



Gregory College House Alumni Society Newsletter

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Gregory Farewells, 2010

As always, Spring semester closes with the departure of many members of the Gregory family. Our graduating seniors were toasted at our Senior Brunch and are now part of our Alumni community: **Kwabena Abraham-Asiedu, Fadeke Agboke, Nasri Bou-Saba, Lina Marcela Carmona, Sharleen Chen, Aaron Ecay, Jacob Ghera, Lauren Gutstein, Daniel Keller, Caitlin Kramer, Michael Lee, Wang Liao, Dennis Murphy, Suban Narthana, Danielle Olexa, Stephen Stewart, Cecily Huaxi Wu, Michelle Yee, YinYin Yu and Siyao Zhao.**

Nasri Bou-Saba, who has served the House as Resident Advisor, ITA Manager and Film Culture Manager over his tenure, received the Joanne Lucid Award for Service to the Gregory Community; his peers Lauren Gutstein and Michael Lee were named seniors of the year. In their case, however, we won't be missing them quite yet; Nasri, who submatriculated into a Master's Program in Chemical Engineering, will continue as the RA on the third floor of Van Pelt for Fall 2010; Lauren will be a graduate student in Penn's Teacher Education Program and will serve as GA-at-Large for the Class of 1925; and Michael will be working toward his Master's in Nanotechnology and we expect to see him at Gregory events often.

Even for long-time Gregorians, it is difficult to imagine the House without Faculty Fellow **Talid Sinno**, who has resided here since Fall of 2002 and provided a steady leadership presence through the terms of three Faculty Masters. An Associate Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Talid has provided advice to our many Engineers; but his lasting influence on our residents

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Seniors of the year Michael Lee and Lauren Gutstein, Lucid Award Recipient Nasri Bou-Saba



Dan Keller, here hanging out at his frosh year BBQ, served as ITA for four years and FCP Manager senior year. He seems to have done fairly well for himself with a position at Microsoft.



Fellows Talid and Sonya (front left) on the town with the Gregory Gourmand, including long-time Casa Italiana director Paolo Di Leo (front right).

may have been his continuation of the great Gregory Gourmand tradition, introducing Gregorians to some of the finest and most eclectic restaurants Philadelphia has to offer. Several years ago he was joined by Dr. **Sonya Gwak**, Associate Director of Student Affairs for the School of Engineering, who quickly became an integral part of the Gregory community, arranging Gourmand trips, running SEAS advising sessions during registration periods, schooling our residents in Origami card-making, and baking for numerous events throughout the year. Their commitment to fitness—Talid is an avid cyclist, Sonya an avid runner—served either as example or cautionary example for our students. They also treated Chris to cigars and scotch, for which he is apparently eternally grateful.

Before moving into an honest-to-goodness real house in Center City, Sonya shared some of her favorite Gregory memories:

- Nick Rapport ('12) going blind and giggly and hallucinating after his first go at Szechuan food.
- Mike Lee ('10) and Nasri Bou-Saba ('10) playing bad cop/bad cop with the ITAs.
- Bob Lucid's charm and sense of humor.
- Exterminator Marty Overline's stories.
- Chris Donovan's fake sad face when anyone vents to him.
- The friendly and quirky cast of characters at the front desk, many of whom know my name even if I didn't know theirs, but we still talked.
- The ITAs who spent hours figuring out what was wrong with my laptop.

Our one graduating Graduate Associate is Casa Italiana Director Paolo Di Leo, who is completing his PhD in Classics. With Lauren moving into a GA role, we will have an entirely veteran staff next year.



After the blizzard of 2010

What's New in Gregory?



Spring trip to Washington DC

FELLOWS: Enough of the sad news about departures. We have arrivals too, including our new Faculty Fellow, **Tsitsi Jaji**, Assistant Professor of English, who is scheduled to join us mid-year. Professor Jaji, who received her PhD in Comparative Literature from Cornell, will contribute much to the House, particularly to our residential programs in language and film. Raised in Zimbabwe, her research interests include Poetry and Poetics and African Diaspora literature in English, French and Spanish. She is interested in running a film series on 50 years of African cinema, as well as teaching courses based around music and literature in the African American tradition. Tsitsi will reside in the former House Dean apartment on the first floor of Class of 1925 (the Dean will now live in the former Fellow apartment on the fourth floor of Van Pelt).

We will also be joined by **Rupa Viswanath**, Assistant Professor of South Asia Studies, who will serve as interim Faculty Fellow while David Kazanjian is researching abroad for the year. Professor Viswanath and her family will be living in the Fellow apartment on the third floor of Van Pelt.

CAFÉ:

Café might be a grand term for it, but Gregory will be the first of the low-rise college houses to open its own little food-and-drink service in the Fall. An abandoned darkroom in the Class of 1925 basement, closed more than a decade ago for inadequate ventilation, is being renovated into a modest shop. Three managers—Sarah Davis ('11), Katie Ricks ('11) and Noreen Sit ('13)-- have been hired to run the café, which will offer coffee, espresso, pastries, sandwiches and the like, primarily during morning and very late night hours. As of this moment, we're still deciding on a name; our House survey question mostly produced a series of variations on "Donovan", all of which Chris selfishly nixed (his personal favorite suggestion: Café Eccentricity). In typical Gregory fashion, we don't see the café as a money-making business, but rather a programmatic addition to the House, relying on student leadership and initiative to thrive; we also expect it will boost usage of some of the underutilized spaces in the '25 basement, including the library next door. We also admit we don't really know what we're doing, so keep your fingers crossed for us.

ARABIC HOUSE:

Gregory prides itself on student leadership, and there's hardly a better example than the formation of Arabic House, a new offering of the Modern Languages Program that began in second semester. A number of residents, led by our Freshman of the Year, Emily Goshey, proposed the language house and did the necessary groundwork; the House responded by stocking up on mint tea and Arabic films, and providing a budget and space. Activities included a weekly dinner, a homework help session with graduate students from relevant departments, and a Sunday night movie and treats get-together. Some alumni may remember that we hosted an Arabic House in 2001-2003, but there were not at that time a surplus of Penn students studying Arabic. The tide has turned somewhat, and we are continuing with the trial run of the language house for 2010-2011 in hopes of making it a fully-fledged MLP group, possibly with academic credit and certainly with a designated Graduate Associate, by Fall of the following year. Events have been crowded and festive; it's typically Gregory to have yet another language ringing in the lobby. Our current lineup also includes Chinese, French, German and Spanish.



Arabic House Manager
Emily Goshey

THE ZAGAR MOSAIC

The House has never had many architectural features to brag about, but that changed somewhat this Spring as noted Philadelphia mosaic artist Isaiah Zagar brought his unusual creativity to the House. Inspired by Penn's Arts and the City theme year, GA Maggie MacDonald contacted Isaiah Zagar about possibly contributing a small piece to one of our walls; instead, Zagar proposed a grander project, in which he would train a team of residents to deck out the entire Greenhouse. More than twenty residents and staff eagerly volunteered, received a crash course in mosaic work at Zagar's Magic Gardens, and worked through a long weekend transforming the space. The eclectic theme was reportedly the Philadelphia production of the Lion King, and indeed various animals—and animalistic humans—are incorporated into the festive design (see pictures on the following page). Zagar and his team returned to the Greenhouse for the official grand opening ceremony during finals; the eye-popping mosaic, complete with an unexpected yellow and pink color scheme, is a real conversation-starter in a House whose physical condition is more often a head-scratcher.



As always, Alumni Society members are more than welcome to attend Gregory's traditional events, starting with the annual opening barbecue (and karaoke session, and whatever else ends up going on that day), which this year will fall on Labor Day, Monday, September 6th. Other events traditionally open to Alumni Society members include our white water rafting, Six Flags and other trips, our annual International Dinner and Lucid Dinner & Performing Arts night, and our Superbowl and Oscar parties, just to name a few. To RSVP for an event, just drop a line to House Coordinator Hilary Pearson at hpearson@upenn.edu. Generally Alumni Society members are welcome to reserve our guest suite when visiting, but please note it will be offline for Fall 2010, as it is reserved for staff member use during some apartment renovations. The suite should be up and running again in Spring 2011.