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Michael West starts Nov. 15 as vice president for finance and administration. Story



Paula Robison, former Filene Artistin-Residence, returns to campus next month for the Flute Choir Festival. Story

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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#### **New GIS Center Fosters Interdisciplinary Study**

The new Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Center for Interdisciplinary Research, incorporating technology that enables students to "see" any geographic place from a variety of perspectives, officially opens on GIS Day, Wednesday, Nov. 17. The center promises to become an important teaching tool for several different courses, including ID 210, "Introduction to GIS," an interdisciplinary course launched this fall.

International GIS Day is a grassroots event co-sponsored by the National Geographic Society to showcase real-world applications of the technology. At Skidmore, the new GIS Center will be open from 1 to 5:30 p.m. Nov. 17, and visitors will be able to see demonstrations of the College's GIS tools. Refreshments will be served at 4 p.m.

A \$100,000 grant from the George I. Alden Trust funded the development of the center, located in Dana Hall Atrium, room 169. The center contains eight workstations, a printer, a plotter and a server, along with the appropriate software to support effective applications of GIS across a number of disciplines. According to Robert DeSieno, professor of computer science, "GIS is extremely practical and can be used in any discipline that needs to map information on a surface." He envisions the center assisting students involved in specific courses, as well as students and faculty working on collaborative research projects.

GIS facilitates the creation of multiple layers of images using selected data for a specific geographic location. For example, if the class project calls for students to analyze how voting patterns in Saratoga Springs are affected by such variables as family income, population density, and voting district location, a city map can be drawn, and new maps could be generated for each variable. When the maps are layered on top of each other on a computer monitor, the image that emerges incorporates all the data sets, creating an image that allows viewers to see how the data sets affect each other.

Robert Jones, associate professor of economics, is teaching the new introductory GIS course, which he calls "a lot of fun" both for him and his students. His class of 20 is spending this fall exploring GIS theory and issues, and learning in depth the methodology and applications of this exciting new technology. To help them become more knowledgeable of the cartographic concepts, techniques, and notions of spatially displaying information and with methods for discovering patterns within those displays, Jones has developed a set of exercises. He has focused on such topics as the location of affordable housing, high- and low-income areas, relationships between congressional districts and race (to determine the impact of gerrymandering), and environmentally hazardous sites in relation to streams, housing, and geological properties of the land on which they are built. Explained Jones, "GIS is a tool for viewing particular aspects of a geographic place and relating one kind of information about that place to other kinds of information about the same place. As a result, GIS is centered on our ability to see connections among kinds of information that are not obvious in other ways."

Although his course is the first to benefit from the new GIS laboratory, Jones is quick to point out that the class and the center are separate entities, and that the interdisciplinary center is campus resource. "The GIS Center is available to any member of the Skidmore community who wants to incorporate the techniques of GIS into work already in progress. My course is preparing students to perform GIS analysis. The center is the place to which they — or anyone — can come for assistance in creating their own GIS analyses," he said.

Other courses currently incorporating GIS applications include GE 371, "Independent Research in Geosciences," taught by Kyle Nichols, assistant professor of geology, who has two students using GIS this year. One is classifying tributaries to the Colorado River into similar erosion patterns to develop a sampling protocol for identifying long-term sediment generation. This research is part of a larger project to determine the rate and quantity of the sediment that eventually is trapped behind the Hoover and Glen Canyon dams. Another student of Nichols is participating in a multidisciplinary study of the Kayaderosseras Basin. By analyzing data collected from well logs, and incorporating GIS, the student is attempting to build a three-dimensional model of the depth and the type of sediment on top of the bedrock, to increase understanding of the basin's hydrology.

In Sociology 213, "Crime and Victimization" Associate Professor David Karp's students analyze crime data provided by the Albany Police Department to create crime maps using GIS software. Beyond building simple crime maps, students develop sociological hypotheses about the causes of crime and test them by creating maps that look at crime hot spots and various demographic variables.

Jones anticipates that the GIS center also will be a place to conduct interdisciplinary research that will serve the greater Saratoga community, continuing along the lines of the Skidmore, Saratoga Study Group. Since its inception in 1999, the SSSG (which includes both campus and community members) has considered questions on such topics as education, social services, housing, development, transportation, and environmental concerns. The goal has been to generate reliable information that informs community discussions about these matters. Said Jones, "One feature of the GIS Center is that it fits right into the longstanding Skidmore tradition of hand and mind: one needs to combine particular tools with the knowledge and creativity that comes with the learning process."

Students in Skidmore's first GIS course are very enthusiastic about being able to visualize relationships that they study in their own major fields. The current students -- all juniors and seniors -- taking the course are applying GIS to majors that range from economics and sociology to environmental studies, geosciences, and management and business, among others. At the same time, they are learning how other disciplines use GIS, thus gaining a multidisciplinary understanding of GIS as a learning tool. Click here for more information about International GIS Day.

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#### **New Chief Financial Officer Named**

Skidmore has named Michael D. West, currently the chief financial officer at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., as vice president for finance and administration.

West, who will begin his new position on Nov. 15, will be responsible for the College's business and financial operations and will play a key role in strategic planning. He will oversee a range of campus operations, including physical plant, information technology, human resources, campus safety, and food services. His areas of responsibility include some 300 Skidmore employees.

"Michael West brings to Skidmore a wealth of experience in higher education. Most importantly he brings the understanding of our mission, the administrative skills, and the strong sense of integrity needed to meet the varied responsibilities of a chief financial officer," said President Philip A. Glotzbach. "He is receiving a warm welcome from the Skidmore community."

In his new position, West replaces Karl Broekhuizen, who was the College's vice president for business affairs and treasurer for 23 years.

Prior to his six years at Trinity College, West worked for more than 19 years at Simmons College in Boston, where his most recent position was vice president for finance and operations, and treasurer. Earlier in his career he worked as a senior auditor and accountant for two Boston public accounting firms and in that capacity specialized in higher education practice.

He received a B.S. degree in accounting from Bentley College in 1975 and earned an M.B.A. there in 1985.

Said West, "I am honored to have been selected as vice president of a college with such an impressive record of accomplishment and such a bright future. Skidmore is driven by a powerful commitment to its core mission and to the values of a liberal arts education, and I am looking forward to being part of that effort."

West is the father of three children currently attending college. His twin daughters, Kathryn and Theresa, are sophomores at Trinity College, and his son, Brian, is a junior at St. Bonaventure University in St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

West's personal interests include reading, music, theater, community service, film, sports, and travel.

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#### **Acclaimed Flutist Returns for Festival**

Former Filene Artist-in-Residence Paula Robinson, known as "the first lady of the flute," returns to Skidmore in November for the annual Flute Choir Festival. The event, scheduled Friday and Saturday, Nov. 5 and 6, features Robison in concert at 8 p.m. Friday. Saturday will include a 10 a.m. master class by Robison along with workshops and two student ensemble concerts.

Friday's concert program features classic and contemporary selections including "Fantaisie" by Adolphe Georges-Hue; Sonata in D major, Op. 94, by Sergei Prokofiev; and "Blue Ridge Airs II" by Kenneth Frazelle. Pianist Timothy Hester will accompany Robison. Admission ranges from \$2 to \$5.

Robison last visited Skidmore during 1988-89. She is treasured on several continents for bringing pure intonation, beautifully varied tone, and extraordinary technical mastery to an astonishingly diverse repertoire. In addition to classical recitals with piano, guitar and harpsichord, her affinity for Brazilian music is heard on two CDs, *Brasileirinho* (Omega) and *Rio Days, Rio Nights* (Arabesque). She recently joined Skitch Henderson and the New York Pops for a "Brazilian Beat" program at Carnegie Hall and last year made a second southern tour of the United States with guitarist Romero Lubambo and percussionist Cyro Baptista. The trio has appeared at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Boston's Gardner Museum, and at the distinguished Classic Chamber Concerts series in Naples, Fla.

In the classical realm, Robison's recital partners include guitarist Eliot Fisk, pianists Jeremy Denk and Hester, harpsichordist John Gibbons and harpist Mariko Anraku. Her engagements include tours of the Far East and Australia; a performance with Claudio Scimone and I Solisti Veneti at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall; appearances at New York's "Mostly Mozart," the Marlboro and Seattle International Music Festivals; recitals in London, Boston, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.; acclaimed performances of Bernstein's "Halil" with Michael Tilson Thomas and the London and San Francisco symphonies; concertos with the Detroit, National, Vermont, New World, and North Carolina Symphonies and Louisville Orchestra; two U.S. tours as soloist with the Budapest Strings; and the continuation of her annual concerts at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Known to millions from her television appearances on *CBS Sunday Morning, Live from Lincoln Center* and *Christmas at the Kennedy Center*, Robison was a founding member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and was for 10 years co-director of chamber music at both the Italian and American Spoleto Festivals. She is also co-director (with oboist Douglas Boyd) of Boston's Gardner Chamber Orchestra. With her interest in expanding flute repertoire, she has commissioned concertos by Leon Kirchner, Toru Takemitsu, Oliver Knussen, Robert Beaser, and Kenneth Frazelle. Her books are published by Universal, Schott, and European-American Music.

Robison was born in Tennessee and spent her childhood in California. She began playing the flute at age 11, and at 19 she moved to New York to study with Julius Baker at the Juilliard School. The following year she was invited by Leonard Bernstein to be guest soloist with the New York Philharmonic. She then studied with Marcel Moyse and became the first American to win the top prize at the Geneva International Competition. Other awards and distinctions include winning the Young Concert Artists International auditions, and the 1987 Adelaide Ristori Prize for her contribution to Italian cultural life.

Her recordings are available on the Arabesque label.

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#### **Columbia Scholar to Lecture on Celestial Iconography**

George Saliba, a professor of Arabic and Islamic science in the Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, will discuss "Reaching for the Skies: Between Greek and Arabic Celestial Iconography" at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 4, in the Payne Room of the Tang Museum.

Free and open to all, the talk coincides with the current Tang exhibition, A Very Liquid Heaven. Saliba will address the interplay between Greek and Arabic interpretations of the stars, with an emphasis on the 10th-century Sufi Atlas. Saliba works in the general area of history of Arabic science, with a special interest in the history of Arabic astronomy and the development of planetary theories in medieval Islamic times.

An internationally renowned scholar, Saliba is the author of numerous publications, including A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories During the Golden Age of Islam; "Arabic Planetary Theories After the Eleventh Century AD," in Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science; A Thirteenth-Century Reform of Ptolemaic Astronomy; The Crisis of The Abbasid Caliphate; and more recently an Arabic book on the Origin and Development of Arabic Scientific Thought (1998) and an article on "Greek Astronomy and the Medieval Arabic Tradition," in the July-August 2002 edition of American Scientist.

He last was at Skidmore in March, when he was Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Fellow. Saliba's upcoming talk is sponsored by the campus chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the Tang Museum, the Dean of the Faculty's Office and the departments of physics and philosophy and religion.

#### **Hrbek Reading Announced** Writer-in-Residence Greg Hrbek, author of The Hindenburg Crashes Nightly, will give a reading at 8

p.m. Thursday, Nov. 4, in Davis Auditorium of Palamountain Hall. Admission is free and open to all. A Skidmore faculty member for the past three years, Hrbek previously taught at Princeton and

Vassar. He earned a B.A. degree at Vassar and an M.F.A. degree at the University of Iowa. His received an Iowa Arts Fellowship from the University of Iowa and an Alfred Hodder Fellowship

from Princeton. He also received the James A. Michener Fellowship from the James A.

Michener/Copernicus Society of America, and the James Jones Literary Society's First Novel Fellowship Award. Hrbek's most recent story, "frannycam.net/diary," was published in the Winter-Spring 2004 edition of Salmagundi. An earlier short story, "Green World" originally published in Harper's in 1999, was short-listed for the 2000 O. Henry Prize Stories Anthology. It also was a finalist in fiction for the 2000 National Magazine Awards sponsored by the American Society of Magazine Editors. Of The

Hindenburg Crashes Nightly, Hrbek's first novel, Publisher's Weekly wrote, "well worth the read."

And Diane Cole commented in The New York Times Book Review, "Hrbek writes with an appealing lyricism." **Phillips Receives Keck Foundation Grant** Associate Professor of Psychology Flip Phillips received a \$12,000 grant from the Keck Foundation to develop a series of courses for a program titled Computational Science Across the Curriculum,

organized by Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. Capital University has established the Keck Undergraduate Computational Science Educational

Consortium. Due to Phillips's involvement, Skidmore is one of 10 schools in the consortium

developing and implementing educational materials for an undergraduate curriculum in computational science — a field that integrates computing, mathematical modeling, and visualization to solve problems in physical, natural, behavioral, and social sciences, as well as finance and engineering. Because of its location at the intersection of mathematics, computer science, and science, the field enhances the development of scientific knowledge. Phillips designed a module in the section on Computational Neuroscience and Psychology, where

students explore different but related problems in neuroscience and psychology. His module, Artificial Neural Networks, introduces the student to the mathematical foundation, biological foundation,

structure and function of artificial neural networks. Courses in the Computational Science Across the Curriculum-Keck Project are available to anyone, anywhere. Phillips will use some elements of the module that he developed in his Skidmore neuroscience courses. For more information on the CSAC-Keck Project, visit the Capital University

**Segrave Accepts Smithsonian Invitation** Jeffrey O. Segrave, professor of exercise science and athletics director, has been invited by the Smithsonian Institution to serve as one of a handful of expert speakers for a new exhibit from the

National Museum of American History titled "Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers." The exhibit, which will travel across America over the next two years, portrays athletes from more than a dozen sports, focusing on their participation in significant events and the social contexts that

influenced them. Spotlighting artifacts from the Smithsonian's sports collection, the exhibition will depict pioneering men and women who dominated their sports; championed their country, race, or

sex; and helped others to achieve. On and off the playing field, these athletes broke records for themselves and shattered many barriers — physical, social, psychological, and cultural. Segrave will be available to lecture at museums where the exhibition is being shown and at the Smithsonian itself. His expertise on the Olympics is especially welcome in this context, according to the Smithsonian, because "Olympians never fail to inspire and break barriers for women, ethnic

groups, and impoverished nations." Read more about the exhibition.

**Benefits Fair Set for Nov. 9** The annual Employee Benefits Fair is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 9, in the

#### Sports and Recreation Center. All employees are welcome. The event is taking place during the annual benefits open enrollment period (Nov. 4-30) to help

plan to attend.

massages, a free blood pressure clinic, and healthy snacks from Food Service vendors. In addition, more than 25 prizes will be raffled off, including tickets from Southwest Airlines, a 2005 entertainment book from CDPHP, assorted gift baskets and other items. Mark your calendars and Lawyer/Activist to Speak on Human Rights Human rights lawyer Carolyn Patty Blum, a widely recognized authority in the area of refugee and

employees obtain the information they need to assist in making benefits choices for the coming year. Benefits representatives for all of Skidmore's programs will attend. Other fair attractions include free

#### asylum law, will discuss "Human Rights Law: The Case of El Salvador" when she visits Skidmore Monday, Nov. 8. Free and open to the public, the talk gets under way at 5:30 p.m. in Emerson

Skidmore appearance is sponsored by the Department of English.

Sept. 5 edition of *The Post-Star* (Glens Falls).

60," published June 6 in the Times Union (Albany).

Honesty 101," published Sept. 13 in the *Times Union*.

Auditorium of Palamountain Hall. A clinical professor emerita of law at the University of California at Berkeley School of Law, Blum practiced in a legal services agency serving immigrants and refugees for eight years before launching the clinical program in immigration and asylum law at Berkeley in 1984. She was the guiding force

behind the school's creation of an International Human Rights Law Clinic, which opened in 1998.

The recipient of two Ford Foundation research grants, Blum was involved in precedent-setting litigation involving Central American and Haitian refugees, as well as female refugees. She has been honored by the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild and the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Her publications include "The Protection of Refugee Women" (with Nancy Kelly), published in Women's International Human Rights; and "License to Kill: The Principle of the Government's Right to 'Investigate its Enemies' in Asylum Law," published in 1992 in the Willamette Law Review. Blum is a graduate of the University of Arizona and earned a J.D. degree at Northwestern. Her

In the News Skidmore faculty and staff expertise was in demand this summer, as the following media round-up

#### demonstrates. Items included below include late spring through late September: Mary Lou Bates, dean of admissions and financial aid, was interviewed by The Saratogian for a

Sept. 5 story titled "Slew of Students Flock to Skidmore." Sandy Baum, professor of economics, was a source for the following stories: "Kerry Failing to Play Vital Education Policy Card," Sept. 15, Financial Times (London); "In College, Scraping By,"

Sept. 14, The Buffalo News; "The Issues: Paying for College," Aug. 3, CBS Evening News; "More

Schools Allow Tuition Freezes," July 27, WSJ.com, the online version of *The Wall Street Journal*; "Kerry Taps into Unrest of Middle Class," July 20, FT.com, the online edition of Financial Times; "College Financial Aid Out of Reach for Many," July 15 letter to the editor of USA Today; and "2004-05 College Tuition: Movin' on Up," May 19, CNN/Money. The Rev. Stephen Butler Murray, chaplain, was a source for "Spiritual Guidance: College

Chaplains Remain a Key Resource for Students," published Sept. 12 in The Sunday Gazette

Regis Brodie, professor of art, was featured in an Aug. 13 news story airing on Time Warner Cable Channel 9, titled "Art Professor Heading to Korea." **Denton Crocker**, professor emeritus of biology, was interviewed for "WWII Vet Waged War Against Malaria," published May 30 in The Saratogian.

Jennifer Delton, associate professor of history, was a source for "Heroism on D-Day Endures at

(Schenectady); and for "In the Midst of War, Prayers. Faith, Combat Often Go Hand in Hand," in the

rankings in an Aug. 20 story, "Williams Again No. 1 on College Rating List," published in The Berkshire Eagle. Tom Lewis, professor of English, was interviewed for "Building Character: UPH Strikes a Balance

President Glotzbach was one of several college presidents quoted on the subject of college

Jack Ling, lecturer in liberal studies and director, Office of Institutional Diversity, was a source for "Home, Thousands of Miles Away: Life in Chinese Restaurant Binds Family, Isolates Members," published Aug. 29 in The Post-Star.

Between Preservation, Sustainability," published June 26 in The Saratogian.

Roy Rotheim, professor of economics and Quadracci Professor of Social Responsibility, was a source for "Locals Reflect on President Regan's Style," published June 10 in The Saratogian.

**Jeff Segrave**, professor of exercise science and athletics director, was a featured commentator in The Golden Games, a multi-part program on the history of the Olympic Games, produced in New York City by Sandra Carter Productions and sold to Columbia Tri-Star TV. The program aired in Europe and Russia this past summer. On Aug. 25, Segrave was a guest on NPR's Talk of the Nation, hosted by Neal Conan, discussing "Subjective Olympic Coverage." (Currently available on the NPR web site) In addition, Segrave was a guest on the Aug. 13 edition of The FlipSide, airing on CNNfn,

Susannah Mintz, associate professor of English, was interviewed for "College Life Starts with

discussing the opening of the Summer Olympics. He was a source on "From Athens to Mexico: The Games in a Political and Historic Perspective," which aired Aug. 10 in Denmark. Also on Aug. 10, he was interviewed about the Olympics by Susan Arebetter on Roundtable, which airs on WAMC-FM. He authored two essays, "Business, Politics at Play in Olympics," published Aug. 27 in the Times Union; and "Hitler's Ambitious Plans for the 1936 Olympics," for the History News Network (currently available on the HNN web site) In addition, Segrave was a source for the following newspaper articles: "Athletic Prowess, Fallible Judging," Aug. 25 in The Christian Science Monitor; "Skidmore Olympics Scholar Observes Games to Track Trends," Aug. 11 in The Daily Gazette; and "When Winning Was Ideal," a column written by AP writer Steve Wilstein and published nationally. It appeared July 11 in the Times Union. Ron Seyb, associate professor of government and chair of the department, and Robert **Turner**, assistant professor of government, were interviewed for "Watergate: Reflections on a Watershed Event," published Aug. 1 in The Saratogian. In addition, Turner was a source for "Presidential Campaigns to Focus on Key States," published in early July by Cox News Service and appearing in several newspapers in the South and West. Bob Shorb, director of the Office of Student Aid and Family Finance, was a source for "Budget

**Linda Simon**, professor of English, and her new book, *Dark Light: Electricity and Anxiety from* the Telegraph to the X-Ray (2004, Harcourt: New York), were the subjects of several recent stories. A feature by Associated Press writer Michael Hill was widely published, appearing in Newsday and USA Today, as well as The Sunday Gazette, The Post-Star, and the online edition of the Fall River,

Mass., Herald News, among others. Simon also did an interview with WBET radio in Boston July 26 and a phone interview with KFAR-AM in Fairbanks, Alaska, in early August. In addition, the Times Union published its own story on the book June 27 ("Electric Shock, in More Ways Than One"). The book was reviewed Aug. 16 in The Philadelphia Inquirer ("When Electric Light Was a Scary Idea").

Laury Silvers-Alario, assistant professor of religion, was a source for "Violent Muslims Are on

Delays Create Anxiety," published Aug. 1 in *The Sunday Gazette*.

the Fringes," published Aug. 6 in The Saratogian.

Recent research by **Sheldon Solomon**, professor of psychology and Courtney and Steven Ross Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, on factors that influence voting behavior was widely publicized this summer. He was interviewed by the Reuters News Service for a story titled "Fear of Death Wins Minds and Votes, Study Finds," that appeared July 30 on CNN.com and CNNinternational.com, in the Calgary Sun (Alberta, Canada), the Buenos Aires Herald, and Boston.com, the online edition of The Boston Globe; as well as the Aug. 3 edition of the Pakistan Daily Times. A Detroit Free Press story on Solomon's research titled "Fear Can Be a Politician's Best Friend," appeared Aug. 3 and was circulated by Knight Ridder News Service, leading to publication on Fort Wayne.com, the online

edition of the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel Aug. 4 and on TimesLeader.com in northeastern Pennsylvania Aug. 8. On Aug. 4, the New York Daily News published "Death Goes to the Polls" online and in its metro edition; Philly.com published a column by Elmer Smith titled "Reading Chicken Entrails and Voter Polls"; the Arizona Summer Wildcat published "Psychology of Sept. 11 Studied"; and Solomon was interviewed by BBC Radio. On Aug. 5, Discoverychannel.com published "Study: Fear Can Cloud Judgment at the Polls," and Time Warner's Capital News 9 in Albany interviewed Solomon on the arrest in Albany of two men suspected of terrorist activities. The Philadelphia Inquirer Aug. 16 published an essay titled "A Climate of Fear Makes Us Less" that drew on Solomon's research; and NewScientist (a British magazine similar to Scientific American), published "Death Defying" in its Aug. 28 issue. On Sept. 13, Solomon was a guest on a program titled "Psychology in the Wake of Terror," a segment of Voices in the Family hosted by Dan Gottlieb and airing on WHYY-FM, a public radio station in Philadelphia, Pa. The Sept. 24 issue of The Sydney (Australia) Morning Herald published "The Fear of Living Dangerously," citing Solomon's research.

Mary Zeiss Stange, associate professor of religion and women's studies, wrote an opinion essay titled "Rules Change Would Beat Reckless Path Through Forests" published July 22 in USA Today.

opinion essay titled "Glens Falls Can Learn from Spa City Review" to the July 25 issue of The Post-Star. **Skidmore Intercom** 

Christopher Whann, lecturer in government and academic advisor, UWW, contributed an

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