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NEWS AND IDEAS FOR THE COLUMBIA COMMUNITY

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Report Proposes New Models for Journalism

By Record Staff

A new report from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism on the future of the news business has accomplished one thing that Nicholas Lemann, the school's dean, had sought when he commissioned it.

It has fueled a wide-ranging conversation among media professionals, pundits and bloggers about how to respond to the wrenching economic decline of major U.S. newspapers and their ability to provide the "accountability journalism" so vital to informed citizenship and self-government.

"The Reconstruction of American Journalism" was written by Leonard Downie Jr., former executive editor of *The Washington Post*, and Michael Schudson, a sociologist and professor at the School of Journalism. Lemann had asked them to assess the enormous changes taking place in American journalism and to make recommendations for the future.

The two men have a wide perspective on the news business. In Downie's 17 years as its executive editor, *The Washington Post* won 25 Pulitzer Prizes. Schudson is the author of books on the news business, political culture and cultural memory, including *Discovering the News*, *The Good Citizen* and *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*. Their report was underwritten in large part by the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

They found that while there have been deep cutbacks in reporting on public issues, they are optimistic about the number of innovative online journalistic endeavors that could provide a diverse mix of for-profit, low-profit and non-profit sources of news and public affairs.

"It may not be essential to save or promote any particular news medium, including printed newspapers," says the report, published late last month. "What is paramount is preserving independent, original, credible reporting, whether or not it is popular or profitable, and regardless of the medium in which it appears."

The impetus for this vast change in journalism is, of course, the Internet, which has ended local newspapers' domination of the news business. "The report does not envision newspapers disappearing, but it also does not regard restoring newspaper staffs to their former size as possible," said Lemann. "It looks forward to a new, mostly digital, era of news production, in which newspapers will continue to have a leading role, but as part of a much larger cast of featured players."

At an Oct. 20 panel introducing the report at the New York Public Library, Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger—himself a First Amendment

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LITTLE CAMERA, BIG IDEA

By Anna Kuchment

Shree Nayar has dedicated much of his computer science career to improving the way cameras take pictures. Four years ago, he decided to move in a new direction: to design a camera that could improve the way children learn about science and each other.

He came up with a prototype as sleek as

an iPod and as tactile as a Lego set: the Big-shot digital camera. It comes as a kit, allowing children as young as 8 to assemble a device as sophisticated as the kind grown-ups use—complete with a flash and standard, 3-D and panoramic lenses—only cooler. Its color palette is inspired by Hershey's M&Ms, a hand crank provides power even when there are no batteries and a transparent back panel shows the camera's inner workings.

Nayar also worked with a group of engineering students, led by Guru Krishnan, An Tran and Brian Smith, to create a website, www.bigshotcamera.org, that walks children, teachers and parents through the assembly process. Eventually, it will serve as a kind of Flickr for kids, with young photographers from around the world sharing their pictures. "The idea here was not to create a device that was an inexpensive toy," says Nayar. "The idea was to

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Retirement for These Professors Means More Work

By Melanie A. Farmer

They may be retired, but professors Alan Cameron and Joan Ferrante are still hard at work.

Both recently received Emeritus Fellowships given by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which support scholarly activities of outstanding faculty members who no longer teach but are still active and productive in their fields. About 20 are given annually, all in the fields of humanities and social science.

The fellowship gives Cameron, 71, who taught in the Core Curriculum and whose expertise is Greek and Roman history and literature, \$18,000 to finish his book, *The Last Pagans of*

Rome. In it, Cameron challenges the myth that the victory of Christianity in the late fourth century was met with a defiant pagan reaction, ending in a dramatic decline of paganism.

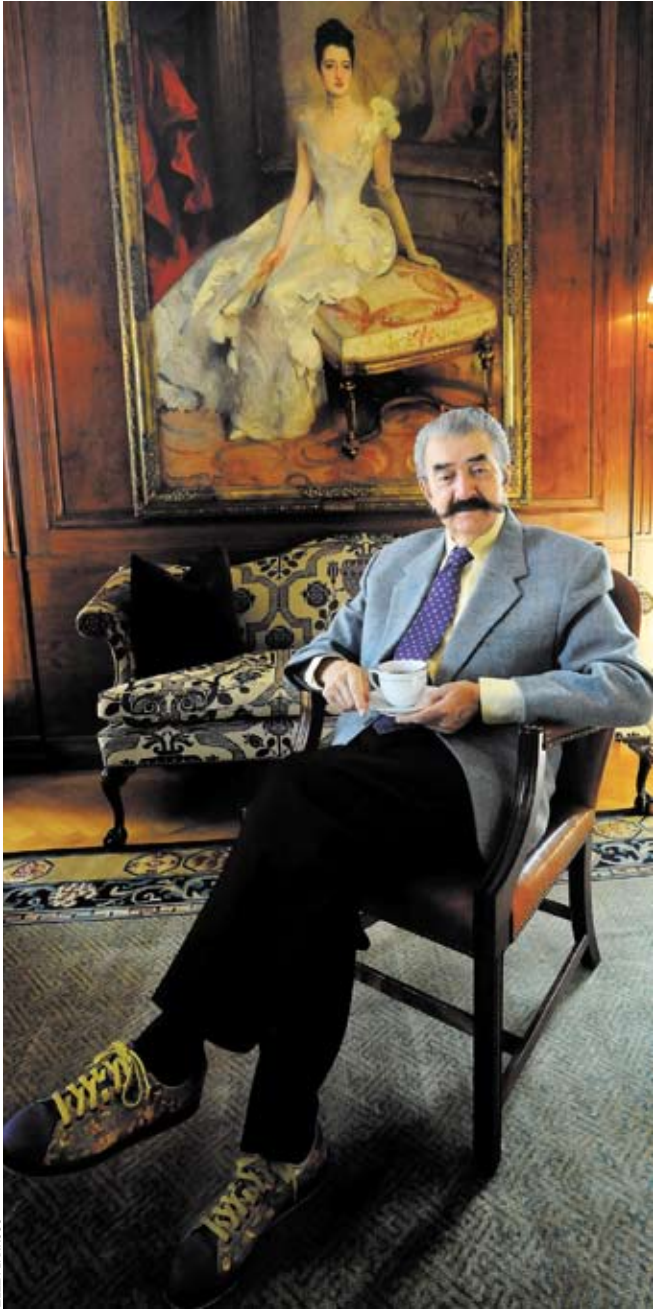
Ferrante, 72, is a professor of English and comparative literature. Her \$40,000 grant will help her build on a research project 20 years in the making. *Epistolae* (epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu) is an online database that showcases letters to and from women from the fourth to the 13th centuries to better understand the roles of women in medieval times.

Cameron, who retired in 2008, was the Charles Anthon Professor of Latin Language and Literature. Now, he says, "apart from trying to stay

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Cameron and Ferrante, Mellon fellows



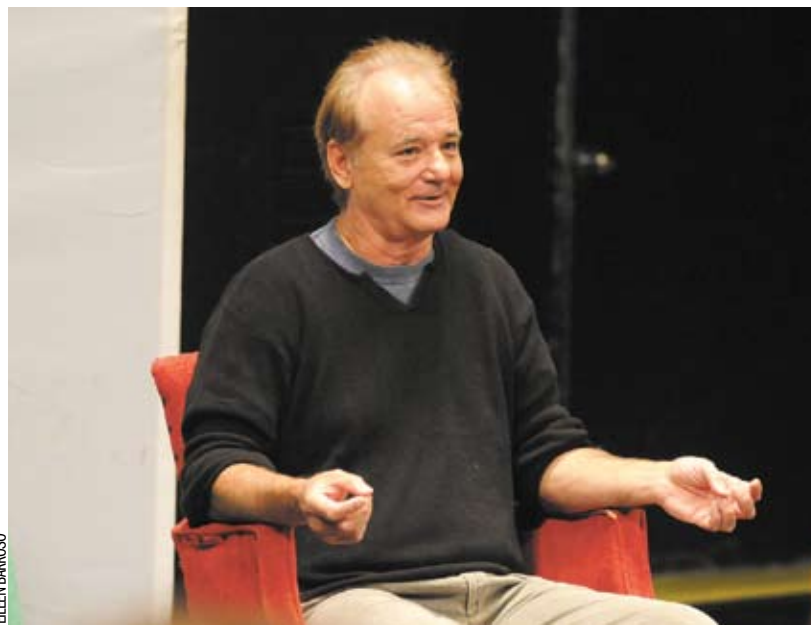
EILEEN BARRIOSO

LeRoy Neiman, a donor to Columbia's School of the Arts and its LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies, attends a tea in his honor, held at the President's House on Oct. 13. Neiman's artwork focused on sociological subjects, including bars, gambling and casino action, and many sports events. Throughout his career, he has drawn and painted many prominent figures in politics, entertainment and sports, including Muhammad Ali, Jimmy Carter and the Beatles. In 1954, Hugh Hefner enlisted Neiman for the launch of *Playboy* magazine, and he became the magazine's official artist. Neiman and his wife, Janet, established the Neiman Center for Print Studies at the School of the Arts in 1996 to promote printmaking through education, production and exhibition of prints.



EILEEN BARRIOSO

President Lee C. Bollinger cuts the ceremonial ribbon for the official opening of the Columbia Alumni Center on 113th Street, which occurred in time for Homecoming weekend. On the balcony of the center, from left to right: Donna MacPhee, vice president for Alumni Relations and the president of Columbia Alumni Association; James Harden, a University trustee and chair of the Columbia Alumni Association; William V. Campbell, chair of the University Board of Trustees; Michele Moody-Adams, dean of Columbia College and Vice President for Undergraduate Education; Richard E. Witten, vice chair of the Board of Trustees; Mark E. Kingdon, trustee; Bollinger; Kenneth Forde, trustee; Geoffrey Colvin, president of the Columbia College Alumni Association; and Susan K. Feagin, executive vice president for University Development and Alumni Relations.



EILEEN BARRIOSO

Actor and comedian Bill Murray spoke to Theatre Arts Program students about acting and performance in Shapiro Theater on Wednesday, Oct. 28. Columbia University School of the Arts Theatre Professor Kristin Linklater invited Murray to the school as a guest lecturer. This was not Murray's first visit to Columbia; in 2000, he delivered the keynote speech at the School of the Arts commencement ceremony. Murray first gained exposure on *Saturday Night Live* in the 1970s and has since starred in numerous films, including *Tootsie*, *Ghostbusters*, *Lost in Translation* (for which he was nominated for an Academy Award) and *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*.

Journalism

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scholar—called what is happening in journalism today “a crisis of massive proportions” adding “The great thing about this report is that it is a call to collective action.”

Downie and Schudson focused particularly on “accountability journalism” at the local level that became a main function of daily newspapers in the second half of the 20th century. They say that foundations, universities, public broadcasters and other mission-driven partners committed to civic affairs news coverage should increase support to news organizations as “a continuous public good.” They also called for changes to the federal tax code that would allow journalism organizations to operate as both non-profit and low-profit corporations.

Long-term support must come from novel partnerships and collaborations among journalists, foundations, universities and other stakeholders to ensure the future of independent news reporting, they say. Such collaborations are already under way. “At many of the news organizations we visited, new and old,” they write, “we have seen the beginnings of a genuine reconstruction of what journalism can and should be.”

Their most controversial proposal involves a new investment of public funding into local journalism much as the federal and state governments fund local arts, humanities and public broadcasting. It could be created with money the Federal Communications Commission collects from a variety of sources.

Just days after the report was released, the FCC named Steve Waldman (CC'84) to lead an agency-wide initiative assessing the state of media and make recommendations “designed to ensure a vibrant media landscape,” according to an FCC release that cited the journalism school's report. Waldman is the co-founder and president of **Beliefnet.com**, an interfaith Web site on religion now owned by News Corp. He will join the FCC's Office of Strategic Planning and serve as a special assistant to FCC chairman Julius Genachowski (CC'85).

For a Q&A with Schudson on the report, turn to page 7.



WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

Hint: To whom do these cascading folds of knowledge belong? Send answers to curecord@columbia.edu. The first person to e-mail the right answer wins a *Record* mug.

ANSWER TO LAST CHALLENGE: Demosthenes, symbolizing law, is located in the Low Rotunda. WINNER: Peter Kollmann, J-school student

Mellon Awards

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reasonably fit,” he continues to visit the libraries on campus almost daily and is constantly reading and researching ideas.

“It may seem rather pathetic in some ways,” he said, “but it's what I like doing best. It's what I spent most of my life doing; I read. And when I read in my field, I get ideas. I keep moving and don't just work in one area or stick to one field.”

“This is very exciting,” said Ferrante. Her Mellon Fellowship will allow her to hire translators for the 2,000 more letters waiting to be added to the database. About 1,000 letters are already available online and the website gets, on average, 300 visitors per week, which “is quite good for anything medieval,” she said. Launched by the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning in 1999, the site mainly serves students, fellow researchers and scholars.

Ferrante has hardly been idle in retirement. Shortly after her last day teaching in 2006, she took a safari trip to Tanzania with her two grandchildren, ages 9 and 6. After having taught graduate students for 43 years, retirement has given her more time to spend with family and with her music. Ferrante plays the piano and the viola.

“I'm having a perfectly good time playing music, gardening and visiting with family and friends,” she said, “but still I want very much for this project to be available, especially since people are using it.”

Cameron, who enjoys traveling now that he no longer teaches undergraduates, said it's probably a good idea to let the future generation of academic scholars take over.

“I think mentally, I'm fine to work,” he joked, “but University departments like you to develop new courses and new approaches, and I'm not really very interested in doing this at my stage. It's not that I'm contemptuous of new approaches. I'm quite happy myself to continue my old approaches, which worked very well for me, but I wouldn't have been doing what, ideally, another person at a different point would do. I'm happy to make way.”