Welcome to the Spring 2014 CMS Newsletter!

In this issue you’ll find our usual blend of features about CMS classes, profiles of alumni, and news about CMS events. We have also continued the trend of asking our students to write more of the articles, which gives them additional journalism experience and often helps them to make some interesting and useful contacts.

Inside this Issue

CMS News — page 2

Alumni News and Profiles — pages 3-11

CMS Events — pages 12-14

From the Classroom — pages 15-18

Internships/Study Abroad — pages 19-20

Arianna Huffington made a stop at the Tufts University bookstore in April to sign copies of her latest book, *Thrive*, before joining Jonathan Tisch, A76, on stage for this year’s Edward R. Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism (see page 14).

Send us your news!

Changed jobs? Gone back to school? Moved? We want to hear from you. Email us at cms@tufts.edu

Do you know someone who might be interested in receiving this newsletter? Feel free to pass it along.
Greetings from the Hill!

We’ve just gone through the bittersweet ritual that is graduation, and said adieu to 69 wonderful CMS seniors who’ve now become part of the larger community of CMS alumni. You’ll hear from a number of these bright and creative graduates in this issue of our newsletter, as they tell you about their Senior Projects, internships, and study abroad opportunities.

It’s been another semester filled with inspiring courses and a variety of CMS on-campus events. We’ve tried to profile a number of these for you, as well as provide you with our ongoing features about some of the fascinating things Tufts graduates are doing in a variety of media fields. In this edition you’ll read about a number of our alums who are working in sports journalism and media and you’ll hear about the growing Jumbo crowd at WNET/Channel 13 in New York.

You’ll be getting this newsletter just ahead of the 10th Annual P.T. Barnum Awards for Excellence in Entertainment, which this year will take place at the Alvin Ailey Theatre in New York on June 9 at 8 p.m. This year we will be honoring actor David Costabile, A89, playwright Robert O’Hara, A92, and House of Cards author, Sir Michael Dobbs. F72, FG77. It’s bound to be an exciting event!

Though the semester has been filled with wonderful learning and great events, I do need to note the sad passing of one of our most special alums, David Burke, A57. David’s many significant accomplishments ranged from serving as a top advisor to former Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and former governor of New York Hugh Carey, to important positions at the Dreyfuss Corporation, and also serving as vice president of news at both ABC and CBS. But one of his most important legacies was his dedication to mentoring young people. We, at CMS, have been the beneficiaries of this in many ways, one of which is the David Burke Internship in Media and Public Service. You can read more in an article in this newsletter on page 19. We will miss David greatly.

We love hearing from you – please send us your news!

Wishing you all a wonderful summer,

Julie Dobrow

CMS Director
In the concrete jungle, a herd of Jumbos

By Lauren Witte, A14

If you need proof that elephants work in groups, just take a look at WNET, New York’s flagship public media provider. At WNET, a “herd” of Tufts Jumbos, led by Neal Shapiro, A80, works to produce and present a range of documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings to the New York region.

The Tufts alumni following at WNET began with Shapiro, now president and CEO, who joined the station in 2007. Prior to his arrival at WNET, Shapiro, an award-winning producer, served as president of NBC News and executive producer of Dateline NBC. At WNET, he is responsible for heading the operations of THIRTEEN, WLIW21, and NJTV, which reach a combined audience of over 5 million people monthly. WNET produces series such as PBS’s American Masters, Nature, and the PBS NewsHour, as well as a host of documentaries, local news programs, children’s programs, and cultural offerings, each greatly expanded since Shapiro’s arrival.

Shapiro himself credits his first job in television to Tufts alum David Burke, A57, who at the time was vice president of ABC News. Burke was in the habit of hiring Tufts alums for a year and then sending them on to immerse themselves in the world of media with the promise that they, too, would give back by hiring other alums—a promise Shapiro has followed through on. In fact, Shapiro was so inspired by his mentor, that he both began a scholarship fund in his name dedicated to providing a funded internship opportunity in journalism for a Tufts student each summer (see page 19), and also decided to begin a similar program at WNET, through which he has so far brought three newly-minted graduates to work at Channel 13 and get their start in the business.

The current WNET Tufts contingent consists of Saskia Chanoine, A09, Ally Gimbel, A10, Kaitlyn Leidl, A13, Benjamin Phelps, A11, G13, and Hillary Sieber, A12—most of whom were Communications and Media Studies minors during their time at Tufts.

At WNET, much is required of research assistants and producers, and all of the Tufts alums agree that they wear a variety of hats. Shapiro credits their aptitude and ability to the intellectual rigor that a liberal arts education provides, and Tufts, he notes, is one of the best places to receive such an education.

“At Tufts you have to be curious about everything,” Shapiro says. “From news to arts to culture to kids education. You have to explore a variety of areas in order to sharpen your abilities.”

While this group all started at CMS (with the exception of Chanoine), they all fill different roles. Gimbel, who was the first to land at WNET, spent her time at Tufts working for the Tufts Daily and Tufts Traveler magazine, and has always been interested in the television industry. She began at WNET as a research assistant, before moving into the roles of associate producer and producer.

Sieber followed a few years later as a research assistant, and has since become an associate producer/researcher. At Tufts, Sieber was an admissions tour guide and won the 2012 Social Entrepreneurship competition, which awarded her $10,000 for a start-up called Keepin’ Tabs, a web communications interface that allowed seniors to stay in touch with family members.

Chanoine joined the WNET herd early last year as a production assistant, and now works as an associate producer and researcher, most notably for the series Treasures of New York.
Leidl recently began as a research assistant in September 2013. She’s passionate about the combination of education and media and spent her time at Tufts studying child development while playing for the varsity women’s lacrosse team.

The most recent addition to the WNET Jumbo alum team is Phelps, who began in February 2014 as a production assistant for documentaries and development. He came to WNET after spending time at PBS and WGBH, getting his masters degree in educational studies at Tufts.

As for the head of the herd, Shapiro was very involved with the Tufts Observer during his time on the Hill (Tufts primary publication at the time; the Daily was not founded until 1980). Shapiro served as the editor-in-chief of the Observer for two years, and majored in political science and history.

The alums’ roles range from overseeing production lifecycles to researching project initiatives to coordinating budgets to editing and interviewing. As much as their respective positions vary, the Jumbo connection continues to unite them. As Shapiro notes, the occasional Tufts mug or sweatshirt is often seen around the office, keeping the Tufts spirit ever-present.

Leidl notes that the cohort of Tufts alums at WNET is most certainly “a thing,” as they attend alumni events together after work, talk about shared Tufts experiences, and reminisce about CMS. She notes, and all of the alums echo, that it has been beneficial to have that sort of connection at a new job, in a new city, away from the comfort of Tufts.

The opportunities provided to these Jumbo alums are indicative of the pride that Shapiro himself feels for Tufts. Shapiro has always been a loyal to his alma mater—in addition to returning to Tufts to speak at myriad alumni events, he was also a recipient of Tufts own P.T. Barnum Award for Excellence in Entertainment. Shapiro will soon serve as the emcee for the 10th Annual PT Barnum Awards on June 9 at the Alvin Ailey Theatre in New York. Shapiro is also the long-serving chair of the CMS Alumni Board, and is a member of the Tufts Board of Trustees.

But his love for Tufts achieved its maximum potential once he reached WNET, as he was finally able to give back in the form of extending opportunities to recent graduates, not only from Tufts but from other institutions, as well.

“It is no surprise that Tufts houses such wonderful students,” Shapiro says. “Its mix of a broad education with experiences at CMS creates great writers and great thinkers. In today’s media market, the students know more about media than the people hiring them—definitely an advantage for this year’s graduating CMS class.”

**Alumni Updates**

Jonathan Abarbanel, A68, is now chair of the American Theatre Critics Association and serves as an adjunct instructor at the School of Theatre and Music at the University of Illinois at Chicago, following many years spent as an arts journalist.

Jon Adler, A08, is an associate director of program development at CNN in New York.

Audrey Appleby, J75, recently produced and directed the short film *Tiny Miracles...Awakening Memory And Emotion In An Alzheimer’s World*, about her work as a dance and music specialist in the Alzheimer’s field.

Ben Bell, A08, is working as a digital producer at ABC News in New York.

Samantha Bissonette, A13, is now a production assistant and assistant to the creative director at Soup2Nuts in Watertown, Mass.

Anna Burgess, A13, works as a news reporter for the North Shore Unit of Gatehouse Media New England.

Jon Cheng, A13, is now an analyst for OgilvyRED at Ogilvy & Mather in New York.
Amy Connors, A12, is now the web and archive manager at VII, a photo agency in New York.

Mona Damluji, A03, is a Mellon postdoctoral fellow and instructor at Wheaton College.

Emily Friedman, A12, is now an account manager at WCG in San Francisco.

Jennifer Gerber, A07, is a senior research program coordinator at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Gladie Helzberg, A09, works as an international account manager at Intrax in San Francisco.

Carly Melniker, A09, is working in the New York office of CAA in its business affairs division.

David Myers, A96, now serves as vice president of content development at CQ Roll Call in Washington D.C.

Ben Phelps, A11, works as a production assistant at WNET in New York.

Florice Pressman, A04, is a business development strategist at the law firm Debevoise & Plimpton in New York.

Georgia Ranes, A11, is working in the production department at HBO in Los Angeles.


Katherine Schmidt, A07, is writing for the digital edition of *Upstream*, covering global energy along with oil and gas exploration.

Joshua Seftel, A90, was recently featured on *Here and Now* for his hilarious web series “My Mom on the Movies.”

Matt Singerman, A88, is now the executive vice president of programming at WWE Network in Stamford, Conn.

Kathryn Vaughan, J95, works as a television producer in Los Angeles now working for the Emmy Award-winning Magical Elves to help produce *Cold Justice* for TNT.

Brett Weiner, A05, a Los Angeles-based director and producer had his short film, *Verbatim*, selected for the 2014 Sundance Film Festival.

Anne Wermiel, A10, is a staff photographer at the *New York Post*.

Jimmy Young, A79, is now a business development consultant for NetTech Services and Media Educators of America.

Angelina Zhou, A13, is a consumer strategist at Hill Holiday in Boston.

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**CMS on the Web**

Please take a moment to visit our [website](http://www.cms.onthe.net), where you’ll find photos, useful links, and video files from many of our events. If you have a career update, please send it to [John Ciampa](mailto:john.ciampa@cms.onthe.net).

You can also visit our Facebook page by clicking on the icon above.
The sporting life

By John Ciampa

Though Tufts is seldom mentioned as a sports hotbed of higher learning alongside the Michigans, Wisconsins and USCs of the world, a core group of alums might beg to differ – at least when it comes to off-field performances.

For Dan Barbarisi, A01, Tony Massarotti, A90, Chris Stone, A92, and Jimmy Young, A79, the journey from the Hill to some of America’s most notable ballparks, arenas, and stadiums has been peppered with a myriad of interesting twists and turns, and enough cool gigs along the way to make the likes of the Rolling Stones and Bruce Springsteen envious.

Largely divided between the two-headed sports metropolises of Boston and New York, they’ve covered or written about top sports figures and the major franchises in two of the largest and most discerning sports markets in the world, with some even reaching quasi-celebrity status as a result.

By the very nature of his current role, perhaps no one on the list is more deserving of the célèbre tag than Massarotti. Affectionately known as “Tony Mazz” over the Boston airwaves as one-half of 98.5 The Sports Hub’s Felger and Mazz show, Massarotti occupies a secure place among the city’s crowded sports scene. Yet he continually distinguishes himself as a go-to figure for his insight and knowledge, with a keen gift for breaking down and analyzing the intricacies of sports and their inherent strategies – especially baseball. Just witness last fall’s post-World Series write-up that appeared in Boston Magazine about Boston Red Sox slugger David Ortiz’s mindset at the plate.

Despite this in-depth knowledge, he admits he was a “poor writer” when he came to Tufts in the mid-1980s and began penning occasional articles for the Tufts Daily’s sports section. But Massarotti says he finally discovered his journalistic voice when he took an advanced writing course with Tufts Professor Michael Ullman.

“Writing was a chore for me up to that point, but he gave me a tremendous amount of freedom and taught me that writing could be creative and fun,” he says. “From that point forward, writing became a passion.”


Stone covered the swim team, before moving on to hockey and baseball. With a few summer internships sprinkled in, by the time he left Medford he had a good portfolio from which to build a career. Stone went on to study at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism and made a beeline for New York City job market. His career trajectory has been remarkably linear as opposed to most who work within the profession, having landing at one of the industry’s leading publications just down the street from the school that Pulitzer built – and then figuring out how to stay there.

His first position at SI was working as a fact-checker. Far more significant a position than it may sound, Stone now views it as an important stage in his development and the best possible way for him to pay his dues. One of his favorite corners of the magazine’s downtown New York office remains the small storage room he spent countless hours in, pouring through sports sections from the nation’s daily newspapers. He vetted the stories and headlines for SI’s writers and editors, checking facts and numbers, while (perhaps unconsciously) fortifying his own sports knowledge.

After that, it was on to the National Hockey League beat, then college football, then a transition to the editor’s desk.

“By 1997, I felt I reached a plateau as a writer,” he says. “Many writers at the magazine had long-running, established beats, had tallied up numerous awards, and had national reputations. I wasn’t sure I could match that, but I believed I had something else to offer.”
Jimmy Young has been a veteran mainstay of the Boston sports scene since the early 1990s, and his long-running newscast, *Jimmy Young's SportsWorld*, remains the only 90-minute sports talk show to have aired on New England television. Young built up a strong following during the show's six-year run at the cable network NECN by digging deep into sports topics in ways the other local news networks couldn't.

He also points to his time at Tufts in the late-1970s as a key period in steering him toward a career that has crossed over from television to education and business.

Flashing back, Young was poised to become an integral member of the Tufts varsity soccer team during his sophomore year, but an ankle injury moved him from the field to the sidelines faster than you can say Beckenbauer. With his soccer career on hold, he was approached by fellow classmate Tony Bennis, A79, one of the founders of Tufts University Television (TUTV). Bennis asked Young to cover sports for the fledgling station, and it was Young’s early involvement as an on air personality at TUTV that cemented his love for sports talk.

“Tony needed a play-by-play guy to cover basketball and I took it,” Young says. “My first gig was a triple-overtime game between Tufts and Sacred Heart. I was so excited that I went a bit over the top with it.

“I’ll never forget listening to myself the next day – It was Jimmy Young doing Johnny Most. It was pretty embarrassing, but I was blessed with the gift of gab and found that talking sports was something that was second nature for me.”

Like Stone, *Wall Street Journal* sportswriter Daniel Barbarisi is a print guy.

Going all the way back to high school in his native Rye Brook, New York, Barbarisi knew he wanted to work in a newsroom. In fact, having two regular publications in the *Tufts Daily* and the *Tufts Observer* was part of the reason he found Tufts so attractive.

When he arrived on campus in 1997, Barbarisi staked out the *Observer* first. More interested in general news coverage than sports at the time, he wrote his first story on the completion of the Eaton Hall computer lab (which still serves as an important study hub for students). He jumped ship for the *Daily* a few months later, though, and didn’t look back, moving from reporter to news editor to eventually the paper’s editor in chief during his senior year. It was the *Daily*’s day-to-day bustle he enjoyed most of all.

Fellow alum, *Boston Globe* staffer, and CMS lecturer Neil Swidey, A91, provided Barbarisi with his first big break—working as an intern covering the Massachusetts State House for *The Boston Globe*. Near the tail-end of 2001 an opportunity opened up at the *Providence Journal* in Rhode Island for a reporter covering local government and other general news assignments. He took it and started as a crime reporter working the hardscrabble streets of Fall River, Massachusetts and loved every minute of it.

In 2008, longtime *Providence Journal* sports reporter Shawn McAdam vacated his Red Sox beat to take on a similar role for *The Boston Herald*, and Barbarisi was happy to take over and move his writing in a new direction. What became the second big break for Barbarisi also turned out to be an inspiring fit, as he fell hard for the energy and excitement he found in covering one of the most storied franchises in sports – a return of sorts, to time well-spent at the *Daily*.

**Part Boston, part New York**

Barbarisi stayed on with the *Providence Journal* and kept his Red Sox beat until a certain other journal came calling in 2010, inquiring whether he’d be interested in covering the New York Yankees on the team’s home turf – yes, writing about the team he cheered for growing up.

It was like asking a third-grader if he would like to take a snow day.

Few, if any writers have had the opportunity to cover both the Red Sox and Yankees. But moving from the Sox to their hated rival hasn’t always been the easiest of exoduses. Just ask Babe Ruth, Wade Boggs, Johnny Damon, or Jacoby Ellsbury.
According to Barbarisi, however, more similarities exist between the organizations than one might think.

“They’re both highly-professional, very smart, and tightly-run operations,” he says. “They drive each other to succeed and copy the best things about each other; in that sense, they’re really not too dissimilar in terms of their vision and approach.”

Massarotti became a baseball junkie following the close-but-no-cigar ’75 Red Sox and the team’s celebrated rookies, Fred Lynn and Jim Rice, then-dubbed the “gold dust twins.” Out came a Boston die-hard from that early cementing, and he accordingly believes he was born at the right time, becoming a fan of the city’s legendary franchises as they’ve grown further in popularity and cultural resonance in the 40 years since.

But even more than that, he feels he’s been incredibly fortunate to become one of the documenters of their respective histories.

“To me, there’s no other place like it in America,” he says. “The relationships between teams and fans are far more personal here than anywhere else. New York may be bigger and the city has more teams, but there are other options and diversions there because of its size; with Boston, sports are right in everyone’s face.”

Stone grew up in an area of Connecticut that could somewhat accurately be described as a battleground ill-divided by New York and Boston allegiances. But he identified far more with the latter contingent growing up, and was a copious reader of the Globe’s sports section each time it would hit the family doorstep on Sunday mornings. Working between the two regions, he finds them distinct and equally remarkable, echoing Massarotti’s take.

“There’s a level of passion and knowledge that’s apparent in both cities,” he says. “One difference, though, is that if a Boston team makes it to the championship, everyone in the city is talking about it. In New York, it might still be a big deal, but there’s always something else going on.”

Careers in the making, and beyond

In addition to Jimmy Young’s SportsWorld, Young also earned a New England Emmy Award in 1996 in the sports special category for his Kid Company’s Sports World, the nation’s first live sports talk show for kids.

Young worked his way from small market stations in Massachusetts and Maine before settling in at NECN, where he would spend 15 years working in front of the camera as a broadcaster and behind it in a sales role. His business acumen eventually landed him a job in the Globe’s sales department, but he grew restless with the changing newspaper industry and longed to get back into what he felt was one of his true innovations – sports broadcasting for children.

That concept came full-flower when Young Broadcasters of America opened in 2008, a television studio that offered lessons, classes, and on-air practice time for kids. Young even took out his Rolodex to bring in past and present colleagues who could give his students professional and experienced instruction.

YBC lasted for four years. Though the idea may have been too new and innovative to sustain its initial support, Young still believes there’s a market for what he tried to do.

For now, Young is looking to design curriculum for the next generation of sports broadcasters, and this past year started a new chapter in his career by signing on with Media Educators of America, returning to what he loves—building coalitions and organizing events that bring together students and educators to discuss media.
Historically not quite the bastion for sports coverage, Barbarisi is riding a changing tide of sorts as the Wall Street Journal continues to expand its sports and lifestyle coverage, a shift that began in earnest after the paper’s acquisition by News Corp in 2007. Barbarisi says the Journal brought in “lots of hires to attack those areas,” leading to an initial spike in the paper’s 2 million-plus circulation. He feels the paper’s sports department is fast becoming one of the country’s best, and is pleased and grateful to be part of the ascendance.

He’s also embracing the increasing digital aspects of his job, viewing technology not as a threat to print, but rather a useful and powerful ally.

Barbarisi cites a story he wrote last summer about the 30th anniversary of baseball Hall of Famer George Brett’s infamous “pine tar” incident as a good example, where rookie umpire Tim McClelland nullified Brett’s late-inning home run and instead ruled him as the game’s last out for having too much pine tar on his bat. McClelland checked the bat at the request of legendary Yankee skipper Billy Martin, and Brett’s animated reaction remains one of the game’s great tirades.

“I wrote a fun little piece on it about Brett’s bat boy and the next day the story exploded all over social media and the 24-hour news cycle,” says Barbarisi. “The bat boy is now a New York cop, and he still feels responsible for what happened.”

Meanwhile, Massarotti remains comfortably in front of mic and camera on Felger and Mazz, currently the highest-rated sports radio show in Boston and The Sports Hub’s crown jewel, occupying the coveted 2 to 6 p.m. timeslot. The success has led to televised simulcasts each weekday on Comcast SportsNet, giving him even greater visibility.

Massarotti frequently comes across over the airwaves as an incisive and pointed commentator who, above all else, remains passionate. But what truly makes him a great analyst is likely the voluminous body of work he produced during his more than 15 years as a beat writer and columnist for the Globe and Herald.

Being a homegrown product helps. The Waltham-bred Massarotti can skillfully wax off on Boston sports lore at the drop of a puck: A fact-based opinion on who belongs on Boston’s Mount Rushmore of sports?

Check. A quick summary of what made the ’86 Celtics so great? Easy. What have the Red Sox been able to figure out over the last 10 years that they couldn’t over the previous 86. How much time do you have?

“It can be intense, but I love it here,” he says. “Mike (Felger) and I have learned to disagree. Some stories warrant more discussion than others, and you can only take so many callers, so you try to focus on what’s most pivotal. One difference from being a writer is that there’s nowhere to hide on the radio.”

Massarotti has also branched out into other projects. His compendium show, The Baseball Reporters, follows Felger and Mazz on weeknights during baseball season, breaking down the game’s minutia for a fan base that seems to have an endless thirst such things.

He’s also written four books—all baseball-related—ranging from the Red Sox/Yankees rivalry to the science behind Sox pitcher Tim Wakefield’s seam-shifting knuckleball.

Now closing in on 25 years at SI, Stone says the biggest change he’s seen at the magazine is the rapid acceleration of the news cycle and the impact that has on a bi-weekly publication. Stone and SI have learned to acclimate, though, to both online and real-time reporting, and SI’s web presence now attracts more than 26 million visits per month.

Despite shifting tastes and attitudes among readers, he still views the magazine as highly-relevant, filling an important and necessary role in national sports coverage.
“Our long-form pieces get a lot of praise,” he says. “Part of our job is looking beyond the stream of headlines and digging deeper by finding the kinds of things that will get readers thinking.”

He cites a last year’s cover story on Jason Collins, who became the first openly gay athlete to participate in a major American sport, as a good example of the magazine’s continuing strengths—uncovering sports’ deeper stories as they relate more broadly to a changing society.

The Collins story, which he edited, marked a particularly proud moment for Stone.

“It’s rare that you get the opportunity to become a part of history,” he says. “I also worked on the story about Alex Rodriguez’s steroid scandal. That wasn’t a happy story, but I was still proud of it because stories like that have to be told, and not everyone is willing to tell them.”

Contrary to print media naysayers, Stone believes now is as good a time as any to jump into newspapers and magazines. CMS Senior Aaron Leibowitz, A14, signed on as one of Stone’s interns last year and cited his time at SI as a key influence for a senior thesis he wrote about the recent Richard Sherman controversy.

“There’s a sense that the opportunities aren’t what there once were, but there are different sorts of opportunities now,” Stone says. “Older editors are going to increasingly lean on young people who are coming up because they’ve grown up with technology; their ideas are far more valued today than the ones I had 22 years ago.”

Bringing it all back home

By John Ciampa

Co-founder of Walden Media, Micheal Flaherty, A90, walked to his Tufts admissions interview when he was still a high school student. Growing up in Arlington, Mass., the campus is a mere 12 minutes from his old neighborhood, and as a boy he sometimes visited with his parents on weekends. He was fascinated that a place which drew people from all over the world could be so close.

Those early dreams of a life spent with interesting and diverse people on the Hill were similar to the ones Flaherty had as a youngster reading books; dreams that would take him to new and exciting places filled with novelty and wonder. Tufts, it seemed, just might be the kind of setting where some of those dreams could come true.

“Tufts was perfect for me in that it seemed very different from some of the schools my friends wanted to go to,” he says. “It was a place where it was OK to be a nerd, and to be interested in stories and big ideas.”

Flaherty founded the film production and distribution company, Walden Media, just over a decade after leaving Tufts, with a lingering love for stories and a pocketful of leftover ideas still intact. Along with co-founder Cary Granat, A90, he has steered Walden in the decade since to the forefront of what has become a revival for literature-inspired film. By the time the company released the third installment of The Chronicles of Narnia in 2010, Walden gave notice that it would be around for the long haul, proving that a unique fusion of film, literature, and education could sustain a mass audience.

Flaherty says the breeding ground for this success was the Tufts Experimental College, where both he and Granat taught courses as students, developing a friendship that would serve as the foundation for future collaboration. Flaherty cites the class he taught in particular—a course that looked at the changing aspects of the American family as a catalyst for understanding the changing directions of familial dynamics—a theme that has informed his work ever since.

Flaherty moved to New York in the summer of 1990 as a newly-minted graduate and took a job as a research assistant for National Review, leaving work every day with “ink-stained hands” from articles he had to hand-cut from the pages of the New York Times. He eventually returned to Boston to work for former Massachusetts Senate President William Bulger, and began developing a strong interest in the education of children. He signed on with the educational organization the Steppingstone Foundation in 1997, developing curriculum that would assist inner-city youth in gaining admittance to the region’s more competitive schools.

“I was always interested in finding informal ways to teach and to learn,” he says. “And I think that goes back to my time at the Ex College.”
Still dreaming, Flaherty remembers having his first vision for Walden when the blockbuster film Titanic was ubiquitously occupying the nation’s theaters and shattering records. He sensed that the film signaled a renewed interest in stories of the past, epochal morality plays that conjured up heroes and villains and inspired the public to imagine. He contacted Granat, who by then was already making inroads as a film producer, and the two began brainstorming as if they were back in the classroom, tossing around proposals about a new kind of way to produce films.

“That’s when we came up with the idea to form a new company that would focus on great books and historical events—things that would get kids excited and asking the big questions again,” says Flaherty.

It was a tough sell, at least at first. Flaherty openly admits to getting “laughed out of every private equity firm in the country,” but he also says Granat was “insanely loyal” to him and stuck by their grand idea. The last meeting they could afford brought them face to face with Philip Anschutz, a highly-successful entrepreneur who, according to Flaherty “believed in the vision.” Under the auspices of the Anschutz Entertainment Group, the company and its vision flourished.

“He took no baby steps. He jumped in right away and told us to think and dream as big as possible,” says Flaherty.

Flaherty said he used Anschutz’s and his wife’s “reading lists” as source material for some of Walden’s early exploits. In 2003 the company released its first film, Holes, based on Louis Sacher’s 1998 novel about a juvenile detention camp where inmates were reduced to a life of digging ditches and taking orders. Not exactly traditional children’s fare, the push to make the film came from a surprising, if telling, source—a teacher and her students in Pennsylvania wrote Flaherty and Granat letters persuading them the book deserved its moment on the big screen. The kids were right, as Holes turned a sizeable profit and garnered positive reviews for its daring take on a genre that typically chooses to play it safe. “It was a different kind of kid’s movie—a film that challenged children’s thinking as much as it entertained them,” says Flaherty.

Other book-based films followed, including I Am David, Nim’s Island, and City of Ember. The three-part The Chronicles of Narnia, of course, was the game-changer, grossing more than $1.5 billion worldwide. Narnia’s first installment, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, was one of Flaherty’s favorite books as a child, and the film exceeded every possible expectation for him, both critically and commercially. Flaherty admits things got a bit crazy after Narnia’s runaway success, and as the company began to expand beyond book-inspired films to a wider variety of sources, he says the company lost some of its initial focus.

A temporary loss of focus is often a byproduct of dreamers, however, and Flaherty and Walden are seemingly back to their original directive with the upcoming release of The Giver on August 15, a film starring Jeff Bridges and Meryl Streep that’s based on Lois Lowry’s 1993 novel. The story is a thought-provoking take on individualism and the qualities that make people inherently unique. Interestingly, The Giver was the first book Walden optioned more than 14 years ago, and finally bringing this long-term project to fruition is especially satisfying for Flaherty.

“I can’t wait for the film to see the light of day and the kind of discussions it will provoke,” he says.

Flaherty maintains that the biggest challenge for Walden is holding on to the initial vision he had, one that included families flocking to theaters to lose themselves in great stories, and perhaps coming away with lessons learned. Fittingly, Flaherty’s latest venture involves an evolving family of sorts at Tufts. Having worked closely with CMS and taking on a string of successful interns since the founding of Walden, he’s eager to further explore the nexus of education and film, and how he might be able to collaborate on some level with the university.

“We want to be different kind of company that’s more thoughtful, and working with Julie (CMS Director Julie Dobrow) and other Tufts faculty (including Professor Richard Lerner, director of the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at the Eliot Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development), I’m excited to find out what we can do together.”

“It always seemed to make a lot of sense because CMS is about media literacy, Rich’s lab is about positive youth development, and Walden Media is about both of those things,” says Dobrow. “Could we come up with something that’s a cutting-edge research lab that’s also about finding different ways of looking at media and its positive social impact? How can media further a child’s social and emotional development?”

“We’re thinking about how to formalize a relationship, and bring it back to where it all started,” says Flaherty.

The chance to return to the place he dreamt about and then got the opportunity to experience and grow from is a rather ideal story arc for Flaherty. You might say it’s almost fairytale-like.

“It’s pretty special to see this going full-circle,” he says.
CMS Events – Spring 2014

Editor’s note: The next few pages contain a summary of the spring 2014 slate of CMS events that go beyond the who, what, when, where, and why.

A Visit from Meredith Turits, A09 (January)
Meredith Turits, senior cultural editor at the online magazine Bustle, returned to campus to offer insights on the rapidly-changing magazine industry as it moves ever closer to life after print. Turits provided unique insights during her visit about the industries inner-workings, in addition to the role she played during the early stages of Bustle. Afterward, Turits visited Susanne Althoff’s “Inside Women’s Magazines” class to continue the conversation (see page 15).

A Conversation With a National Security Reporter (February)
It’s truly remarkable that in the five years since her graduation, Sara Sorcher, A09, has been able to build such an impressive resume. From working as a freelance journalist based in Israel to serving as National Journal’s national security correspondent stateside, Sorcher has already covered significant journalistic ground—both geographically and topically—in her still-young career. CMS was happy to welcome her back for an informal conversation with students about her experiences as a “backpacking” reporter, working in some of the world’s most daunting locales.

Sorcher told students that her career was a direct outgrowth of her ability to successfully fuse her Middle Eastern Studies major with a CMS minor. Coupled with a series of successful internships, she was poised to cover stories—from articles to documentaries to multimedia presentations—with both skill and aplomb (see our Spring 2010 newsletter for an extended profile). From there, she told students, it was simply a matter of going for broke.

Screening of Kind Hearted Woman (February)
CMS was thrilled to welcome David Sutherland, A 67, to campus in early-February for a special screening of Kind Hearted Woman, his latest film that the New York Times called “a detailed portrait of the kind of lives rarely given a media spotlight, those lived on the margins of rural America, where money and education are scarce.” The film aired on PBS during the spring of 2013, garnering widespread acclaim. Sutherland spoke to students after the film about its genesis, sharing insights about his many unique filming techniques, including his signature style of discreet camera work and an emphasis on richly-detailed sound reproduction.

How to Land a Media Job: Tips for Seniors (February)
CMS was pleased to welcome back a panel of media professionals for the annual “How to Land a Media Job: Tips for Seniors” event in February. The event featured Gail Bambrick, senior marketing communications writer for Tufts and instructor for a number of CMS courses, David Brittan, editor of Tufts Magazine, Pete Chianca, A90, editor in chief for the north unit at GateHouse Media New England, Carol Greenwald, senior executive producer of children’s programs at WGBH Boston, and Taryn Roeder, associate director of publicity at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. It was an evening of tips, resume and interviewing advice, networking ideas, and post-panel mingling.
Book Publishing in the Digital Age (March)
What have publishing companies been doing to stay afloat in the rapidly changing world that’s shifting from print to digital? A packed room heard Michael Fisher, assistant director for university relations and executive editor for science and medicine of Harvard University Press, Jessica Saint Jean, art coordination associate at Candlewick Press, Debbie Kovacs, senior vice president and editorial director of Walden Pond Press, and Taryn Roeder, associate director of publicity at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt discuss ways in which each of their companies are taking advantage of digital technology by making publications available in electronic forms. On the whole, the panel did not see the growing influence of electronic media as an end to book publishing, but rather a new tool for wider distribution of content.

Digital Media Hangout “Beyond the Click: Careers in Digital Media” (March)
Embracing the new technology of Google Hangouts, students gathered in the CMS Library for an “over the web,” remote discussion about digital media with Tufts alums Rebekah Gilbert, A09, Shari Novick, A12, and Abha Gallewale, A13. As recent graduates, each stressed how important it was for college students to try to aim for careers in growing fields, such as digital media. A main concern of students was the competition with graduates from other universities that offer majors in digital media, and how to use Tufts’ well-rounded liberal arts education to their advantage. The panelists assured them that with this background, communicating and understanding the needs and goals of vendors, which can range from banks to publishing companies, is easier when you have some knowledge of the company you are trying to represent and how it functions. As students could see, that notion paid off for our virtual visitors: Gilbert works as an account manager at Google, Novick is a global digital strategist at OMD Worldwide, and Gallewale is an account executive at Digitas.

Screening of Kings, Queens and In-betweens (March)
We were thrilled to have Professor Jennifer Burton, along with two of her sisters, Maria and Gabrielle, screen a rough cut of their new 5 Sisters Production film Kings, Queens and In-betweens. The Burton sisters spoke with students and faculty about this work in progress. Professor Laurence Senelick from Drama and Dance led an engaged discussion at the conclusion of the screening. This event was part of the “A Camera of Her Own: Contemporary Women Filmmakers” that CMS co-sponsors along with the Drama and Dance Department and the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program.

Television Writers Workshop (April)
Though it was April Fool’s Day and we were dealing with some pretty humorous materials, this was no joke. Television writer/producer/director Stephen Engel, A83, spent the day with CMS in a variety of activities that kept us all learning—and laughing.

One highlight of Engel’s visit was a master class on television writing he taught. Professor Jennifer Burton opened up her DR 194 “Half the History” class to additional CMS students, and 20 lucky students got to participate. Engel, executive producer for ABC/Disney’s Mighty Med series, had students watch an episode and familiarize themselves with the characters in advance. When he got to class, Engel told the students of a situation that had unfolded in the writer’s room when, just hours before they were to shoot an episode, the NFL pulled the plug on a script guest-starring football star. Engel then broke the students up into groups and told them to come up with a pitch for a redesigned episode, just what the actual writers had had to do. Students made their pitches for Engel, who critiqued them, and then showed students how the writers had actually rewritten the show before it was shot.

Later in the afternoon Engel was joined by fellow Jumbos, television writer/productions and funnymen Jeff Greenstein, A84, and Jeff Strauss, A84, who, in what could only be called a cosmic convergence, had also made their way back to Tufts on the same day. The three told tales of their own journeys from the Hill to Hollywood before a packed room of future Hollywood hopefuls. They kibitzed, offered advice that was alternately sage and irreverent, and filled the room with laughter.

Could this have possibly happened on any other date?
The Edward R. Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism (April)
The 9th annual Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism featured Chair, President and Editor-in-Chief of the Huffington Post, Arianna Huffington. The topic of this year’s event, “From TV to Tablets: Is the Digital Frontier Making Journalism Better?” provided a lively forum in which Jonathan Tisch, A76, asked Huffington a provocative variety of questions and engaged her on both the strengths and the limitations of the new model of online news she has helped to craft in the Huffington Post.

In introducing the event, CMS Director Julie Dobrow mentioned that when she announced Huffington as this year’s Murrow speaker, the Tufts Daily suggested that Murrow would “unlikely recognize” her as someone in the traditional mold of a journalist. Dobrow agreed, but added, “I also believe that Edward R. Murrow would have embraced our selection of Arianna Huffington as this year’s speaker because she, like he, is a true journalistic innovator.”

A video of this year’s Murrow Forum will be available on the CMS website later this month.

Photos from the 2014 Edward R. Murrow Forum, clockwise from top left: Arianna Huffington shares a lighter moment with the audience while Jonathan Tisch conducts an interview centered on the evolving state of news coverage.

Below: Huffington meets with various members of campus media, including the Tufts Daily, Tufts Observer, WMFO, and TUTV. Bottom left: CMS Senior Sam Poliquin watches intently while filming the proceedings.
Beyond the cover: an inside look at women’s magazines

By John Ciampa

It all started, appropriately enough, with an article.

It was last June when Susanne Althoff read Jessica Grose’s piece in *The New Republic*, an eyebrow-raising look at how the most recognized editors-in-chief at major magazines continue to primarily be, as she memorably put it, “white dudes.” An unfortunate if unsurprising phenomenon.

Grose’s “Can Women’s Magazines Do Serious Journalism” leaves some other lingering, troubling questions in its wake: Why aren’t more women assuming top editorial positions at what she calls “thought-leader” magazines? And, for that matter, why are women’s magazines still considered “less-serious” than men’s or general interest publications?

The article struck a chord with Althoff, editor of the *Boston Globe Magazine*, who, like many female writers working in the industry, already had strong opinions about such matters.

“A lot of people were talking about how women’s magazines are understood, and how they contribute to journalism as a whole,” she says. “I come from the perspective that women’s magazines are important, yet often unfairly ignored.”

Together with CMS Director Julie Dobrow and Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies Director Sonia Hofkosh, Althoff devised a course for the spring 2014 semester called “Inside Women’s Magazines: From *Ladies Home Journal* to *Bitch* and Beyond,” that sought to illuminate the many aspects that make women’s magazines—and the publishing formulas they employ—important and unique. The course was funded by the WGSS Program, which co-sponsored it with CMS, and by its very nature, would inevitably collide head-on with the questions Grose raised.

In addition to these and other contemporary issues, the course also placed a strong emphasis on the history of women’s magazines, dating back to the late-19th century, when publications first started reaching the masses. Althoff had students considering early contributors such as Dorothy Parker and Eleanor Roosevelt, as well as the magazines’ varying impacts and responses to popular culture and key social issues of the day, including the women’s movement, abortion, healthcare, and equal pay.

Althoff said that the history aspect of the course was fascinating for students, and that they were especially eager to learn about the roles of early female journalists, often viewing them as trailblazers and role models. In a strange bit of circumstance, one of the magazines frequently cited (and source material for the course’s namesake) announced it would cease operations as the semester was unfolding: On April 24, *Ladies Home Journal* stated it would end its monthly run this coming July after more than 131 years of continuous publishing. Yet more evidence of a constantly-changing industry.

By design, Althoff’s class was relatively small, allowing for in-depth discussion and close interactions. Guest speakers were a staple, as Althoff used her extensive professional network to invite professionals into the classroom to provide students with insights about the inner-workings of the magazine trade. They ranged from Alyssa Giacobbe, former editor at *Elle, Harper’s Bazaar, Teen Vogue, InTouch Weekly,* and *Lucky* to CMS’ own *Bustle* and a former associate online editor at *Glamour,* in addition to many more. Each week speakers would reflect on their experiences or particular areas of expertise, enhancing the weekly readings by way of practical insights and experiential anecdotes.
As the semester unfolded, students continued to absorb the finer elements of women’s magazines and the challenges they continue to face. In addition to discussions about what constitutes a successful publishing “formula,” students examined the roles that celebrities and models play in magazine content and marketing. Students also looked at the differences between women’s magazines and men’s or general interest publications.

Other discussions focused on whether women’s magazines are able to produce hard-hitting journalism, and even when they do, whether they would be taken seriously and honored accordingly by the industry. The culture of the women’s magazine workplace and job-landing strategies were also topics for discussion, as was magazine photography, layout and design. Finally, Althoff and her students addressed the question of whether magazines can be tools for issue advocacy—an increasingly important element for many publications as readers become more demanding and sophisticated.

Such inquiry eventually led to questions as to why a separate “women’s magazine” classification is even necessary, which trails back to the heart of the course and some of the questions it initially raised.

“Sports Illustrated is not considered a men’s magazine,” says Althoff. “There’s a female audience that’s part of the equation, yet sports coverage in women’s magazines tend to discuss things like how to lose weight or how to look better.”

For evidence of this prevailing gender gap, students this semester need only look around them. As Althoff notes, the class consisted entirely of female students, which she felt was interesting.

Still, the class proved enormously popular, filling to capacity almost as soon as registration opened in January. The students were energetic and engaging, Althoff says, and eager to absorb the material and apply it to their own creative pursuits.

CMS senior Madhuri Khanna, A14, was one of several students who used the course as a jumping off point for her senior project, where she was able to produce an original magazine that came from a unique female perspective.

Elsewhere, senior Molly Mirhashem, A14, centered her senior project on a series of in-depth profiles of contemporary female writers.

“Susanne’s class placed her lessons in the context of the current nature of the magazine publishing industry, so most of the topics we discussed were not only relevant to the current economic and creative climate, but also to our personal interests,” says Khanna.

“We analyzed different magazine covers and discussed the ways women and men are portrayed in stories, images and advertisements. The class helped me to understand how some women’s magazines aim to be producers of knowledge and serious journalism.”

“A lot of the students were coming to the subject with a strong feminist perspective,” says Althoff. “A lot don’t subscribe to print magazines, but were still extremely interested in them and felt they continue to hold value and influence.”
In their own words: CMS Senior Projects for 2014

Peter Balonon-Rosen - *Investigating Journalism: Producing an Investigative News Series for Somerville Neighborhood News*

I produced a five-part multimedia investigative news series focusing on gentrification's effects on affordable housing for *Somerville Neighborhood News* (SNN), a local bi-weekly television newscast. I served as producer, reporter, anchor, videographer, and editor as a member of the SNN news team. Additionally, I wrote a reflection paper focusing on the limitations of TV news journalism when it comes to conceptualizing and challenging structural causes behind local issues. This process served as a wonderful experience to branch out into the Somerville community, enhance my experience as a videographer, and successfully grow as a journalist.

Knar Bedian – *Uncovering the Sound of Boston: An iPad Music Magazine*

Having had exposure to the music technology industry and as the managing editor of Sound of Boston, a site covering the local music scene, I was curious to explore the ways in which music publications could take on the mobile medium. After researching the current apps of music publications, putting together my written and visual content, and drawing up sketches, I created an interactive music magazine app using a new program called Origami Engine. Though I had to work around some of the program's limitations (and learn how to use it in the first place) I was able to put out a digital publication called "Uncovering the Sound of Boston," complete with interactive visuals, text, and audio.

Madhuri Khanna – *SAANS – The South Asian Arts n' Style Magazine*

For my project I decided to design and publish a South Asian cultural magazine. The magazine is a bridal issue and it included a mix of serious and lifestyle stories. I decided to title my magazine "Saans," which means breath or inspiration in Hindi. This was a rewarding and educational experience and I truly believe that my capstone project helped me tie together all the skills I've acquired at Tufts.

Amir Mosallaie – *A Box Appears: Three Similar Stories from Different Dimensions*

My project was a trilogy of short films, and the result of over a year of brainstorming, writing, shooting, acting, directing, and editing. Though three distinct short films of wholly separate genres, together, *Chasers, Clay,* and *Circuit* attempt to weave a story larger than the sum of their parts. The project has taught me more about film and about myself than I will ever know, and has augmented my love and passion for the craft tenfold.
Nicola Pardy – *Quince: Exploring the Female Experience Within Cuban Culture*

With the support of Tufts' Institute for Global Leadership and the Program for Narrative and Documentary Practice, I traveled to Cuba along with a friend and fellow student journalist, Emily Bartlett, to document the female experience within the Cuban context. We photographed and interviewed teenage girls in Alamar, a suburb of La Habana, to understand the unique social rituals and societal pressures that this particular demographic faces.

Amy Strauss – *Alameda Court: An Animated Television Show for 6 to 8 Year-olds*

For my senior project, I planned out an animated television show for children. I did a lot of research about what already exists and what is known about how children interact with television, and used this information to plan the premise, characters, and some story lines for a new show. Then I wrote the pilot script for the show. This experience gave me the confidence to be creative with children’s media, and taught me about the process of writing for both television and children.

Alison Williams – *How to Be Vine Famous: A Study of Microcelebrities on Vine*

I wanted to study Vine “microcelebrities” and determine what exactly made them so popular with their millions of followers on the platform. I also wanted to see if Vine microcelebrities used the same kinds of self-promotion tactics found on other platforms such as YouTube. I conducted my project through a content analysis of over 250 Vines from 16 of the most popular users. I discovered that most popular Vine users don’t constantly self-promote, but instead rely on humor to entice their audiences. Many use humor based on racial stereotypes, gender stereotypes, and parodies of popular movies, TV shows, and music.

Lauren Witte - *SuperOrdinaries*

What began as a pitch in the opening weeks of my first screenwriting course evolved into an idea for a story that would extend far beyond the confines of the original screenwriting assignment. My senior project, a feature-length screenplay entitled “SuperOrdinaries,” is a coming-of-age story that centers on the life of Parker Smith. Parker belongs to a family of SuperOrdinaries, which is a class of quasi-superheroes who have the power to know when bad things are happening. Parker has to navigate his own emotions, familial pressures, and societal norms to figure out how to define a successful life in his eyes. Parker is pitted against his brother, his family, his friends, and himself and must rise to action to save his community—a process in which he learns that it doesn’t take a superhero to be super. Writing SuperOrdinaries was very important to me because it helped me make sense of the same emotions that Parker was dealing with. Through my character, I could examine what it meant and what it means to be going through life transitions and facing the surrounding pressures. Beyond the scope of the project itself, writing my first screenplay was a task I never thought I would be able to accomplish and gives me a sense of pride that I will carry with me.

Nick Woolf – *Leveling the Playing Field: A Soccer-Themed Interactive eBook for Empowering Positive Youth Social-Emotional Development*

I wrote a sportsmanship-themed children's eBook with interactive choose-your-own adventure features to promote positive social-emotional development. I then used the eBook as part of a pilot study to test its effectiveness. Completing my senior project for the Mass Communications and Media Studies minor was an amazingly unique process—one that was challenging and stressful at times, but, ultimately, the most rewarding experience of my time at Tufts. Working on an ambitious project throughout the entire semester led to an astounding amount of personal growth and allowed me to really dive into something I would not have been able to explore in my normal course load.
CMS Interns Gain Experience, Connections

This spring, students doing internships in the field of communications earned valuable hands-on experience, made important career connections, and had lots of fun. Students worked in a range of companies, from TV stations and advertising agencies to start-ups and video production houses. Enrolled through the for-credit CMS course EXP99, interns participated in advertising and public relations campaigns at Hill Holliday, 451 Marketing and Arnold Worldwide; managed social media at WGBH; wrote creative copy at Racepoint Global; designed and tweeted an original Twitter CYOFable (Create Your Own Fable) campaign at Fablevision, and so much more.

The internship program’s new online, searchable database of internship openings also launched this spring. The new system, built with Filemaker, allows students to research internship opportunities that match their interests. Students can search the database using a range of criteria, including fields of interest, location, hours, and more. The new system also allows the CMS program to quickly and efficiently update internship listings. Students can also search for openings from home, during off hours, and even while studying abroad. In the coming months, we will continue to develop and expand the database to help students find exciting, career-enhancing positions.

Also new this year were several info sessions on “How to Find an Internship.” Hosted by CMS Internship Administrator Leslie Goldberg, these drop-in sessions, held a few times each semester, addressed the frequently asked questions students have about finding and obtaining credit for media-related internships. Golberg also launched “Internship Digest,” a bi-semester e-update that offers internship-related news, available positions, and FAQs.

For more information about obtaining a for-credit summer or fall internship, contact Leslie Goldberg at leslie.goldberg@tufts.edu or John Ciampa at john.ciampa@tufts.edu.

David Burke and CJ Saraceno interns announced

CMS is pleased to announce the names of two highly-deserving students as this summer’s David Burke and CJ Saraceno interns.

Graduating CMS Senior Peter Balonon-Rosen, A14, will be the fifth Burke intern, and will spend the bulk of his summer inside the newsroom at public radio station WBUR in Boston. Balonon-Rosen will split duties between the station’s multiplatform newsdesk and the nationally-syndicated show Here and Now. As a student, Balonon-Rosen showed a keen interest in covering local, urban issues as a regular correspondent for the Somerville Evening News on local access television.

This summer internship program has been established in honor of Tufts Alumnus David Burke as a tribute not only to his impressive career in public service and media, but also to his commitment to mentorship and experiential learning. Burke passed away on April 18 at the age of 78. You can read about his many accomplishments in obituaries published recently in both The Boston Globe and The New York Times.

Sophomore Dylan Kai Dempsey, A16, will be the inaugural intern for the CJ Saraceno Los Angeles Internship, a scholarship fund spearheaded by L.A.-based alums Daniel Rosen, A10 and Rosanna Xia, A11. Both Rosen and Xia rallied others to establish a fund in memory of CJ Saraceno, A11, who describe him as a passionate creator who challenged the status quo, and noted that this scholarship aims to provide financial support and transformational experiences to students who want to dive head-on into the Los Angeles media world.

Saraceno cultivated a blossoming media career evident in the body of work he has left behind—an impactful portfolio of new media accomplishments and ambitious endeavors, according to those who knew him.

“We’re very pleased to see this opportunity come to fruition,” says Rosen. “We hope it’s the beginning of a lasting relationship with CMS that will carry on the spirit of CJ and what he stood for.”
Broadening borders (a reflection on studying overseas)

By Gracie McKenzie, A14

When I left Tufts in December 2013 to study in Denmark, I thought it was to examine what I’ve always wanted to do with my life: journalism, media, design, and creative business. These fields do exist within Tufts’ academic landscape as Communications and Media Studies and Entrepreneurial Leadership Studies, but these interdisciplinary minors supplement a course of study rather than serve as its centerpiece.

I expected that my classes would be filled, for the first time, with peers who study communications full-time – and many of my classmates did. In April, when I was choosing my senior seminar, some of the people I sat next to were selecting courses in advertising, business, and telecommunications.

But at the Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS), I was not alone in my liberal arts education or even my interdisciplinary major. In my core course of 27, there were students from both Wellesley and Smith, not far from Tufts in terms of academic aim or location, as well as two other American studies majors, from Brandeis University and the University of Virginia.

And, just as the makeup of my peers surprised me, so did my study abroad experience as a whole.

I was effectively illiterate in Denmark. Though I am European (a dual Irish-American citizen) and semi-functional in Spanish, I still felt somewhat dumb and uncultured on a daily basis, and rather insecure among the tall blondes around me who switched effortlessly between Danish and English, all while pulling off bigger scarves, tighter jeans, and higher heels than I ever could.

I didn’t expect to feel incompetent.

But more than anything, I was continually surprised that I learned more about communications outside of the classroom than I ever did within the confines of my school assignments. To be clear: I don’t mean to “dis” my abroad program (no pun intended). It’s just that after this semester, I remain unconvinced that the skills necessary to work in communications can be gained completely in a classroom.

My classes through DIS focused on “theory and practice,” which means that while we read sociological and psychological research in class, we also spent quite a bit of time on projects that mimicked the “real world.” In my “Journalism vs. PR” course, we spent five hours in a simulation dealing with a PR crisis in a faux company. And in my “Creative Industries” class, I designed merchandise that DIS will sell at the end of the semester, managed and edited a blog for which each of my classmates wrote three posts, and made my own professional website.

The classroom experiences that were the closest to reality were the ones that best prepared me for the real world, which I experienced approximately two days per week. I had an internship with the Copenhagen Post, the only English language newspaper in Denmark. It wasn’t easy, but I can’t help but feel that by writing articles that were edited by professionals for publication, I learned far more about the process than I ever could in a classroom.

If I hadn’t left Tufts, I would always wonder. But at this point, I don’t feel underprepared for the real world of communications having chosen to pursue my college degree in a liberal arts institution – especially this particular liberal arts institution. After a semester with both pre-professional and liberal arts students, I still don’t see a difference in our professional potential. I thought I needed to study journalism in the classroom, but I think what I really needed to do was step outside my Tufts degree and see a little more of the world, before returning to the Hill to focus on studying what I like to study, which I now see will prepare me for what I want to do.

Editor’s note: Gracie McKenzie studied Cross-Cultural Communications in Copenhagen during this past spring in Denmark through the Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS). In the fall, she’ll return to Tufts to complete a degree in American Studies with a minor in Mass Communication and Media Studies.