed.

11:30pm
After a day full of many details and racing round campus, I finally head home.

Day 2:  Travel to Columbus to design an opera

8:00am
By contrast, no campus projects today, but instead I’m off to the airport, traveling to Columbus Ohio to implement my design for a production of La Boheme for Opera Columbus. I have had many conversations with the director via phone. This will be our first time working together. I’m a bit nervous since we’ve never met, wondering if the words we’ve used to describe the lighting match the visual images we’re each imagining in the theatre. My design ideas have been translated into a drafted light plot which was sent to the theatre’s electrician. All of the lights have been hung and circuited in the positions as indicated on my plot. I will arrive and go straight to the theatre where the crew is waiting for me to focus the lights. I take advantage of waiting in two different airports and two planes rides to listen to the music one more time, notating in my score the placement of each light cue.

4:00pm
I arrive at the theatre to begin focus. I’m informed that scenery is behind. They should be ready for me to focus after the dinner break.

7:00pm
Back at the theatre, I’m ready for my four hour focus call. Four electricians have been sent to the front of house lighting positions. Two are in the front beam position and two are in the stage left and stage right box boom positions along the walls of the theatre. In my design, I have divided the stage into acting areas. They are usually 8’-12’ in diameter, depending on the size of the stage, and allow me to isolate individual areas where actors might stand or to bring them all up together to create a wash of light for the entire environment. My plot includes front lights to see faces, side lights to sculpt the actor, back lights to pull them out from the scenery, and top lights to isolate them within a scene. I stand in the center of each acting area and direct the electricians to place the hot spot of the light on my face. I then sharpen or soften the edges of the light beam, and by using shutters, can shape the beam of light to the scenery.

11:00pm
Out for a quick drink with the director and production manager to do a little bonding before the onslaught of tech rehearsals.

Day 3:  Cue Writing and Tech Rehearsal

8:00am
continued on page 5
A Week in the Life....

continued from page 4

I arrive at the theatre to write my light cues. The stage managers will walk the stage, standing where the singers will be in any given scene. This is the fun part of the process where you get to see what the lights do. I always start with a black out in the space and then selectively bring up one light at a time to create the look I am after. I constantly watch the stage and use my eyes to judge when a light is bright enough or the contrast between angles and colors is just right. When I am pleased, I turn to the director, explain my intention for the cue, give the placement to the stage manager who will call the cues during the show, and wait for feedback from the director. He thinks it’s beautiful and I start to relax a little. I’m now confident we are on the same visual page. I quickly rough in 300 light cues, intended to create the overall focus, mood, and ambiance; however, I am not looking for perfection at this point. Everything will need to be adjusted when the singers come on stage in costumes, wigs, and make-up.

7:00pm

Piano tech rehearsal. This is the first time that the singers will be on the set under stage lighting. We will stop and start, re-running scenes for blocking (where the singers stand and move) to work out a staging problem or to fix a light cue. I notice some dark spots on stage so I focus one of the moving lights (where the singers stand and move) to work out a staging problem or to fix a light cue. I decide to skip major portions of Act III so we can get to Act IV. This means of those stops to fix light cues. We are running out of time, so the Maestro decides to skip major portions of Act III so we can get to Act IV. This means we can anticipate any visual problems and fix them before the evening dress.

11:00pm

I thank my crew for their hard work and head off to bed for some much needed sleep.

Day 4:  Dress Rehearsal

9:00am

I have the morning off from the opera but use the time to check on things back at Carnegie Mellon. The students know that if there is a real emergency, they can always call my cell phone. Otherwise, they update me on their activities through e-mail.

1:00pm

Back at the theatre for a notes session. I’ve made a list of cue notes and focus notes of things I want to change. I only have two lights to refocus. Once that is done, I jump right into cue notes. We start with Act IV of the Opera and work backwards so that we end in the Act I set where we will start the evening’s dress rehearsal. The director sits next to me while we look at each cue and finesse the visual look or timing.

7:00pm

First orchestra dress. It will also be the first time the singers will appear in full costume, wigs, and make-up. There will be much for me to look at, making sure the focus is balanced and that each singer looks good. However, tonight is all about the orchestra. The conductor will drive the rehearsal, stopping as necessary for the orchestra or the singer. I take advantage of those stops to fix light cues. We are running out of time, so the Maestro decides to skip major portions of Act III so we can get to Act IV. This means I won’t get a chance to see every light cue with the singers so if there is a problem, I won’t know until tomorrow’s final dress. We don’t get through the end of the show. During our production meeting, I plan for the next day’s afternoon notes session. We will start with Acts III and IV to look at every cue with stage managers standing where the singers are. That way we can anticipate any visual problems and fix them before the evening dress.

Day 5:  Final Dress Rehearsal

1:00pm

Final notes session. Not only do we have time to look at light cues for Acts III and IV, but we go through the entire show. I am confident that the lights are in a finished polished state going into the final dress rehearsal.

7:00pm

Final dress rehearsal. We run in performance conditions without stopping. I watch with a critical eye for any final adjustments to the lighting. There are no more notes calls so I will need to make the changes as we go along. At the end of the evening, the director hugs me. He is thrilled with the results. Unfortunately, I won’t be able to stay for opening night. Too bad, they always have great parties after the performance.

Day 6:  Travel to Antwerp

9:00am

...and besides, there’s another airport beckoning. I’m off to Brussels where I am a guest professor at an architecture school in Antwerp. This is the third year I’ve taught this lighting design course, traveling to Antwerp 5 or 6 times a year. The course has been structured in a way so that I teach the students intensively for 16 hours. They then work on a project in-between my visits. Through my contacts in the lighting industry, I was able to secure a donation from a major lighting manufacturer for a fully equipped light lab like the one at Carnegie Mellon. I’m told that my light lab in Antwerp is better equipped than most professional theatres in Belgium. Again, I take advantage of airport waits and long plane rides to switch gears and focus on what I will teach when I arrive.

Day 7:  Teach Architectural lighting classes

6:30am

Arrive in Brussels. The school sends a limo to pick me up and drive me to Antwerp. I check into my hotel, take a shower, and then go straight to the school.

1:00pm

I need to prep in the light lab for teaching 16 hours of classes starting at 8:30am on Monday morning. In stark contrast to Carnegie Mellon, the school is closed on the weekends, so I must set up all of the lighting for class today. I’m handling jet lag pretty well, letting my adrenaline push me through the day.

6:30pm

I leave school rejoicing in the fact that I have a FREE WEEKEND! How did this happen? I dream of Belgium chocolate, frites, and beer. I love my job!
Also a fine writer is my colleague Jane Bernstein whose outstanding memoir about her brain-damaged daughter “Loving Rachel, A Family’s Journey from Grief” has just been re-issued by U. of Illinois Press in concert with a new sequel, “Rachel in the World.” This child whose mental and physical disabilities challenged her parents to the edge of madness in the first book has now become a woman in her early twenties with all the accompanying concerns of such maturity. But Bernstein discovers these difficulties are made even more complicated by the maze of social and bureaucratic services supposedly meant to assist the disabled. So much of the new book describes her persistent and tough combat with ineffic- tual and often uncaring agencies to find security and a place for Rachel as she grows older and even seeks her own independence as any child would.

The sequel is told in the same clear, sentimental voice that marked “Loving Rachel” and set it apart from other often self-flattering accounts. The result portrays a triumph for both Rachel and her family, and it’s quite a story.

If you have ever wondered about the people who serve you at a local chain restaurant, Stewart O’Nan will satisfy that curiosity with “Last Night at the Lobster,” his eleventh novel. A versatile writer and a native Burgher, O’Nan has a remarkable ear and he has reproduced the speech of a great and varied cast of characters in his eleven novels; here the rhythm and inflections of a sad bunch of locals closing down their restaurant in a der- elicet New England shopping mall. O’Nan has done his research too, and the process of terminating such a business makes this interesting reading beyond the interplay of the servers and the feckless manager for whom the end of the fish house is also the end of a hopeless romance. The reader is pulled into this corner of a world that he most likely has always driven by.

The sounds of ordinary lives are also prominent, indeed they are the sub- stance of Ellie Wymard’s first-hand recording of the people who worked or lived by Pittsburgh’s steel plants. “Talking Steel Towns: The Men and Women of America’s Steel Valley” is freshly published by our own Carnegie Mellon Press. All who wish to know about this part of our his- tory or refresh an acquaintanceship with this past, should pick up a copy at Borders. Wymard states her motive in an introduction, “The hot re-
tory or refresh an acquaintanceship with this past, should pick up a copy of the Lobster,” his eleventh novel. A versatile writer and a native Burgher, O’Nan has a remarkable ear and he has reproduced the speech of a great and varied cast of characters in his eleven novels; here the rhythm and inflections of a sad bunch of locals closing down their restaurant in a der-elict New England shopping mall. O’Nan has done his research too, and the process of terminating such a business makes this interesting reading beyond the interplay of the servers and the feckless manager for whom the end of the fish house is also the end of a hopeless romance. The reader is pulled into this corner of a world that he most likely has always driven by.

The lives of families were orga- nized around the mill shifts and whole histories were engulfed by the gigantic hearths as common as like “passing a journey with an intelligent, fluent seatmate and enjoying the give and take with his agile and meaning- ful mind. We’re not often in agreement, but I am grateful for the exchange.

And I am grateful for the quiet, lovely language of William Trevor as he makes his discreet inquiries into human motivations. The New Yorker has called him “the greatest living writer of short stories in the English language.” Well, yes, but I would put Alice Munro on the same shelf, and they both seem to effortlessly turn their short stories into novels, complex and multi-dimensional. “Cheating at Canasta” is Trevor’s latest collection.

The wife in the title story is losing her grasp on reality due to Alzheimer’s but still enjoys a hand of canasta with her husband who cheats in order for her to win the game. Taking the winning tricks with the purloined cards delights her; she’s not aware of his strategy. We learn this history as the husband is having lunch in Harry’s Bar in Venice. He is alone. His wife has urged him to take this trip alone to revisit one of their favorite haunts when younger and he has just witnessed a spat between a young couple seated next to him. He engages them in conversation and volunteers intimacies as if to find work—let me repeat that, to find work—can be read as a great work of literature as well as a social critique that hasn’t lost its power—or its target.

As Hemingway ought to have said, he’s one helluva writer. Often I will pick up a book that goes far beyond what, in a flash of self-delusion, I call my expertise: a volume whose language and intellectual rigor challenge my patched-up knowledge. It’s a kind of cerebral weight-training for me to read such books, and recently a slim book titled “Modern Liberty and the Limits of Government” by Charles Fried supplied this engagement. Professor Reid’s treatise is a review of the history of liberty and how that quality has been affected by contemporary government. Dare I say, Big Government? So, the book’s conservative argument challenges those precepts that have largely guided my thinking in the so-called American Century just past. It’s good fun, and even though some of it is over my head, it’s like passing a journey with an intelligent, fluent seatmate and enjoying the give and take with his agile and meaning-ful mind. We’re not often in agreement, but I am grateful for the exchange.

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As Hemingway ought to have said, he’s one helluva writer. Often I will pick up a book that goes far beyond what, in a flash of self-delusion, I call my expertise: a volume whose language and intellectual rigor challenge my patched-up knowledge. It’s a kind of cerebral weight-training for me to read such books, and recently a slim book titled “Modern Liberty and the Limits of Government” by Charles Fried supplied this engagement. Professor Reid’s treatise is a review of the history of liberty and how that quality has been affected by contemporary government. Dare I say, Big Government? So, the book’s conservative argument challenges those precepts that have largely guided my thinking in the so-called American Century just past. It’s good fun, and even though some of it is over my head, it’s like passing a journey with an intelligent, fluent seatmate and enjoying the give and take with his agile and meaning-ful mind. We’re not often in agreement, but I am grateful for the exchange.

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Jars of olives selling for $7.
Sarah Brown (Jessica Waxman) and Ravide Abernathy (Tristan Farmer), Guys & Dolls.

Several of the plays in this year’s School of Drama season are classics—perfect examples of their kind. Such is certainly the case with Guys and Dolls and Ghosts, two recent productions whose runs overlapped. If you saw them both on the same day or on consecutive nights, as I did, you ended up either whistling a tune or in a deep funk, depending on which came last.

Guys and Dolls (1950) is a great Broadway musical with colorful characters and dialogue (derived from Damon Runyon’s tales of Broadway gamblers, crooks and showgirls), and brilliant music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. As the showgirls), and brilliant music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. As the

Two Reviews: Guys & Dolls, Ghosts

Robert Lenzl made a plausible Sky Masterson; you could believe that he ultimately got religion. Jessica Waxman played Miss Sarah Brown, the genteel but spirited salvation army damsel, very well. These two romantic leads contrasted with their comic counterparts, the ha-rassed Nathan Detroit (Ben Goldberg) and “dumb” blond Adelaide, thrillingly embodied by Emily Ros-sell. After a 14-year engagement, Nathan and Adelaide finally tie the knot. Since it’s a musical, we don’t have to wonder what happens next.

The language of Guys and Dolls is amazing. Here’s a sample of Runyonesque dialogue, an ex-change between Nathan Detroit and Joey Biltmore (on the phone):

“--It’s a bet I can’t lose. I bet him he could not take a doll to Havana. --Why couldn’t he? --Because she ain’t the kind of doll that goes to Havana. --Where does she go? --She don’t go no place. That’s why I know I’m gonna win. --Don’t be so sure. … It ain’t a horse, it’s a doll…

As a segue to Ghosts, the words of the translator and Ibsen scholar Bri-an Johnston are apropos: “In Ibsen’s time, the theater was purely escap-is-tic. It still is! We’re teaching our kids at CMU to help people escape from reality. … That’s the whole art of acting, the better you fake, the more you’re applauded. But Ibsen is trying to use the theater in a dif-ferent way—to shake up audiences by breaking down their expectations when they go into the theater.”

Ghosts (1881) is a tightly-struc-tured, five-character drama in which a young artist returns from Paris to his widowed mother’s home in Norway. Disturbing truths about the past are revealed, layer by layer. It is a tainted past, which the two young people, Oswald and Regina, inherit in body and mind. All the characters onstage are re-lated to each other in unexpect-ed, distorted ways. Two offstage characters—one a father and one a mother—cast a shadow over the lives of those who remain. In the person of the outwardly conformist but inwardly rebellious Mrs. Al-ving, Ibsen explores the family, the sexual double standard, class relationships, and other pillars of respectable nineteenth-century so-ciety.

The role of Mrs. Alving demands a strong technique, which Sonja Field, as the genteel but spirited salvation army damsel, very well. These two romantic leads contrasted with their comic counterparts, the ha-rassed Nathan Detroit (Ben Goldberg) and “dumb” blond Adelaide, thrillingly embodied by Emily Ros-sell. After a 14-year engagement, Nathan and Adelaide finally tie the knot. Since it’s a musical, we don’t have to wonder what happens next.

The two lower-class characters in Ibsen’s play have their own hopes, dreams, and tragedies, but they are no more idealized than those of the gentry. Emma Galvin played Re-gina Engstrand as a self-possessed, rather primitive egotist interested only in using others for her own advancement. She certainly looked healthy, and had plenty of strength of will, which may have been the qualities that Oswald was perverse-ly attracted to. Peter Albrink was excellent in the part of Regina’s “father,” Jakob Engstrand, an in-stinctive liar and alcoholic, perhaps Ibsen’s embodiment of the “natural man.”

This CMU offering was beautifully produced in the Helen Wayne Rauh Studio Theater, using an open stage built up in layered stages rising to a window where rain poured down like a waterfall. The play was lit like a Rembrandt painting, with costumes in rich dark blues, grays, purples and browns. Only at the end of the play did the sun come out, one of Ibsen’s more heavy-handed ironic symbols. There were a few problems in the third act, perhaps not related to this particular perfor-mance but to the playwright him-self, and the form within which he was working. The action seemed to go on just a little too long, with a few too many twists and turns, long after the audience had figured out what was going on. Dramatic unity and closure may be exactly what Ibsen was trying to expose and to undermining, but the conventions of nineteenth-century theater did not allow him to do without them.