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Faculty & Staff Newsletter

Vol. 2, No. 1 - August 27, 2002

Highlights

[Anderson to Keynote Convocation](#)

[Expanding Horizons Gets New Grant](#)

[Solomon Authors New Book](#)

Printable Version



Professor of Theater Carolyn Anderson will give this year's [Opening Convocation](#) address, starting at 5:30 p.m. Sept. 3 at South Park Green.



Biology Professor David Domozych instructs a group of Schuylerville 8th graders in the botany, history, and modern-day uses of psychoactive chemicals from plants and fungi. The presentation was part of a recent mini-college at Skidmore for Schuylerville students, as part of the [Expanding Horizons Program](#).



Professor of Art Doretta Miller's gouache paintings of China were featured in a recent [review](#).

Welcome -- The Skidmore *Intercom* Faculty-Staff Newsletter is a production of the Office of College Relations. All members of the campus community are invited to submit story ideas or news items, using the contact information provided below. Department chairs and office directors are asked to please print a copy of this document to share with colleagues who do not have regular access to a computer.

We hope you enjoy this electronic newsletter and encourage you to share your impressions via email or telephone.

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Anderson to Keynote Opening Convocation

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The event gets under way at 5:30 p.m. at South Park Green. The traditional J. Erik Jonsson Day Barbecue on Case Green will follow the ceremony, which is open to the campus community. In case of rain, convocation will take place in the Sports Center, with the barbecue following in the dining halls.

Anderson, who chairs the Department of Theater, will focus her remarks on Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel *Brave New World*, the summer reading assigned to members of the Class of '06. The book will be the focus of early Liberal Studies discussions for incoming students.

"I'll emphasize themes relating to liberal arts learning - how college transports us from the world that we're so used to living in and gives us the tools necessary for continued growth. I think that it's important to stress the messages of a liberal arts education in order to help our newest students prepare for their academic careers," she said.

The Class of '06 will share the spotlight at Opening Convocation, the formal start to the College's academic year. Totalling approximately 600 students, the class is 60 percent female and 40 percent male. Class members come from 30 states and 11 foreign countries. The average SAT score for the enrolled class is 1,250.

A total of 36 class members will begin their college careers participating in Skidmore's London program, which will be under the direction of Dean of Studies Jon Ramsey. This group of students will return to campus for the Spring '03 semester.

A member of the Skidmore faculty since 1979, Anderson last spring received the second annual Ralph A. Ciancio Award for Excellence in Teaching, established in 2000 to honor Ciancio, emeritus professor of English. Anderson said that she was "honored and humbled" to have been selected and noted, "in the midst of my talented colleagues, I feel like all of us should be chosen for this." This is the second time that Anderson has been recognized at Skidmore. In 1989 she was chosen by her faculty colleagues to deliver the Edwin M. Moseley Faculty Research Lecture.

Anderson has long specialized in the Living Newspaper form of theater with her collaborator Wilma Hall. Their plays have been performed at Actor's Alley Repertory Theatre in Los Angeles, the Arizona Theater's Cabaret Theatre, Theater of the First Amendment in Virginia, the Capital Repertory Theatre in Albany, and the Spa Little Theater in Saratoga Springs.

Faces: A Living Newspaper on AIDS, an early Anderson/Hall collaborative effort, has been produced by a variety of theaters and organizations throughout the country and was the subject of a documentary produced by WMHT-TV and aired nationally. *For Bread and Freedom*, a Living Newspaper production about work and labor in the United States, was staged for George Mason University's Labor and Culture Conference and by the Theater of the First Amendment.

Anderson and Hall have recently finished a film script for the National Park Service about the baths at Saratoga. Their full-length play *Parting Kind* (about pioneer women making the overland crossing in the mid-1800s) has received staged readings by three professional play development groups.

In 1996 Anderson accepted an invitation to lead a workshop and create a play using Bread and Puppet Theater puppets. The resulting piece about the plight of workers in a North Carolina poultry processing plant - *The Sky is Falling* - was actually performed by workers at the strike site. Other Anderson productions include three short plays on the western landscape: *Titans in the Earth*, a one-act concerning the Titan missiles that surrounded Tucson during the Cold War; *Ground Zero*, about the Mercury Test Site in Nevada; and *The Last River*, a site-specific environmental theater piece written for the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity.

Anderson has directed a number of plays for Skidmore, including *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Our Town*, *Spoon River Anthology*, and *Under Milk Wood*. She is a member of the Capital Repertory Theatre Board of Trustees as well as the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and the Arizona Theatre Alliance.

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Vol. 2, No. 1 - August 27, 2002**Expanding Horizons Gets \$40K Grant for Program Support**

The Educational Foundation of America has approved a new \$40,000 grant for Expanding Horizons: The Skidmore/Schuylerville Connection.

Over the next two years, the grant will support initiatives designed to achieve three broad goals: to strengthen connections between the Skidmore and Schuylerville communities that will enable both groups to share information, resources, and experiences in ways that expand traditional academic content and classroom learning; to encourage Schuylerville students' access to a college education; and to enhance curriculum and faculty development and educational research opportunities for both the College and the school district.

Now starting its third year, Expanding Horizons involves students, faculty, and community members from Skidmore and the Schuylerville Central School District, located about 15 miles east of the campus in rural Saratoga County. The program covers kindergarten through the senior year of college, fostering creative professional and community relationships and expanding the learning horizon for all participants.

Since its inception, Expanding Horizons has included a combination of one-time activities as well as ongoing projects designed to achieve the program's goals. According to EH founder and director Ruth Andrea Levinson, associate professor of education at Skidmore, a new item on this year's agenda is the development of an assessment component to solicit comments about individual aspects of the program, as well as overall program effectiveness. "We've received fantastic feedback about the program and we believe that the involvement of so many students, parents, and community members is indicative of a strong level of support," said Levinson. Formal assessment instruments will allow for objective program analysis and enable Expanding Horizons participants to better direct their efforts and resources.

Sue Layden, who most recently worked on institutional assessment in the Office of the Dean of the Faculty and earlier directed the Higher Education Opportunity Program, will be instrumental in helping to develop an assessment pilot plan for Expanding Horizons.

Levinson reported that Michelle Hubbs, coordinator of volunteer services in the Office of Campus Life, will work with the staff of the EH program on student co-curricular and academic involvement. Explained Levinson, "We hope to encourage the involvement of Skidmore courses that have an activity-based component, as well as promote increased involvement of student clubs and sports teams in the EH program." By providing both academic and co-curricular options, the program will emphasize the strengths of participants and appeal to a broader range of interests.

In addition to its three broad goals, Expanding Horizons has helped both the College and the school district address several fundamental needs. Over the past few years, Skidmore reorganized its curriculum to expand interdisciplinary learning, developed more interactive collaboration between faculty and students, and increased faculty development for project-based learning. In connection with these developments, Skidmore began to concentrate on incorporating service-learning practices within the curriculum, creating a need for outside resources to provide new learning opportunities. At the same time, the Schuylerville Central School District sought to expand its access to educational resources and to increase faculty and curricular development.

Levinson points with pride to the broad College involvement in the many Expanding Horizon activities. "Skidmore students across the disciplines have gained field experience and added depth and meaning to their academic studies. Faculty on both campuses get a chance to explore their own content area interests, incorporate new ideas into their pedagogy, and forge bonds with educators outside of their immediate communities. It's a win-win situation for all who are involved."

To learn more about the program, visit the [Expanding Horizons website](#).

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Vol. 2, No. 1 - August 27, 2002**Solomon's New Book Looks at Post-9/11 Terror**

In the Wake of 9/11 - The Psychology of Terror, (American Psychological Association, 2002) a new book co-written by Skidmore Professor of Psychology **Sheldon Solomon**, explores the despair, fear, and anger that arose after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001.

Solomon and co-authors Tom Pyszczynski of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and Jeff Greenberg of the University of Arizona analyze the events of last fall through the lens of Terror Management Theory, which they originally defined about 20 years ago. Terror Management Theory helps explain why humans react the way that they do to the threat of death, and how this reaction influences their post-threat cognition and emotion. In their new book, the authors explain how Terror Management Theory provides ways to understand and reduce terrorism's effect.

According to the authors, "Terror Management Theory concerns the impact that awareness of the inevitability of death has on how we live our lives. It is essentially a theory about the effect of death on life." In the book's introduction they explain, "What the terrorist attacks have done is to disrupt our normal means of managing our natural terror and, in so doing, threatened to undermine the psychological equanimity necessary for people to function effectively on a daily basis."

Drawing on the work of the late cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker, the trio began to examine Becker's assertion that the uniquely human awareness of death and the consequent denial of it is a primary force that instigates and directs a substantial portion of human behavior. Becker, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1974 for his book, *The Denial of Death*, believed that humans refuse to accept awareness of their own mortality and that this inability to acknowledge mortality motivates virtually all human behavior.

Solomon, Pyszczynski, and Greenberg have studied how Becker's theories illuminate the interrelatedness of various forms of human behavior and motivation. They translated Becker's ideas into Terror Management Theory and subjected a number of hypotheses to empirical scrutiny. Their research has provided new knowledge about diverse aspects of the human condition, including self-esteem striving, intergroup conflict, conformity, aggression, creativity, and altruism.

In their book, the authors point out, "We are animals with an instinctive desire for life with enough intelligence to know that we will someday die. The potential for terror this knowledge creates leads us to seek shelter in the form of cultural worldviews that give life meaning and permanence, give us the opportunity to view ourselves as valuable, and provide some hope of transcending death. Whether these anxiety-buffering worldviews are religious or secular, they ultimately serve the same psychological function of protecting us from the 'rumble of panic' that lies beneath the surface and that energizes our quest for meaning in life and value in ourselves."

Using Terror Management Theory as the foundation for their discussion, the authors consider the effects of the September 11 attacks on the American public and discuss ways in which the impact of such terrorism can be reduced. Conflicts involving terrorism are explored, and practical suggestions for resolving terrorism are presented.

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Terence Diggory, Courtney and Steven Ross Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and chair, Department of English, attended the sixth conference of the International Association for Word and Image Studies July 21-27 at the University of Hamburg, Germany. He organized and chaired a panel titled "Moving Images and Traveling Texts I Contemporary Art," in which he responded to presentations by German metalsmith Wolfgang Kaiser and New Zealand filmmaker Bridget Sutherland.

Linda Simon, professor of English, gave a paper titled "The Empowered Physician: William Wilberforce Baldwin and 19th-Century Medical Therapeutics" at the International Henry James Conference July 9 in Paris. Baldwin was James's physician.

Joel Smith, associate professor of philosophy, completed a three-year term on the board of ASIANetwork by chairing the board this past year. ASIANetwork is a national consortium that promotes the study of Asia in small liberal arts colleges. His duties included organizing ASIANetwork's 10th anniversary conference near Chicago April 19-21, which included two keynote speakers, two plenary sessions, 16 breakout sessions, and a musical performance. He also organized and participated in a conference panel titled "Orienting Students for Study Abroad."

Publications

Jennifer Delton, assistant professor of history, is the author of *Making Minnesota Liberal: Civil Rights and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002). [Read more about it.](#)

Chinese gouache paintings by **Doretta Miller**, professor of art, are featured in an article ("The Chinese Gouaches of Doretta Miller") by John A. Parks published in *Watercolor: An American Artist Publication*, Summer 2002. Parks called Miller's work "a reward of visual treats and delights."

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Ginsberg Named to Teaching Post at Belgian University

Professor of Government **Roy H. Ginsberg** has been appointed the 2002-03 Glaverbel Chair in European Politics at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

During the coming academic year, Ginsberg will present a series of lectures on U.S.-European relations to graduate students at the university's Institute for European Studies. He will cover U.S.-European relations with regard to trans-Atlantic security and economic issues, as well as the war on terrorism, the Middle East crisis, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the new round of world trade talks, Russian and Chinese integration into the world economy, and the eastern and southern enlargement of the European Union.

Ginsberg has been a visiting professor or research fellow at New York University, Johns Hopkins University, the European Commission, and the Center for European Policy Studies, where he was a Fulbright Scholar. He has submitted testimony on trans-Atlantic relations to Congressional committees; consulted for the federal departments of State, Education, and Defense; and co-founded and chaired the European Union Studies Association.

The author of numerous works on the EU's foreign policies, Ginsberg most recently wrote *The European Union in International Politics: Baptism by Fire* (Roman and Littlefield, 2001).

Hallenbeck Named Associate AD

Women's field hockey and lacrosse coach Beth Hallenbeck has been appointed associate athletic director by Jeff Segrave, interim athletic director. Hallenbeck will step down as head women's lacrosse coach but remain with the lacrosse program as assistant coach. She will continue to serve as head field hockey coach and senior women's administrator for the athletic program.

Mark McCormick will take over the position of head women's lacrosse coach and continue as assistant field hockey coach.

Hallenbeck has been in charge of Skidmore's field hockey and women's lacrosse programs since 2001, following a decade as the head field hockey and women's lacrosse coach at Rensselaer. She guided the Skidmore field hockey team to the 2001 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III national semifinals.

McCormick is in his second year at Skidmore. Last year he served as assistant field hockey coach, assistant women's lacrosse coach, and administrative intern. He previously was an assistant women's lacrosse and field hockey coach at Rensselaer.

Award-Winning Poet to Give Reading on Campus

Saul Bennett, a national award-winning poet and father of a Skidmore graduate who died suddenly at age 24, will read from his work at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at Emerson Auditorium in Palamountain Hall on campus.

As an undergraduate, Sara Bennett '92 was on the staff of *The Skidmore News*, was a sports columnist and reporter for *The Saratogian*, and was a campus stringer for *The New York Times*. She was a feature writer at TV Data in Queensbury when she died. Sara's death in 1994 from a brain aneurysm propelled her father into poetry from his position as president of a Madison Avenue public relations group. Bennett's first poems were published in a variety of journals and his first collection, *New Fields and Other Stones/On a Child's Death*, a chronology of poems addressing life following Sara's death, was selected to begin a new publishing imprint, Archer Books, in 1998, and subsequently won the Benjamin Franklin Silver Award.

In one periodical the reviewer wrote of *New Fields and Other Stones*: "Bennett creates a unique idiom. And yet also shows the fingerprints of a tradition -- the work of e.e. cummings, Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Carlos Williams -- even John Donne. Like all great poetry, these poems connect with something larger."

Bennett's second collection, *Harpo Marx at Prayer* (Archer Books, 2000) was the subject of a major article in *The New York Times*, and the fabled 92nd Street Y in New York City invited Bennett to conduct walking tours, under its aegis, to his "growing-up" neighborhood in the borough of Queens, to the sites of a number of the poems in *Harpo*.

Bennett's poems have been posted on various websites, and he has been invited to read his poems for public radio, television, colleges, libraries, cultural centers, coffee houses, bookstores, places of worship, and at meetings of bereavement organizations. He has been a host and featured reader at the annual Woodstock Poetry Festival.

Bennett and his wife, Joan, live in Woodstock.

In the News

Members of the Skidmore community have recently shared their expertise with readers of a number of mainstream publications, including the following:

Sandy Baum, professor of economics, was included in an August 2002 article published in *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* on Tennessee's new prepaid tuition plan.

Peg Boyers, executive editor of *Salmagundi*, was a guest on "Bard's Eye View," a program on WAMC-FM, a National Public Radio affiliate in Albany. She shared poems from her new book, *Hard Bread*, and was interviewed by program host Paul Elisha.

Robert Boyers, Tisch Professor of Arts and Letters and professor of English, had a letter to the editor responding to an essay by Amartya Sen published in the July 29, 2002 edition of *The New Republic*. In that same issue, Boyers reviewed *The Melancholy of Resistance* by Laszlo Krasznahorkai (translated by George Szirtes and published this year by New Directions).

Versailles, the new novel by Professor of English **Kathryn Davis**, is an "elegant, idiosyncratic novel," according to *The New Yorker* in its Aug. 19, 2002, issue. The book also received a favorable review in the Aug. 4 edition of *The New York Times Book Review*.

Roy Ginsberg and **Steven Hoffmann**, professors of government, each were interviewed on "Roundtable," a program airing on WAMC-FM. Ginsberg discussed right-wing politics in Europe in a May 23 appearance during which he fielded calls from listeners; Hoffmann spoke on the continuing discord between India and Pakistan in a June 27 interview.

Charles M. Joseph, interim vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty, and professor of music, saw his new book, *Stravinsky & Balanchine: A Journey of Invention*, receive positive critiques in *The New York Times Book Review* (Aug. 4, 2002), and in *The Boston Globe* (Aug. 25, 2002).

Flip Phillips, assistant professor of psychology, was quoted in an article in *Salon.com* (May 15, 2002) on Stephen Wolfram, who developed the computer program Mathematica. Phillips is editor of the *Mathematica Journal*.

Sheldon Solomon, professor of psychology, was a guest July 31 on National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation." Solomon was one of several guests interviewed by host Neal Conan on the subject of the coal miners trapped in Pennsylvania and the group dynamics that enable people to work together under pressure in disastrous situations. All guests on the program took calls from public.

Mary Zeiss Stange, associate professor of women's studies and religion, contributed an opinion essay titled "Abductions highlight another security threat," Aug. 26 to *USA Today*. She appeared Aug. 26 on Wisconsin Public Radio and on the Michael Medved Show.

Stange also had an essay titled "The Political Intolerance of Academic Feminism" published in the June 21, 2002, issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

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