UPCOMING EVENTS
OPEN TO ALUMNI SOCIETY MEMBERS
• 1/22: Dinner with Gregory: Anastasia Shown, Outreach Coordinator Africana Studies
• Feb: Ski Trip (date TBA)
• 2/1: Superbowl Party
• 2/4: Dinner with Gregory: Sean Buffington, President, University of the Arts
• 2/6: Lucid Dinner and Performing Arts Night
• 2/11: Dinner with Gregory: Fellow David Kazanjian, Professor of English
• 2/18: Dinner with Gregory: Vincent Price, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs & Acting Provost
• 2/22: Oscar Party
• 2/23: Gregory kicks off College Houses Student Film Festival: http://www.collegehouses.upenn.edu/filmfest/
• 2/25: Dinner with Gregory: Fellow Talid Sinno, Professor of Chemical & Bimolecular Engineering
• 3/21: Annual Modern Languages Program International Dinner

EMAIL HILARY AT HPearson@upenn.edu TO RSVP

Happy New Year

Happy New Year to all of our former Gregorians! We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season, and with all the festive seasonal joy and/or boredom associated with hanging out in a college house temporarily empty of students, we bring you one of our semi-occasional Alumni Society newsletters.

Besides serving up a “what’s new in Gregory” buffet that includes some yummy tidbits about our Film Culture Program (pg 2), we as always welcome Alums in the area to pop in and take part in various goings-on. You can find some of our upcoming events in the left sidebar, and of course we will crassly do what everyone else does and take every opportunity to clog your facebook inboxes with irritating invites. We promise never to send you flair or ask you to join in an Eagles wave.

Besides talking about what lies ahead, we offer a little celebration of what came before, as we finally got around to scanning some of the old photos we’ve had sitting in the office forever (page 4). While we’re at it, we’re asking you for a bit of a favor—no, not a few million for renovations (though if you have it sitting around…) but help spreading the word about staff positions if you’re in contact with any current or future Penn graduate students (page 3).

Whether or not you have any names for us, please feel free to drop us a line and let us know what you’re up to. We’d love to run a “here’s where they are” issue of this newsletter at some point… it’s really slow over the summer….

Best of luck in 2009!

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire? Well, not quite. But Gregorians ward off the cold with s’mores, hot dogs and more at an end-of-semester bonfire… or at least they did before the police shut it down. Um, whoops.
New Frontiers for Film Culture

Through the Modern Languages Program, Gregory has a long tradition of incorporating Penn’s scholastic mission into everyday life in the House, allowing residents to receive academic credit for participating in the myriad language-oriented dinners, coffee hours, excursions and screenings taking place almost every night. This fall, we very successfully augmented this tradition by introducing an academic credit option for the Film Culture Program (which dates back to Fall 2003). Under the stewardship of Graduate Associate Lance Wahlert, Dean Chris Donovan and eternally enthusiastic FCP Manager Nasri Bou-Saba, the program offered four different screening series over the course of the semester, totaling some 37 films ranging from Double Indemnity to Fight Club, Blow-Up to 4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days; 28 of these screenings were followed by moderated discussion/lecture. The program also offered dinner-and-discussion trips to Philly theatres to see new releases Burn After Reading, W, Body of Lies, Changeling, Quantum of Solace, Slumdog Millionaire and Milk.

Students presented dissections of their favorite scenes, wrote reviews and critical essays, and created their own screenplays and short films; the House will be publishing a short collection of the best written submissions. In the spring, the program will be incorporating both the Philadelphia Film Festival and the Penn College Houses Student Film Festival; the latter, which was started by FCP six years ago and has since expanded into a campus-wide showcase, will commence a week of competitive screenings with a night in Gregory for which Film Culture credit participants will serve as jury. There will be even more films and discussions on deck during Spring semester, including series on Disney animation, coming-of-age landmarks (bildungsroman, if you want to get technical—or pretentious), spaghetti westerns and contemporary works featuring Americans abroad, a topic typically of great interest to Gregorians. There will also be a number of relevant events ranging from our traditional Oscar bash to a dinner for potential Cinema Studies majors.

The finalized Spring semester program will be posted on the FCP website: http://gregory.house.upenn.edu/filmculture.aspx. Screenings are open to the Penn Public (and Alumni Society members), though the film lounge is very snug and, typically, very messy!
Staff Searching

It takes a rare person to be an ideal Gregory GA. As such, we always have an uphill climb finding candidates who combine an eagerness to work with undergraduates, a welcoming and interestingly idiosyncratic personality, and just enough maturity to hold their communities together.

We ask any Alumni Members who happen to know Penn graduate students possessing “the right stuff” to encourage them to apply—particularly if they are fluent in French, Spanish, German, Italian or Chinese (pesky ambitious programs!). As of this writing, we still aren’t sure which vacancies we need to fill for next year, though it seems likely there will be quite a few.

We’ll begin interviewing 2009-2010 candidates mid-January and will keep searching until we have a full staff; interested graduate students can consult the College Houses and Academic Services website for more information: http://www.collegehouses.upenn.edu/ra_ga_info/ga.html. Oh, and it goes without saying that if you are coming back to Penn as a student…. Give it some thought.

Thanks for your assistance!

A Tweak Here and There

Though Gregory is eternally awaiting a renovation project akin to what has been underway for years in the three high rises, the House did see some minor improvements this year, including the replacement of all hallway carpets in Class of 1925 with tile; ditto in the greenhouse. Both buildings have brighter hallway lighting and projectors and screens in their film lounges. The seminar room in Van Pelt has some new furniture as well as various study aids, including a frequently stocked fridge and an all-so-essential coffee maker for residents perpetually pulling all-nighters.

Potential improvements for next year include a much-needed renovation of the Van Pelt third floor kitchen, used constantly for such events as Tuesday Bring Your Own Mug!, monthly birthday parties for the freshmen community, and the main course of the annual progressive dinner.
“Vintage” Photos

In the tranquil silence (i.e., tedium) of winter break, we took the time to scan in some photos from Gregory’s earlier, pre-digital years; you can find these and a few more at http://picasaweb.google.com/GregoryCollegeHouse25/VintagePhotos. Highlights and/or lowlights include the first-and-to-date-only Gregory semiformal, the somewhat inexplicable joy Gregorians felt when Halle Berry won the Best Actress Oscar, then-president Judith Rodin dancing with Casa Hispanica, and more. If any of our Van Pelt College House or Modern Languages College House Alumni have older photos to post, we’d love to make those available one day! New Gregory photos (Fall ’02 on) appear on the facebook group.