Alumni, Friends to Return for Pitt Homecoming, Oct. 28-31

By Patricia Lomando White

A Welcome Back Reception, a fireworks and laser show, Homecoming Extravaganza, theatrical performances, and school and departmental reunions are the highlights of festivities planned for alumni, students, and friends as the University of Pittsburgh celebrates Homecoming 2010 from Oct. 28 to 31, including the noon Oct. 30 football game between the Pitt Panthers and the University of Louisville Cardinals.

Homecoming festivities will begin from 6 to 8 p.m. Oct. 28 with Pathway to Professions: A Career Networking Event held in the J.W. Connolly Ballroom of Alumni Hall, at which alumni offer insights into their careers.

Celebrating its centennial, The Pitt News will hold an open house from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 29 in Room 424, William Pitt Union (WPU). Alumni can tour the office, meet the staff, and peruse bound volumes of newspapers from years past.

A festive autumn setting, complete with hors d'oeuvres and drinks, will be the backdrop for the Pitt Alumni Association’s Welcome Back Reception that helps connect Pitt alumni from past decades. It will be held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Oct. 29 in the Cathedral of Learning’s Commons Room. The Nationality Rooms also will be open for visitors. Following the Welcome Back event, a number of schools and departments will host their own alumni receptions.

The Pitt Program Council’s fireworks display, at 11:30 a.m. Oct. 31 in the Pittsburgh Grand Residence, will be recognized.

This year’s Sankofa Awards carry the theme It Takes a Village. Five members of the University’s Homecoming 2010, Blue, Gold, and Black: It Takes a Village, Oct. 28-31

Pitt’s AAAC to Celebrate Sankofa Homecoming Weekend 2010, Blue, Gold, and Black: It Takes a Village, Oct. 28-31

By Patricia Lomando White

The University of Pittsburgh African American Alumni Council (AAAC) will celebrate Sankofa Homecoming Weekend 2010: Blue, Gold, and Black: It Takes a Village by honoring five Pitt alumni and several Pitt and local organizations with the Sankofa Award during AAAC’s Fellowship Brunch and Sankofa Awards Presentation to be held at 11:30 a.m. Oct. 31 in the Pittsburgh Grand Hotel (formerly the Hilton), 600 Commonwealth Place, Downtown. The event is part of the University’s Homecoming 2010, taking place Oct. 28-31.

This year’s Sankofa Awards carry the theme It Takes a Village. Five members of the University community who have exhibited outstanding educational support and service to students of African descent will receive the honor and nine University and community organizations that have made significant contributions to the success of Pitt African American students will be recognized.

Gail Austin, former director of Pitt’s Academic Resource Center (ARC) who retired after 42 years of service in various University positions, will be given a special Sankofa Jean Hamilton Walls Award. Austin is being recognized with the Walls Award for her commitment to enhancing diversity, particularly regarding African American students; for her dedication to ensuring the educational success of thousands of students who matriculated through Project A (a 1968 Pitt summer preparatory program for African American students); Malcolm-Martin-Marcus Scholars Program, University Community Education Programs, and University Challenge for Excellence Program; and for her devotion to the advancement of partnerships within the larger African American community.

Austin received her BA in French literature from Pitt and has done graduate work in psychology and anthropology. As a student in the late 1960s, she was inspired by the civil rights movement and by visits to Pitt by Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders in the movement.

Since then, Austin has been a peace and justice advocate both at the University and in the community. She was named a winner of the 2010 Iris Marion Young Award for Political Engagement, an honor inaugurated in 2008 by Pitt’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs and the Women’s Studies Program to recognize those who work to promote social justice and democracy. She also received the 2008 Thomas Morton Center New Person Award for her efforts promoting peace and justice. With other activists from Pitt and the community, Austin helped form the Afro-American Cultural Society to increase the number of Black students, staff, and faculty at the University.

Katz Welcomes Center for Women In Business

By Amanda Leff Ritchie

Pitt’s Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business is the new home of the Center for Women In Business, led by director Lee Ann Munger. The center, housed in the Katz School’s Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence, grew from the success of the once-independent PowerLink, founded in 1991 with the goal of helping women-owned businesses grow profitably through the use of professional, volunteer advisory panels. “Women are choosing to start and build businesses at greater numbers than ever, and the ability to be self-sufficient allows women to balance the competing demands of their lives,” said Ann Dungan, director of the institute. “Although people today are better prepared for the start-up phase of a business, they often stumble in the growth phase. The institute’s new Women In Business Center provides the resources and services to ensure that women-owned businesses soar to the next level of profitability and success.”

During its first 10 years, PowerLink was operated entirely by volunteers. Its first client, Anita Brattina, CEO and founder of Direct Response Marketing, wrote about her experience with having a PowerLink Advisory Board in her book Diary of a Small Business Owner (AMACOM, 1995). The book was an Inc. Magazine cover feature and garnered significant national interest. Female business owners from across the country clamored for PowerLink programs in their communities, and in 2001, a licensing agreement with the ATHENA Foundation led to PowerLink programs being established nationwide; PowerLink now exists in 25 U.S. cities.

Munger, the former executive director of PowerLink, has been an advocate for women in business throughout her career: She has managed PowerLink Advisory Panels for more than 40 woman-owned businesses, managed the work of hundreds of volunteer business advisors, developed...
Annual Nordenberg Lecture in Law, Medicine, and Psychiatry Set for Oct. 28

Anne Tamar-Mattis, founder and executive director of Advocates for Informed Choice, will deliver the annual Mark A. Nordenberg Lecture in Law, Medicine, and Psychiatry at noon Oct. 28 in the University of Pittsburgh Barco Law Building’s Tippin Memorial Courtroom. Her talk is titled “Legal and Ethical Issues in Medical Treatment of Children With Variations of Sexual Anatomy.”

In her talk, Tamar-Mattis will identify key legal and ethical issues in treating children with intersex conditions—variations of sexual anatomy or chromosome anomalies that do not fit standard expectations for gender identity. The talk will explore the ethics and law surrounding decisionmaking on behalf of children in complex cases and discuss the balance between the medical need for knowledge and the child’s right to privacy and dignity.

Advocates for Informed Choice is the first organization in the country to focus on legal advocacy for the civil and human rights of children born with intersex conditions. The organization has served for many years as an organizer in the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning) and intersex communities. She is the former director of the nationalLYRC Youth Taskline and former program director of the San Francisco LGBIT Community Center.

A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, Tamar-Mattis earned her BA in religious studies at Brown University. She has returned to Berkeley law school as a lecturer teaching the intersex human rights course in Law, Medicine, and Psychiatry. “Our conference is an opportunity to develop a new standard of ethical research that will guide professional practice in the 21st century,” Tamar-Mattis said.

At the conference, social science researchers from around the country will present information on ethical dilemmas they have encountered.

For more information, call 412-648-7580 or visit www.sociology.pitt.edu.

—By Sharon S. Blake

Pitt Conference to Focus on Disability Law and Policy

Pitt’s annual lecture in law, medicine, and psychiatry is named after Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg, former dean of the law school, and is approved by the Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Board for one hour of substantive CLE credit. Registration is available on the door. It is a $52 fee to obtain CLE credit with a check made payable to the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. For more information, call 412-647-5700 or email bioeicp@pitt.edu.

—By Patricia Lamonde White

Pitt Offers Oct. 29 Conference on Research Ethics

How vulnerable are the people academic researchers choose to study? Do institutional review boards (IRBs) go far enough in helping to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects?

These issues will be addressed in a free one-day conference at the University of Pittsburgh titled “Beyond the IRB: New Frontiers in the Ethics of Qualitative Research.”

Registration deadline is Friday, Oct. 22. For more information, contact Dr. Sheree Byrd at 412-624-5906 or byrd@pitt.edu.

—By Odessa Cheney

Pitt Conference to Focus on Disability Law and Policy

For more information, call 412-648-7580 or visit www.pitt.edu.

—By Sierra L. Stacks

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Pitt Researchers: Plant-Based Plastics Not Necessarily Greener Than Oil-Based Relatives

Biopolymers trumped the other plastics for biodegradability, low toxicity, and use of renewable resources. Nonetheless, the farming and chemical processing needed to produce them can devour energy and dump fertilizers and pesticides into the environment, wrote lead author Michaelangelo Tabone (ENG’10), who conducted the analysis as an undergraduate student in the lab of Amy Landis, a professor of civil and environmental engineering in Pitt’s Swanson School of Engineering. Tabone and Landis worked with James Gregg, an undergraduate chemistry student in Pitt’s School of Arts and Sciences; and Eric Beckman, codirector of Pitt’s Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation and the George M. Bittner Professor of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering in Pitt’s Swanson School. The project was supported by the National Science Foundation.

The researchers examined 12 plastics—seven petroleum-based polymers, four biopoly- mer hybrids, and one biopolymer. The team first performed a life-cycle assessment (LCA) on each polymer’s preproduction stage to gauge the environmental and health effects of the energy, raw materials, and chemicals used to create one ounce of plastic pellets. They then checked each plastic in its finished form against principles of green design, including biodegradability, energy efficiency, wastefulness, and toxicity. A graph of the LCA results and a chart ranking the poly-mers by ecofriendliness are available on Pitt’s Web site at www_news.pitt.edu/news/Landis_polymeres_LCA.

Biopolymers were among the more prolific pollutants on the path to production, the LCA revealed. The team attributed this to agricultural fertilizers and pesticides, extensive land use for farming, and the intense chemical processing needed to convert plants into plastic. All four biopolymers were the largest contributors to ozone depletion. The two tested forms of sugar-derived polymer—standard poly- lactic acid (PLA—G) and the type manufactured by Minnesota-based NatureWorks (PLA—NW)—were the most common sugar-based plastic in the hybrid. The team estimated the maximum contribution to eutrophication, which occurs when overfertilized bodies of water support an excessive growth of algae and other aquatic plants.
Three members of the Pittsburgh Citizen Police Review Board, including Pitt’s Deborah Walker (seated, center) and Debora Whitfield (left), took their oaths of office on Sept. 10 in City Council’s chambers. Walker (CGS ’01, GSPIA ’03), a former Pitt police officer, is the student conduct officer and assistant to the dean in Pitt’s Office of Student Affairs. Whitfield (CGS ’06) is a financial counselor in Pitt’s School of Dental Medicine. Several Pitt administrators and colleagues observed the ceremony. From left, Carol Mohammed, director of Pitt’s Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Inclusion; James N. Williams III, assistant director, City/County Relations, Pitt Governmental Relations; Richard M. Carrington, CPRB member; Gwen Watkins, vice president, Steering Committee, Pitt Staff Association Council; Pitt Vice Provost and Dean of Students Kathy W. Humphrey; Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs Robert Hill; Shawn E. Brooks, associate dean and director, Pitt Residence Life; Eugene M. Downing Jr., CPRB member; and, seated at right, Leshonda Roberts, CPRB member.

**THE CITY IS OUR CAMPUS**

An estimated 2,800 Pitt students fanned out across the city on Saturday, Oct. 16, during Pitt Make a Difference Day. The third annual volunteer event sent 60 buses full of students to various locations across Pittsburgh to pick up trash, take care of green spaces, and to perform other chores. Students gathered at the William Pitt Union in the morning to catch their buses; Pitt volunteers picked up trash in parts of Wilkinsburg.

**PITTSBURGH CITIZEN POLICE REVIEW BOARD**

John Perkins, a New York Times best-selling author, spoke Oct. 14 at Soldiers & Sailors Auditorium. He discussed corporate responsibility, ethics in the public and private sector, and sustainable environmental practices. Perkins is the author of Confessions of an Economic Hit Man (Penguin Group, 2006), The Secret History of the American Empire (Penguin Group, 2008), and Hoodwinked (Random House, 2007). He has held a variety of positions, including chief economist for a major international consulting firm, CEO of an alternative energy company, and advisor to Fortune 500 corporations and the World Bank. Perkins donates all proceeds from his speaking engagements to his nonprofit work, which includes environmental sustainability efforts and human rights initiatives in the Amazon rainforest region.

**CONFESSIONS OF AN ECONOMIC HIT MAN**

Alice M. Scales and Shirley A. Biggs (seated, from left), Pitt professors of education emerita, met with officials from Florida A&M University (FAMU) to discuss issues related to the Negro Educational Review. The international refereed journal was established in 1950 and has been edited by Scales, editor-in-chief and comanaging editor, and Biggs, comanaging editor, at Pitt since 2005. The women met Oct. 18 in Posvar Hall with (standing, from left) FAMU officials Franklin D. Hamilton (GSPH ’69), professor emeritus, Environmental Sciences Institute; Frederick S. Humphries (A&S ’65), Regent Professor, FAMU College of Law; and James E. Hawkins, advisory editor of the Negro Educational Review and dean, School of Journalism & Graphic Communication.

**NEGRO EDUCATIONAL REVIEW**

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Alumni, Friends to Return for Pitt Homecoming, Oct. 28-31

Continued from page 1

and laser show at 9:30 p.m. Oct. 29 on Bigelow Boulevard between the Cathedral of Learning and the William Pitt Union is always a hit with onlookers. The evening’s festivities will continue with the Homecoming Extravaganza at 10 p.m. in the William Pitt Union with Casino Night, music, and light refreshments.

The Homecoming football pregame festivities will kick off at 9 a.m. Oct. 30 at Heinz Field with the World’s Largest Family Block Party on Art Rooney Avenue between Gates A and B. The opening events will feature live entertainment on the main stage, a giant video wall, inflatable games for the kids, and other family-oriented activities.

Pitt’s Panther Prowl at 10 a.m. will give fans the opportunity to meet and greet the football players as they arrive at Heinz Field outside Gate A. Immediately following will be the Pitt Marching Band’s Pregame Concert. The band will lead the March to Victory parade at 11 a.m. from Tony Dorsay Drive down General Robinson Street, ending at the stage on Art Rooney Avenue. The Homecoming Court will ride in the parade, and the king and queen will be crowned during halftime festivities.

Throughout Homecoming weekend, Pitt’s African American Alumni Council (AAAC) will host numerous events for the entire University community. These activities will include Rhyme, Rhythm, and Rapture: Blackline Magazine Release Party and Poetry Slam at 8:30 p.m. Oct. 28 in the Frick Fine Arts Building, 650 Schenley Dr., Oakland; screening of the documentary Blue Gold and Black: From Doorway to Distinction from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Oct. 29 in the Third Floor Lecture Room, Alumni Hall; and Rejoice in the Miracle, the AAAC worship service at 10 a.m. Oct. 31 at the Pittsburgh Grand Hotel, 600 Commonwealth Place, Downtown. (Story on page 1.)

Additional Homecoming events will include those hosted by the School of Nursing, the School of Law, the School of Dental Medicine, the Swanson School of Engineering, the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, the College of General Studies, and others.

Pitt Repertory Theatre will be presenting Slasher: A Horrifying Comedy, a satirical twist on horror movie clichés, written by Allison Moore and directed by Holly Thuma, from Oct. 29 through Nov. 7. Also, alumna Yvonne Hudson (A&S ’89) will portray poet Emily Dickinson at 4 and 6 p.m. Oct. 30 in Emily Dickinson: The Poet Lights the Lamp, a presentation drawn from the author’s letters and poems.

For general information about Homecoming, call the Pitt Alumni Association at 412-624-8229 or 1-800-258-7488 or visit www.alumni.pitt.edu. For tickets to coming football game, call 1-800-643-7488 or 412-624-5532. For ticket information for the Homecoming activities, call 412-624-7529 or visit www.pitt.edu/homecoming. For information on Pitt’s AAC Sankofa Homecoming Weekend, visit www.alumni.pitt.edu/homecoming. For tickets to Slasher, call 412-624-7529 or visit www.play.pitt.edu. To RSVP for Emily Dickinson, e-mail PoetsCornerPittsburgh@gmail.com, or for information, call 412-251-5532. For ticket information for the Homecoming football game, call 1-800-643-7488 or visit www.pittsburghpanthers.com.

UPCI Plans 3 Symposia to Mark 25th Anniversary

UPCI is headed by Nancy E. Davidson, an internationally renowned expert in breast cancer research and treatment. She also serves as associate vice chancellor for cancer research and as chief of the Division of Hematology-Oncology in the University of Pittsburgh’s Department of Medicine.

Pitt’s Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence works to grow Western Pennsylvania’s economy by supporting, nurturing, and promoting entrepreneurship, new business creation, and establishing business growth. Its mission is to provide educational and consulting services that support the continued growth and success of the business sector. Today, the institute is the largest membership-based entrepreneurial support organization in the region.

For example, the sugar-based plastic from NatureWorks jumped from the sixth position under the LCA to become the material most in keeping with the standards of green design. On the other hand, the ubiquitous plastic polypropylene (PP)—widely used in packaging—was the cleanest polymer to produce, but sank to ninth place as a sustainable material.

Continued from page 3

Center Support Grant to support UPCI’s broad range of clinical, research, and educational programs. Established in 1985, UPCI received its designation as an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center in 1989 and has retained this distinction since then. UPCI is the only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center in Western Pennsylvania.

As an independent entity, PowerLink worked with 154 companies and 184 women business owners in Pittsburgh. The Center for Women in Business is currently in the process of accepting about 10 more companies.

Katz Welcomes Center for Women in Business

Continued from page 1

programs and procedures, and directed the organization’s marketing and recruiting. She is a past president of the PowerLink Board of Directors.

Prior to her work at PowerLink, Munger was president and cofounder of Graphics & Artworks, a graphic design and marketing firm. In 1996, she was honored as the Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year by the Pittsburgh chapters of YWCA and the National Association of Women Business Owners. She is a graduate of Leadership Pittsburgh Year XII, and Munger has served on the Leadership Pittsburgh and Greater Pittsburgh ATHENA selection committees.

“We are very excited about our association with the institute,” said Munger. “As a stand-alone nonprofit, PowerLink had a limited capacity to grow. The added resources now available through the institute will allow growth and the innovation of additional programs to meet a wider range of needs of women-owned businesses.”

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Continued from page 3

water can no longer support life. One type of the corn-based polyhydroxyalkanoate, PHA-G, topped the acidification category. In addition, biopolymers exceeded most of the petroleum-based polymers for ecotoxicity and carcinogen emissions.

Once in use, however, biopolymers bested traditional polymers for ecofriendliness. For example, the sugar-based plastic from NatureWorks jumped from the sixth position under the LCA to become the material most in keeping with the standards of green design. On the other hand, the ubiquitous plastic polypropylene (PP)—widely used in packaging—was the cleanest polymer to produce, but sank to ninth place as a sustainable material.

Interestingly, the researchers found that the petroleum-plant hybrid bio-polyethylene terephthalate, or B-PET, combines the ills of agriculture with the structural stubbornness of standard plastic to be harmful to produce (12th) and use (9th).

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Landis is continuing the project by subjecting the polymers to a full LCA, which will also examine the materials’ environmental impact throughout their use and eventual disposal.

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Pitt Wins IABC/ Pittsburg Best in Show Award

The University of Pittsburgh’s February 2010 world-premiere screening of Newspaper of Record: The Pittsburgh Courier, 1907-1965 project was awarded Best in Show at the Pittsburgh chapter’s awards ceremony on Sept. 30.”

Pitt's AAAC to Celebrate Sankofa Homecoming Weekend 2010

She has served on the Pitt Divestment Coalition and was active in Pittsburgers Against Apartheid, the national Free South Africa Movement, the No Dope Coalition, and African Americans Against War. Austin’s latest work focuses on Black Voices for Peace, an organization that opposes the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. She is president of the Kente Arts Alliance, a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to bringing quality arts programming to underserved communities. Since her retirement in April, Austin has been involved in environmental issues, including supporting biodiversity initiatives in her Manchester neighborhood.

“I am grateful to the AAAC for recognizing me with the Jean Hamilton Walls Award,” said Austin. “It is truly an honor, but I must say that it has been a collective achievement inspired both by the need to increase diversity at Pitt and by the timeless words of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights pioneers resonating in my mind.”

The award is named in honor of Pitt alumnus Jean Hamilton Walls, the first Black woman to earn a bachelor’s degree at Pitt. Walls, a Pittsburgh native, graduated in 1907 with a BS in mathematics and physics. She also became the first Black woman to earn a PhD at Pitt in 1938. Throughout a distinguished educational career spanning more than four decades, Walls taught at such notable institutions as Central State, Southern, and Wilberforce universities.

Honoraries receiving the Sankofa Award this year are James Cox, director of Pitt’s University Counseling Center; Linda Williams Moore, director of Pitt’s Office of Cross Cultural and Leadership Development; Deborah Walker, student conduct officer in Pitt’s Division of Student Affairs; and Raschall Brackney, commander in the City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Police.

Organizational Sankofa awards will be presented under three classifications: University Departments and Organizations, with awards going to Pitt’s Roberto Clemente Minority Business Association, EXCEL, Academic Resource Center, Center for Minority Health, and Office of Residence Life; Community, Civic and Business Organizations, with awards going to the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and Merrill Lynch; and Faith Institutions, with awards going to Mt. Arrarat Baptist Church and Macedonia Baptist Church.

A highlight of the festivities is the Homecoming premiere of the documentary Blue Gold and Black: From Doorway to Dis- tinction, to be held from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Oct. 29 in the Third Floor Lecture Room, Alumni Hall. Based on a treatment written by Robert Hill, Pitt’s vice chancellor for public affairs, and produced by the University’s Office of Public Affairs, the film tells the story of the 180-year experience of Black men and women at Pitt.

The AAAC Apple Seed Project, an annual community service event, will take place from 8:30 a.m. to noon Oct. 29, with participants sharing their time and talent with students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. This year’s event is cohosted with Pitt’s Black Action Society, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and Blue and Gold Society.

Throughout Homecoming weekend, Pitt’s AAAC will host numerous events for the entire University community. These activities will include Rhyme, Rhythm, and Rap: A Blackline Magazine Rite of Passage and Poetry Slam at 8:30 p.m. Oct. 29 in the Frick Fine Arts Building; and Rejoice in the Miracle, the AAAC’s monthly service, at 10 a.m. Oct. 31 in the Pittsburgh Grand Hotel.

The Pittsburgh Courier, 1907-1965, was awarded Best in Show award for 1907-1965 project.”

Life is a scream for aspiring actress Sheena Alexander, who will be presented by Pitt’s Repertory Theatre Oct. 29- Nov. 7 in Pitt’s Chancellor Randall Theatre, Stephen Foster Memorial. Alexander is described as a satirical twist on horror films as iconic “last-girl-standing” character Sheena lands a part in a low-budget flick, only to have her debut marred by a smarmy D-list director and her feminist mother, who adds new meaning to the word “cat!” Written by Allison Moore and directed by Holly Thuma, head of undergraduate performance at the University, Slasher will be performed evenings Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.; there is no Monday performance.

Tickets are $25 general admission; $20 for Pitt faculty, staff, and alumni; and $12 for students. To order tickets, call 412-624-PLAY (7529) or visit www.play.pitt.edu. Tickets also are available at the downstairs box office of the Stephen Foster Memorial, on Forbes Avenue adjacent to the Cathedral of Learning, from noon to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

At 3:30 p.m. Nov. 7, following the matinee performance, the public is invited to attend a special presentation Oct. 29 for those attending the play through the Pitt ARTS program. Prior to the performance, from 7:20 to 7:45 p.m., several members of Slasher’s stage crew will be in the Randall Theatre balcony to discuss their roles in bringing the story to life.

—Sharon S. Blake
Concerts


Brown Bag Lunch and Live Jazz, offered in connection with upcoming 40th annual Pitt Jazz Seminar and Concert, noon Oct. 28, Nordy’s Place, Lower Level William Pitt Union, Pitt’s Jazz Studies Program, 412-624-4177.


Miscellaneous

Havanyork (2009), directed by Luciano Lora-Lor, 6:30 p.m. Oct. 27, Frick Fine Arts Auditorium, Cuban Eyes/Cubanize: Fifty Years of Cuban Cinema Since the Cuban Revolution Film Series and Beyond the SSR: New Frontiers in the Ethics of Qualitative Research, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 29, 132 Music Building, Pitt’s Department of Music, www.music.pitt.edu/events, 412-624-4125.


Lectures/Seminars/Readings


Pittsburgh’s transformation from a manufacturing giant to an emerging green, high-tech center has not gone unnoticed. That’s what the organizers of the upcoming SLAG: What’s Left After Industry? exhibition at the University Art Gallery want to illuminate.

The exhibition, conceived and developed by students enrolled in the Museum Studies Seminar in Pitt’s Department of the History of Art and Architecture, will run Nov. 1-29 in the University Art Gallery in the Frick Fine Arts Building.

The students and their instructor, Janet McCall, executive director of the Society for Contemporary Craft, will host an opening reception from 7 to 9 p.m. Nov. 1 in the Gallery. Pittsburgh photographer Mark Perrott, whose images are part of the show, will give an informal talk in the gallery at 7:30 p.m.

SLAG: What’s Left After Industry? seeks to answer its own question by portraying Pittsburgh in three stages: its industrial heyday, during the shuttering of the steel mills, and in its most recent incarnation.

McCall divided her 20 undergraduate students into four independent teams—curatorial, interpretation, installation, and documentation—to contribute to the overall planning and execution of the exhibition, which was built around the University’s 1946 Gimbel Pennsylvania Art Collection, donated to Pitt in 1959 by Gimbel Bros., Inc.

The industrial boom is shown through selected works from the Gimbel Collection, paintings by American artists of factories, mines, and people bound together by Southwest Pennsylvania’s industrial background. For the second phase, the teams used black-and-white photographs taken by Perrott in the early 1980s during the dismantling of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company’s Eliza Furnace on Pittsburgh’s South Side. The final phase, of contemporary Pittsburgh, is represented in 15 to 20 works submitted by Pitt students and local artists—photography, oil on canvas, fiber, and other media.

“By showcasing a broad range of renderings depicting the construction, deconstruction, and rebirth of Pittsburgh, we expect SLAG to rouse memories of Pittsburgh’s past, provoke thoughts about the present, and open a dialogue about its future,” said Matthew Showman, a Pitt senior majoring in art history and leader of the curatorial team.

During the seminar, students learned about the history of public art museums, ways of thinking about the different types of exhibitions, new models for museums, as well as art-handling guidelines. McCall says the course is giving the students real hands-on experience in museum work, a field that she says is currently in “an identity crisis” but also presenting new opportunities for young people.

“Many baby boomers will be stepping down over the next few years, and there will be a need for well-trained, passionate individuals to continue their work,” McCall said. For Showman, who hopes to continue his curatorial studies in graduate school, the seminar has been an atypical experience: “Sure, we write papers, but our discourse and intensive discussions about the future of museums and what we want to do as exhibition makers has been really inspiring,” he said.

For more information, call 412-648-2400 or visit www.theslagexperience.info.

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