



# Gregory College House Alumni Society Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2 FALL 2006

## Fall Semester at Gregory

New student orientation once again merged with the return of old friends as our opening barbecue and karaoke session on Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup> introduced recently-arrived freshmen to upperclassmen and even a few devoted alumni. Alumni Society Members in attendance included Dan Cope, Dianali Rivera, Vicky Sakr, Tom Xu, Irene Godoy, and Adarsh Shah, who contributed his annual rendition of "Because I Got High" (hey, it's an *anti-drug* song).



### Gregory College House Alumni Society Members

- Are welcome to visit for select events during the year, including our opening barbecue, study breaks and BYOMs, International Dinner, Oscar Party, and more.
- Can book the guest suite for stays during the academic year
- Can order House mugs, T-shirts, and other gifts



Guests for our Dinner with Gregory speaker series (below), coordinated by House Manager Kate McCormick, included our own Bob Lucid, Ted Hershberg (Public Policy and History), Amy Kaplan (English), Andrew Shatte (Psychology), Bruce Lenthall (History and the Teaching and Learning Center), and VJ Kumar (Robotics). As always, DwG allows our residents the opportunity to chat with Penn professors away from the stuffy classroom.



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## A New Breed of Staff: The Gregory RA

For years, graduate associates have ruled the roost (well, or thought they did) at Gregory, but starting next fall they'll be joined by a couple of undergraduates. For the first time, we'll be bringing aboard two **residential advisors** to join the GAs on the third and fourth floors of Van Pelt. Our RAs will have a very specific focus: our freshman community in Van Pelt. We're excited not only to enhance the experience of new Gregorians but to provide a few additional leadership positions for our veteran residents.

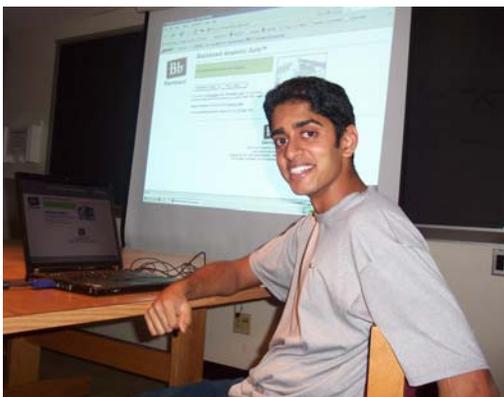
During the course of the past few years, Penn has scrutinized the so-called "freshman experience" in the college houses, particularly those, like Gregory, which represent alternatives to the "standard" Penn path (ie, the quad houses and hill). Although many student groups assumed that those poor freshman stranded on the fringes of campus were inevitably miserable, the research ulti-

mately proved, as stated in the report of the Residential Advisory Board, that "the most satisfied freshmen are those who live in low rise Houses, namely Du Bois, Gregory, and Stouffer; in fact, freshman-concentrated Houses have the lowest satisfaction rates."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, our staffs were notably praised: "In Gregory and Stouffer, student managers help promote staff interaction and an open door situation pervades the house, with GAs, RAs and the House Dean constantly seen around." Despite the (unsurprising) validation, this review process has made us more aware of some of the specific concerns of first-years, and encouraged us to take new steps to ensure that their introduction to the House—and Penn—goes as smoothly as possible. Our two new staff members—seniors Gustavo Centeno and Teri Kirby—will provide new perspectives and enthusiasm to the process.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.collegehouses.upenn.edu/rab/rabreport.html>

### ITAs Speak

Our ITAs protect us from computer viruses and keep our labs running, but they also share their wisdom *outside* the lab. Veteran ITAs provide tips and tricks for the computer literate or semi-literate; for example, sophomore Rahul Reddy (below) recently taught his peers how to read publications free online, get the best deals on textbooks, create their own websites for free, and LEGALLY download videos and music and more (what was said after the Dean left the room, we aren't sure).



### Health Amid the Junk Food



As we're sure our alums remember, no House tradition is as enduring as our Wednesday night study breaks, which usually drown our residents in chips, cookies, cakes, ice cream and the like. But under the auspices of first floor GA—and MD/PhD student—Priya Dedhia, the breaks have taken on a redeeming trace of health awareness. As our Health Liaison, Priya not only tries her best to incorporate fruit and other artery-protecting treats at the breaks, but also encourages our students to learn a few things to protect their well-being. Each week she announces health-related questions in advance—regarding everything from the length of a proper nap to the campus rates of STDs—and attendees with the proper answers in hand can win gift certificates to campus eateries. Priya also plans our annual "Sex [Education] Quizzo," with prizes ranging from... well, use your imagination.

## REMEMBERING DR. BOB LUCID, FACULTY MASTER OF GREGORY COLLEGE HOUSE



Much beloved for his kindness, enthusiasm, wit, and wisdom, Dr. Bob Lucid will be dearly missed. His presence in the halls of Van Pelt and Class of 1925 was a vibrant and reassuring one, which greatly delighted those he came in contact with. Bob Lucid was the driving force behind shaping Gregory into what it is today—a diverse mix of students with a strong sense of community and a particular interest in languages.

Though his influence extends far beyond Gregory, it was here that Bob shared his life with students. That is something the House will always remember him for. —*Gregory Publications Managers*

The College Houses lost a great friend on December 12th, when Robert Lucid died at the age of 76. Since 1998, Bob served as Faculty Master of Gregory College House, capping a distinguished career at Penn that spanned more than 40 years, during which he was one of the University's most creative citizens. A beloved Professor of English (and Lindback and Abrams Award winner), Bob was a longtime chair of the department and helped build it to its current stature. He was also a central figure in the creation of the Kelly Writers House.

Bob was highly influential in the building of the College House system. As chairman of the Collegiate Planning Board and the Council of Faculty in Residence, his vision molded Penn's conception of residential life even before a system in general was in place. From 1979 to 1992, Bob served as Faculty Master of Hill College House, where he put his ideas into action. It is hard to envision today, but Bob was once known for his genteel sherry hours in Hill, in which students exchanged urbane conversations and felt like adults for the first time. Under Bob's direction, Hill served as a laboratory and model for what would later be adopted for all of Penn's College Houses. Many colorful (and some hilarious) stories about life with Bob have been posted online by our friends at Kelly Writers House at [www.writing.upenn.edu/~whl/lucid.html](http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~whl/lucid.html).

The entire campus benefited from events that Bob developed – writers Norman Mailer and Richard Wilbur were among his close friends, and they came to campus on several occasions, delighting faculty and students alike.

We cannot overlook Joanne Lucid's contributions to both Hill and Gregory; as a teacher at Germantown High for many years, her participation in House life came naturally. She and Bob often co-taught for the Penn Reading Project. After Joanne passed away in 2002, Bob established the Joanne Lucid Memorial Award for Gregory residents who contributed the most to the House community.

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The official University service for Professor Lucid, hosted by the Department of English, will be held on Friday, April 13th, from 5-7 PM, on the sixth floor of Van Pelt Library.

Gregory will host its first annual Lucid Dinner on Saturday, February 17th in the Piano Lounge. All Alumni Society members are welcome to attend; please RSVP to Winnie, [wtang@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:wtang@pobox.upenn.edu)

On a personal note, I was a Fellow in Gregory for several years, during which I came to treasure Bob's friendship. Conversations in his apartment were a regular feature of life in the House, and I and many others were the lucky recipients of his sophistication and wit. I remember wonderful stories that ran the gamut from the day Stephen Sondheim was almost attacked by a horde of crazy fans, to the transformative experience he had when he first heard Frank Sinatra. Was there anything he didn't know about? I doubt it.

I'll miss those stories, and I'll miss Bob – but I am a much richer person for his friendship.

— **David Fox, Associate Director, College Houses and Academic Services, Former Gregory Senior Fellow**



Although my interaction with Dr. Lucid was limited to a Dinner with Gregory, a few passing conversations, and occasionally seeing him at Pottruck Fitness Center, Bob exuded a caring attitude that made being at college feel like being home. A few weeks into first semester of freshmen year, I had yet to find my footing. Dr. Lucid was the guest at a Dinner with Gregory and spoke of Penn being a good fit for some and not for others. Though his passion for Penn was clear, he assured us that if things weren't clicking for us, there was absolutely nothing wrong with investigating other options. While I eventually discovered that Penn was a good fit for me, his words were comforting at a time when I was terribly unsure of what I was getting myself into. His frankness and empathy was much appreciated. He will be missed!

— **Justin Sykes, Junior**

Bob was the leader of the Penn Reading Project my freshman year. I was intimidated that the faculty master of Gregory was my group's leader. My worries went away as soon as Bob started talking. He was extremely down to earth. Bob did not like the book so instead he asked our group to explain to him about "hip hop music." He wanted to learn about the evolution of hip hop music and the popular artists and thought a room full of freshmen was the perfect opportunity to teach him. A few students tried to apply principles from the book to hip hop but Bob was just interested in learning about hip hop. At Bob's open house for the 3rd floor he asked us to look at his music collection to see if he had any music close to hip hop. Bob wanted to learn from the students of Gregory and his lifetime passion for knowledge is inspiring. Once at a house

event, I sat on a couch next to Bob and an apple fell from the top of the couch and landed on his shoulder. It startled me and I said, "Oh my gosh, Dr. Lucid, are okay?" He said, "Oh yes. I am fine. I feel like Newton." Bob had a great sense of humor and he will be greatly missed.

— **Erica Denhoff, Junior**

Not only did I get to know him, but my mom had him as a professor for two classes when she was at Penn. I took her to see him three years ago, and I remember they did a lot of talking about how people today don't read books the way they used to -- that is, as something that might provide knowledge or authority. It was kind of funny because I was basically stuck in the middle of my generation getting bashed. — **Stephanie Craven, alum '06**

I have all these little images of him floating around in my head. Bob peering up at me over his glasses at the NSO barbecue...Bob in shorts and a waistcoat at the fire alarm in the middle of the night over the summer...Bob putting on great jazz at his get-togethers...Bob telling me about his days as a pilot...me almost falling asleep at the first DwG I heard him speak at - \*laugh\*... I keep thinking about the card he gave me with the Award in May - he wrote that he was honored to have served in the House with me. Shouldn't it be the other way around? — **Vicky Sakr, alum '06, Joanne Lucid award recipient**

To a large extent, Bob was Gregory House. He was the first faculty master of Gregory, and this place took on much of his personality. Many of our residents, present and past, knew him very well, particularly those who returned to the House many times over. But even those who never had time to get to know him on a personal level benefited enormously from what he brought to us. Everything about this place, from the types of events we do to the way we treat our students--as adults, as often as possible--came from Bob's philosophy, which he developed over decades of living and working in residence at Penn. He was committed to creating a welcoming, low-key atmosphere, in which residents would be encouraged to take an active role in the shaping and direction of the community. He was very particular about the staff he brought in, including me, making sure that they would do justice to this model, and he empowered all those interested in the House--GAs and Managers, House Council and ITAs, residential faculty and indeed any Gregorian with a trace of enthusiasm--to feel like they were destined to make a difference. The best way to honor him is to make sure Gregory continues to evolve the way he always envisioned. — **Christopher Donovan, House Dean**

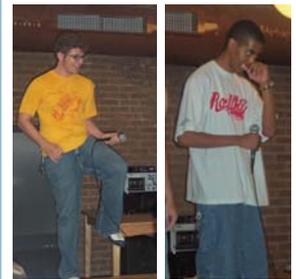
Finding the right words to succinctly remember Bob by turns out to be more difficult than I expected, perhaps because of Bob's multifaceted impact on his surroundings. It was always clear how strong his presence was around Gregory and how the whole House benefited from his quiet and vigi-

lant leadership. But most importantly, Bob made Gregory a real home for me and for many of the students and staff – no mean feat at a large, international institution such as Penn. I know now that I will never forget my interactions with him, many of which ended with a sharp, witty comment that left me laughing to myself for minutes, sometimes hours, afterwards. I will miss him dearly. — **Talid Sinno, Faculty Fellow**

I am at a lack of words to express how much Bob will be missed. I met Bob over 6 years ago. Through the years he was not only a mentor for me, but also became a great friend. Among the many things that I truly enjoyed about Bob was his never-ending ability to listen and stimulate great conversation. As I myself prepare to leave Penn this upcoming year, I will truly regret not having the benefit of Bob's guidance and support. — **Alex Ifill, Casa Hispanica Program Director**

Although I only knew Professor Lucid for a year and a half, I will keep very fond memories of him. I found Bob to be an incredibly thoughtful person with a very keen memory. He always remembered to ask how I was doing if I had come down with a cold or had a thesis deadline. I will particularly miss his funny yet inquisitive emails asking me to translate a French phrase or word that he had come across in his reading. Bob truly cared deeply for Gregory House, and this was always apparent in his comments during our staff meetings. I will really miss seeing him every other Monday night. — **Allison Glasmann, Maison Francaise Program Director**

I first met Bob five years ago when I started to work in Gregory. Like most GAs, our relationship was based on biweekly meetings in his apartment, where we always enjoyed his hospitality. I like to think that I used this opportunity to learn from his advice and experiences. But it is a vice of youth not to realize fully at the moment, the importance of the company of wise people. So I believe that the memory of my professional and personal relation with Bob will get stronger and more precious as time goes by. Thank you Bob! — **Gunder Varinlioglu, Maison Francaise Program Director**



Freshmen Joe Coyne and David Chang rock (and rap) out at karaoke



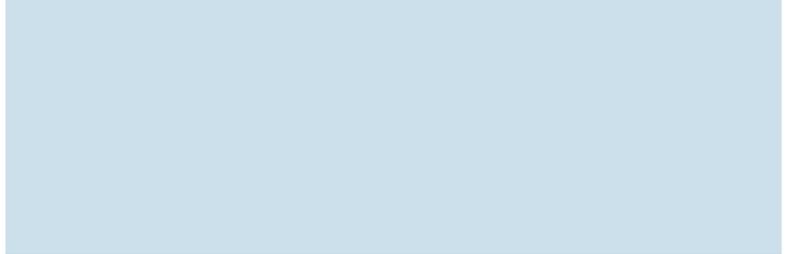
Junior John Lin and GA Bartek Czeck, both nicely decked out, make snazzy alliterative speeches at the conclusion of Bartek's annual ping pong tournament and alliteration contest.

## Gregory College House

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The **Gregory College House Alumni Society** is devoted to former residents who want to keep track of their old haunt—and each other. Contact House Coordinator Winnie Tang with any society-related correspondence at [wtang@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:wtang@pobox.upenn.edu), and check out our facebook group for photos, news and more!



## Thanksgiving Feast

30+ Gregorians joined in our annual holiday bash, arranged by "Thanksgiving Manager," junior Teri Kirby.

### Upcoming Events:

**February 17th,  
Lucid Dinner**

**February 25th,  
Oscar Party**

