Inside this issue:

An Interview: Mohamed Mahmoud Returns to Tufts

Q: Mohamed, you left Tufts in summer 2001 to spend a sabbatical year in England. Because of visa issues in the wake of September 11, you were unable to return until this semester. Welcome home! Bring us up to date on life during your time away.

MM: Though it was difficult to be away from Tufts, I’d to be “philosophical” about my situation and accept it as a matter of reality. I’m, however, used to the situations of exile on the one hand and being denied entry into countries on the other. Since summer 2001, I spent all my time in England. My time was divided between Birmingham and Oxford. The Department of Theology at Birmingham University was supportive and through them I’d constant access to the university library and in particular the library of the Selly Oak Centre which has an active Islamic Studies program.

Also, I could take an active part in many seminars and conference events. Besides focusing on my research, I also did some teaching at Durham University and Oxford Brooks University. I couldn’t live without my student contact, as I’ve always found contact with students intellectually stimulating and revitalizing.

Q: Your reception of tenure last May was unprecedented at Tufts; you were awarded tenure in absentia. This was a pretty impressive affirmation of the esteem in which you are held by your students and faculty colleagues in the university. What were your thoughts upon learning that your tenure application had been favorably received?

MM: This means a lot to me. This is my second tenure, as I’d tenure before at Khartoum University. But this

(Continued on page 13)

It’s All Happening in Comparative Religion...

With Our Majors and Minors

Lunhide Amazan, ’06, double major in CR and Clinical Psychology, served as a Resident Assistant last year during Houston Hall’s second year as an all-freshmen dorm, housing 270 first-year students. Last summer, she took three courses in Tufts’ summer program.

Also, she is currently volunteering with Adoption and Foster Care. Volunteers work with children in adoptive and foster living situations, providing support and mentoring to encourage each child to reach his or her full potential. She was Clinical Psych senior internships, Lunhide also volunteers 12 hours each week for the Boston Youth Network. She plans to participate in the dance group Spirit of Color and Tufts Dance Collective, as well as Caribbean Club and International Club.

Megan Ault, ’07, double major in CR and Psychology, is planning to study abroad in Barcelona this spring. In preparation, she took an immersion Spanish course last summer, and also spent time in Spain improving her language skills. This fall, she is serving as co-president of the Tufts Feminist Alliance. Megan is looking into possibilities for next summer to further her interest in women and religion.

(Continued on page 6)
A "Muslim Refusenik": One Woman's Call for Reform in Her Faith

Shasta Jean-Mary, '05, wrote these reflections after hearing the author and activist Irshad Manji speak at Goddard Chapel last spring.

After walking up to the podium in Goddard Chapel, Irshad Manji takes a sip of water from her glass and then thanks Reverend O'Leary for his introduction. While waiting for her to begin her lecture, the audience is able to take in the woman who wrote a book questioning Islam in its current state. The casual paring of jeans and a bright tangerine sweater over a white buttoned-down blouse emphasizes her youthfulness. Her short, dark hair is shot through with streaks of golden brown; the spiky but very neat do adds inches to her short frame. Stylish glasses with rectangular lenses and a thick, dark frame accentuate her oval face. Even though her presence has already captivated the audience, they lean forward on the pews after she begins her lecture with "I call myself a 'Muslim Refusenik.' That doesn't mean I refuse to be a Muslim; it means that I refuse to join an army of automatons in the name of God."

Ms. Manji starts out her best selling book, The Trouble with Islam Today: A Muslim's Call for Reform in her Faith, with the same theme. Her calling as a Muslim Refusenik is what prompted her to write a book that could potentially place her in the same situation as Salman Rushdie and Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The two very large bodyguards who shadow her at Goddard illuminate the backlash against her "nerve." (Later, she gives a chilling account of an Imam at her mother's mosque whose scathing sermons assert that she is more dangerous than Osama bin Laden). Despite the danger, she penned an open letter to readers of all religions (and those who have none at all). In her letter, she talks about her life and the events that led her to this point. Her comments are interspersed with jokes that hint at her frustration with the state of things. When focusing on the promise of seventy virgins in Paradise for suicide bombers, she writes, "It's like a perpetual license to ejaculate in exchange for a willingness to detonate." Ms. Manji also addresses her audience with an interesting one-sided dialogue that begs the reader to interact with her. Her lecture was in the same format and equally as compelling. During the lecture, she intersects, "I know what you want to ask me: 'Irshad, how can you question your faith and yet maintain your connection with God and Islam?' I say religion has nothing to fear from questions. It is dogma that should worry."

Dogma is exactly what she tackles in her book. Irshad Manji grapples with the misinterpretation of Islamic texts that she thinks many Muslim teachers perpetuate and extremists abuse. These themes include the inferior treatment of Muslim women, the rampant anti-Semitism countless Muslims engage in, the ongoing slavery in Islamic countries, and the inability of many Muslims to speak out against their own faith. She states that because the Qu'ran is the last sacred text written, it appears to have final say on everything pertaining to religion. It is God's Word in its most pure form, and therefore, Muslims believe if they question it, then they are guilty of being non-believers. Nevertheless, she has no qualms against bringing up the contradictions that plague Islam's most holy book, and stresses that opposition is necessary for change. Manji attributes her fearlessness to the constructive aspects of democracy, particularly the freedom to ask questions:

"I knew I lived in a part of the world that permitted me to explore. Thanks to the Freedoms afforded me in the West -- to think, search, speak, exchange, discuss, challenge, be challenged, and rethink -- I was poised to judge my religion in a light that I couldn't have possibly conceived in the parochial Muslim microcosm of madressa [Islamic equivalent of Sunday school]" (19).

The freedom to ask questions of her faith is the basis of her plan to reform her faith: Operation Ijihad. In fact, when St. Martin's Press first released her book, it was called The Trouble with Islam. Since open inquiry and critique are integral to her project, she changed the title with the release of the paperback edition, to acknowledge the spirit of Ijihad that has so often in the past fueled progress in Islam:

"Not i-i-h-a-d, but i-j-i-i-h-a-d. Ijihad...the Islamic tradition of independent reasoning, which...allowed every Muslim, female or male, straight or gay, old or young.

(Continued on page 8)
Writing A Senior Honors Thesis: An Incomparable Experience
By: Lauren Dunn, '06

My senior thesis, Social Justice and the Well-being of Women: Re-envisioning Family and Gender in Catholic Social Thought and American Welfare Policy, attempted to expose the ideologies of family and gender that are imbedded in both Catholic social thought and American welfare policy, and to argue against support for marriage promotion programs. The ideology of the traditional family, along with its essentialist assumptions about women, is woven into our policy and theology, and now presents to us an incredible challenge toward realizing a more just social policy. By drawing on Catholic feminist theo-ethics with the goal of promoting the wellbeing of women, I suggested that policy makers adopt a more adequate approach to human relationships than marriage promotion. I also encouraged Catholics to re-envision gender and marriage within the wider scope of the promotion of friendship, to make the welfare of all the members of the American community a moral priority.

The focus of my thesis developed very slowly and continued to narrow even after I had begun writing my first few chapters. I began my research by looking at the histories of both Catholic social teaching and American social policy. Both began in the late 19th century, Catholic social teaching, as a discussion about work in moral terms, and American social policy, as a program for disabled soldiers and widows. Both have ideologically evolved over time towards a focus on the maintenance of the family as a "proper home" and the strong promotion of marriage in contemporary American society. This intersection of policy and theology especially interested me because most of my CR coursework concentrated on religion in contemporary American public life.

Historically, social policy in America that provided assistance to women was founded on the ideal of the patriarchal family structure. These same ideologies and assumptions about family and women are also interlaced in contemporary Catholic social thought. Women's work outside the home was considered physically and morally dangerous for the female gender, the family, and society. Fortunately for me, right while I was completely involved with the depths of my thesis research, the Vatican published a conversation about gender in its Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World (July 31, 2004). This gave me an updated snapshot of where the official Catholic Church stands on gender ideology today. Asserting functional differences between men and women, the traditional Catholic gender theology suggests that the sexes perform hierarchical and complementary roles in marriage and in the world. The Letter denies women the opportunity to classify their work outside the home as a vocation. For women, "the interrelationship between family and work" should have different characteristics from those of men. Women's work outside the home is not taken as serious economic endeavor, but rather another arena for women to express their nurturing, motherly characteristics. Women are not encouraged to desire economic self-sufficiency.

This led me to look into

(Continued on page 10)
Prayers as Provocations: Official Visits to Yasukuni Shrine

Question: When does a simple act of piety become an international incident?

Answer: When it seems to prettify imperialist aggression.

There is in the heart of Tokyo a stately shrine of the native Shinto religion, outwardly resembling many other Shinto establishments. These are for the most part charming places, where one can watch the devout believer or casual tourist stand before the entrance, pull on the straw rope to sound the gong, clap to catch the attention of the kami (divine beings) therein, and offer a perfunctory prayer. The kami worshipped may be gods with names and personalities like the Sun Goddess Amaterasu or her brother Susanoo, mountain or river deities without any particular attributes, fox or badger gods, phallic or fertility deities, or deified humans. Those in Yasukuni happen to be the souls of 2.5 million Japanese killed in the service of the emperor since 1868, hovering over Tokyo, protecting the imperial house and the Japanese nation. That, at least, is what the Yasukuni priests explain in Japanese and English literature distributed to visitors, as well as on their website (http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/english/qanda.html).

So far, not very controversial, at least not to the student of religion familiar with and tolerant toward various ideas about the afterlife. But the literature also presents a particular perspective on history, averting that, "War is truly sorrowful. Yet to maintain the independence and peace of the nation and for the prosperity of all of Asia, Japan was forced into conflict. Yet to maintain the independence and peace of the nation and for the prosperity of all of Asia, Japan was forced into conflict." That's in reference to World War II. The invasion of China from 1937? "Japan’s dream of building a Greater East Asia was necessitated by history and it was sought after by the countries of Asia." And the 14 convicted Class A war criminals, including wartime prime minister Gen. Tōjō Hideki, interred in the shrine? "Martyrs...who were cruelly and unjustly tried as war criminals by a sham-like tribunal of the Allied forces (United States, England, the Netherlands, China and others)." There's nothing subtle in the Yasukuni message. The Japanese war dead all deserve reverence, having served emperors who have always sent them off to fight just wars.

People in China, Korea, the Philippines, and other countries victimized by Japanese aggression in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries might reject the idea that the souls of Japan’s war dead linger in the Tokyo firmament guarding the Land of the Rising Sun. But that's after all just a matter of personal religious belief. The problem is that high-ranking politicians make it a point of visiting the shrine, sometimes on the anniversary of Japan’s defeat in 1945, pointedly and publicly praying for those souls.

There is a history to this public piety. Yasukuni was founded as the official national shrine over 135 years ago, just as the newly-established Meiji regime was transforming the indigenous pre-Buddhist faith into State Shinto. Drawing on the model of European state churches, it hoped to inculcate in the Japanese people (whom they feared might be seduced by Christianity) a belief in the kokutai—the mystical unbreakable unity of the Japanese kami, the Japanese islands that emerged from the limbs and orifices of the primordial deities Izanagi and Izanami, the emperors descending in an unbroken line from the great-great-grandson of the Sun Goddess, and the Japanese people uniquely graced by Heaven. The cult of the emperor was a key aspect of this State Shinto. Represented to the people as a living god, his words (such as the Rescript on Education, and Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors) were treated as holy texts. The national anthem was really an imperial eulogy. "Above the clouds," seldom appearing publicly, the emperor himself conferred the constitution of 1889 on the Japanese people as a gift. The text began with reference to the imperial line "coeval with heaven and earth."

The masses were expected to accept all this, or at least avoid any criticism of the kokutai, which was paired with the (equally holy?)
both off-limits as objects of criticism. As of 1925, questioning either of these could land one ten years’ imprisonment at hard labor. As Japan became increasingly militaristic during the 1930s, and especially after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the divine pretensions of the Japanese monarchy came under sharp attack in the U.S. and elsewhere. Christian fundamentalists in particular fumed against the god-emperor cult. As the U.S.-led occupation of Japan began in September 1945, U.S. officials seriously considered banning the Shinto religion altogether as an element in Japanese fascism. But cooler heads prevailed; scholars noted that the simple devoutness of the adherents of “folk Shinto” had little political content and posed little threat. State Shinto was officially disbanded, however, and Emperor Hirohito obliged to publicly announce that he was not a divinity after all. The U.S.-authored constitution of 1946 officially separated religion and the state, and Yasukuni Shrine, spared demolition, was privatized.

Up until 1976 Japanese prime ministers and the emperor himself made occasional visits to the shrine, but Hirohito discontinued his pilgrimages in 1976, after the war criminals’ remains were added. He apparently wished to avoid controversy. But Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro tested the waters in 1985, producing much protest. (That same year Nakasone’s close ally, U.S. President Ronald Reagan, also drew popular anger when he visited Germany’s Bitberg military cemetery, where SS officers are interred, with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.) Eleven years later another prime minister, Hashimoto Ryutaro, repeated Nakasone’s performance. But these were careful measured gestures, testing the political waters. The current prime minister Koizumi Junichiro has visited annually during his tenure, in his official capacity, signing the guest book accordingly. In response to Asian outrage, he has asked “a positive view of the country.” But what if the past doesn’t warrant a positive view?

“See things as they really are.” This is a basic message of Zen, in its Japanese and other variants. The Kusha school of Zen, rooted in the Indian Sarvastivada and influential in ancient Japan, declares that past, present and future all coexist. Japanese military forces no longer occupy a huge swath of Asia and the South Pacific. But the memory of the evil they did—committing massacre in Nanjing, forcing foreign women into sexual slavery to service Japanese troops, torturing and killing thousands through Unit 731’s bio-warfare experiments—cannot be interred.

William Faulkner wrote that the past isn’t dead; “It isn’t even past.” Living evil makes public prayer for the warrior dead controversial, all the more so when the prayers aren’t just for but to the dead—to millions who fought for an imperialism still frankly championed by the Yasukuni priests. This is why Koizumi’s prayers are not a private religious matter, or an in-house affair of the insular Japanese. They’re a political statement to the world that Japan, protected by claims of piety, and appealing for tolerance for its unique religious customs, need not see things as they really are or were but can distort for patriotic purposes a history of inflicting pain. And pain there is each time the prime minister visits Yasukuni.
their writing, raising questions, offering suggestions, and tendering praise.”

Last summer, Erica interned at MOVA (Mass. Office for Victim Assistance). Since she is interested in attending law school in the future, her father, a lawyer, suggested this placement to give her a different take on the legal system. MOVA provides direct assistance to crime victims and their families. Its work also involves advocacy, legislation and policy, program and grant administration, professional training, and education and outreach (http://www.mass.gov/mova/).

At MOVA, Erica’s work included going to field sites with program coordinators to see what kinds of help were being offered to victims of crime, and to verify that government money was being appropriately spent. She also did some legislative research. “After witnessing how harrowing the legal system can be for victims,” Erica says, “it definitely made me more interested in criminal law. Even so, the Religion major in me has a difficult time seeing issues in black and white, so I’d really like to get more experience before I decide what type of law I want to pursue.”

Nancy Chen, ’06, double major in English and CR, was one of the producers of last year’s Vagina Monologues. She also served as Editor of Optimus Prime Poetry Magazine, and worked at Hodgdon making sandwiches for fellow Tufts students.

In spring term, Nancy took an Ex-College class called SEEP (Science Elementary Education Partners), in which she student-taught science at nearby Winter Hill Community School. For a month last summer, she taught ESL (English as a Second Language) to recent newcomers to the States. “It was a challenging but very rewarding experience,” she says, “because it tested my knowledge of Chinese and English and going back and forth between these two languages.” For the next two months, Nancy taught English literature and math to fifth through ninth graders in New York City at Ivy Bound Prep School, aimed at preparing students for the most prestigious high schools and colleges. She describes her time there as “a unique experience. I created all the lesson plans and had a lot of freedom with the material I used to teach the students.”

This term, Nancy continues as Editor of Optimus Prime, and is still turning out great sandwiches in Hodgdon. But her most exciting activity is co-teaching (with fellow senior Lauren Albertini) an Explorations class titled "How Women Rule: From Mythology to Historical Practice." Nancy hopes that her teaching will “raise awareness and encourage critical thinking for freshmen (and women). We focus on studying notable women leaders and figures that were downplayed and undermined because, after all, history was written by men. We also explore the reasons for the exclusion of such women from history textbooks.” Nancy’s course also serves as a freshman advising seminar, helping first-year students make a smooth transition into collegiate life.

Teaching is Nancy’s future goal. She is considering applying to Teach for America and the New York City Teaching Fellows, programs recruiting recent undergraduates for high-need teaching assignments. She is also considering graduate programs in women’s studies, religion, and ethnic studies.

Christina Cheung, ’06, CR major, volunteered last summer at ACCESS (American Chinese Christian Educational and Social Services), a non-profit organization that offers ESL classes and an enrichment program for children entering kindergarten through grade five. She worked mainly with the kids in grades K through second as a teacher assistant for English and math. Christina continues to volunteer at ACCESS twice a week. She is considering applying to graduate school for a master’s degree in education. Her goal is to work with early elementary children.

Lauren Dunn, dual degree candidate majoring in CR at Tufts and in Studio Art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, will graduate in February. She is working -- and “loving every second of it” -- as a Lobbying Associate at NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby in Washington, DC. Lauren is serving in an eleven month paid internship. Her work focuses on issues of domestic economic equity through the lens of Catholic social teaching, in collaboration with the greater interfaith and human needs advocacy communities.

Last March, Lauren presented aspects of her Senior Honors Thesis in Tufts’ Undergraduate Research Symposium. Her topic was Catholic social teaching and its impact on current U.S. welfare pol-
icy, from a feminist perspective. In April, she participated in the Women’s Studies symposium, “Beyond the Classroom.” Her presentation was on “Social Justice and the Well-Being of Women: Re-envisioning Family and Gender in Catholic Social Thought and American Welfare Policy.”

At our Annual Ceremony of Academic Awards, Lauren received the Ivan Galantic Special Achievement in Humanities Prize, awarded to “a student who has demonstrated the inclination and capacity to cultivate an integrative approach to learning, one who reaches for wisdom, not simply knowledge.”

Andrew Fenlon, ’06, double major in CR and Art History, minor in Visual Art, will be graduating in ’07 with a dual degree from Tufts and the New England Conservatory of Music. At NEC, he is studying music history and is part of the Contemporary Improvisation/Third Stream Department, essentially a mixture of jazz, classical and world music. "Although music is my main pursuit," Andrew says, "I’ve always been interested in religion." He is thinking of pursuing a senior thesis or an independent project next year with Prof. Walser on the popularity of Buddhism and Hinduism in America.

Ben Foote, ’06, double major in CR and Spanish, studied last fall at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma in Heredia, Costa Rica. He lived with a host family (which included two adorable little sisters), took all his classes in Spanish, and spent much time traveling the length and breadth of the country. Ben taught himself to surf (semi-successfully), as well as taking innumerable photographs of the indescribable natural beauty of Costa Rica.

This past spring, Ben decided on a change of scene from the tropical showers of Central America to the perpetually gray drizzle of Edinburgh, Scotland. There he studied a variety of religion-related things, became a karaoke addict, and was significantly involved with the University’s ultimate frisbee team, which placed second in British Nationals.

During spring vacation, Ben traveled to Italy, marveling at Rome’s St. Peter’s Basilica, which he describes as "the most impressive building I’ve ever seen ever." With friends, he visited the tomb of Pope John Paul II on its opening day, and ascended to the top of the dome for a great panoramic view of the city. Ben has become a true believer in studying abroad, and would love to chat with anyone about it.

Last summer, Ben spent his third season at Philmont Scout Ranch outside Cimarron, New Mexico. Philmont covers more than 200 square miles and serves between 25,000 and 30,000 people each summer through a variety of backpacking and leadership training programs. This year, Ben was the manager of Philmont’s newspaper, the PhilNews, with a distribution of more than 1,200 readers.

Ben is excited to be back for his third and final year of Tufts Ultimate Frisbee. He has also been selected to serve as a Writing Fellow for our ARC (Academic Resource Center), and is currently working on his Senior Honors Thesis. He is considering applying to Harvard Divinity School for graduate work, and perhaps pursuing seminary studies in the Reform Jewish tradition.

Natawnee Fritz, ’06, double major in CR and International Relations, minor in Italian, studied abroad in Rome last year with IES. She was present in St. Peter’s Square for the white smoke signaling the election of Pope Benedict XVI.

Tawnee is working on a Senior Honors Thesis for CR on the responsibility of the Catholic Church in relation to the Rwandan genocide. In 2004, she was awarded an Anne E. Borghesani Prize, which enabled her to journey to Africa, where she worked during the summer in Uganda with the African Child Foundation. Her travels took her to the genocide sites of Ntarama and Nyamata in Rwanda, where she saw mass graves and bags of bones from the 15,000+ people killed in these two places alone. Tawnee’s thesis is her attempt to “understand how such brutality could have happened where there is so much beauty all around,” and in particular, to investigate the role and response of the Church in relation to the genocide. She recently shared her African experience with the Tufts community in a symposium of Borghesani Prize recipients.

Tawnee is currently applying for the Peace Corps. She would like to work with community development in Africa.

Kyler Hardin, ’06, double major in CR and Philosophy, enjoyed traveling last summer in Switzerland and Italy. This year, his special study interest is researching death and its psychological and theological relations to, and understanding in, various religious traditions and forms of religion.

Christopher Hope, ’07, CR major, is doing an internship at Mass. General Hospital (continuing from last summer) in AIDS Research. This term, he has started a research project of his own, carrying out experiments involving SIGN dendritic cells as a target for therapeutic vaccine.

Chris is working on a Hip Hop record soon to be released and marketed specifically to colleges titled "HIP HOPE Mixtape Vol. 1." He has been appointed as a Human Rights Commissioner by Mayor Curatone for the City of Somerville.

Marc Katz, ’06, CR major, is assisting Rabbi Jeffrey Summit, Executive Director of Tufts Hillel, on a project studying oral tradition. Marc worked last summer at Camp Eisner, a Jewish camp in the Berkshires. This year, he is captain of the Tufts Swim Team, and is active in his fraternity, Alpha Tau Omega. He hopes someday to attend rabbinical school.

Katerina Lucas, ’07, double major in CR and Philosophy, was born and grew up in Europe, so she describes her time at Tufts as essentially an extended study abroad. She is a non-traditional student, participating in Tufts’ REAL Program, which offers opportunities for adult learners to return to college.

Katerina traveled with her husband to Prague, Czech Republic, last summer to see her family and hang out with friends. They also visited Slovakia, Germany, and Austria.

(Continued on page 12)
Muslim Refuseni
(Continued from page 2)
to update his or her religious
practice in light of contempo-
rary circumstances” (50).

Manji’s Operation Liji-
had has several components,
but its focus is to jump-start
female entrepreneurship in the
Muslim world. She believes
that giving micro-enterprise
loans to women will allow
them to deal with unmet
needs in their communities.
When one woman uses her
money to learn to read and to
open a school, she can then
work to lower the highest
illiteracy rate in the world,
that of Muslim women. (Once
the women learn to read, then
they can point out to the men
the passage in the Qu’ran that
states that any money a
woman makes is hers to keep).
Irshad Manji is hoping that
the quote written on the
wall of a school created with
the type of loan she proposes,
will prove to be true: “Teach
a boy how to read, you only
teach that boy. Teach a girl
how to read, and you teach
the whole community.” This
outlines the rolling effect of
female entrepreneurshipMen
would benefit because it will
courage foreign investment
that will reduce dependence
on jobs in the army and secu-
ritv forces. Children would no
longer have to work at very
young ages, or be prevented
from attending school because
of inability to pay tuition.
Priorities might change. She
acknowledges the overly opti-
mistic tone of her plan, but
also strengthens her argument
with small-scale -- but grow-
ving and glowing -- examples.

The Trouble with
Islam Today is a fearless
woman’s attempt at reorgan-
ing a flawed world. In her
journey toward addressing
the problems of one religion,
Irshad Manji highlights the
problems inherent in several
faiths. Therefore, her message
is for both Muslims and non-
Muslims: “Don’t silence your
selves. Ask questions -- out
loud.”

Reflections from Abroad:
CR  Alum Lauren Peach, ’04, Completes First Year of Peace Corps

What have you been up
to since this time last year?

I’ve been in Namibia,
Africa, working as an HIV
and AIDS Peace Corps Vol-
unteer. I just recently moved
to a new town and job, and
have started working on a lot
of exciting projects. The two
I’m most excited about are the
Juvenile Justice Program and
my girls’ club. I’m working
to re-activate the Juvenile
Justice Program in my region,
to assure that young offend-
ers’ backgrounds and circum-
stances are considered before
punishment is rendered. An-
other key aspect of the pro-
gram is restorative justice: as
opposed to a sentence of jail
time, the offender is given an
opportunity such as commu-
nity service or attending a
behavioral change workshop,
or the chance to repay the
victim, to compensate for the
damage done. The first step
forward getting the pro-
gram back on its feet is to
meet with all the major parties
that should be on the commit-
tee to run it: people in
the ministry of health, prison
officials, police, social work-
ers. This is actually a very
huge task.

My other major focus is
my girls’ club, which meets at
my flat two afternoons a
week. There are nine girls,
between the ages of 13-15,
who have re-ignited my pas-
sion for the work I do here.
We do craft projects,
talk about healthy relationships and sex, talk about the influence of religion and cul-
ture on their decisions, work
on their homework together,
etc. I am really excited to
work with the girls from now
until December of next year,
when I finish my service.

How would you describe
your first year in the Peace
Corps?

The entire past year has
been an important life experi-
ence for me. I love Namibia
and I hate it, but no matter
what, it’s an education like
I’d get nowhere else in the
world. Namibia is 15 years
post-apartheid, 90% Chris-
tian, and almost 25% of the
population is HIV positive. It
also has the greatest economic
disparity between the wealthy
and the poor in the world. Being here has taught
me me something every sing-
le day. I also know my ex-
periences here will benefit
others in whatever I do for the
rest of my life.
Comparative Religion

I've had a chance to take some amazing trips to South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia. Next year, I hope to visit Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, and West Africa.

Any Reflections on your experiences in CR, or the value of your CR/minor?

I see the value of my CR minor in a variety of ways: It has aided me in many interesting discussions with friends and colleagues, especially here in Namibia, when cultural differences become apparent daily. It has also helped me better understand the complicated picture of Namibia and how Christianity has affected Namibia's societal problems both positively and negatively. Negative: the Catholic Church does not promote condom use, which is a deterrent to the promotion of contraception and the fight against AIDS. Positive: Churches are the organizations contributing funds and setting up programming to fight poverty, HIV and AIDS, and other sicknesses.

What are your plans for the future?

When I return from Peace Corps next year in December, I plan to take eight months off and then start law school in fall '07. Law and public policy have always interested me, and after a short time in Namibia, I realized continuing my education at law school is the best way for me to help people in the way that I want.

2006 Calendars for Sale!

Peace Corps Volunteers Create Project For HIV/AIDS Education in Namibia

Lauren would like for the Tufts community to know about a project that is dear to her heart: "The Peace Corps Namibia HIV/AIDS Committee presents its annual fundraiser: Calendars for 2006!"

"After a quarter of a century, the AIDS pandemic is still devastating the world. Namibia, located in southern Africa, ranked as the sixth most infected country in 2004. This high rate of HIV infections has had a profound impact on the rates of life expectancy, orphans, and economic growth in the country. An estimated 22% of Namibians are HIV-positive. Even though these statistics paint a bleak enough picture, they still do not illustrate the intense burden of suffering among individuals and households affected by the pandemic. As more and more Volunteers observe and experience this degree of suffering, we have made HIV/AIDS education a top priority in our two years of service here in Namibia.

"Over 100 Peace Corps Volunteers work in schools and communities throughout Namibia. Our Committee's primary objective is to equip our fellow volunteers with appropriate information and teaching materials to promote HIV/AIDS awareness as one of their secondary projects.

"To finance these projects, our committee has created a calendar for 2006. It consists of photos illustrating the beauty and diversity of Namibian life thereby promoting positive living. All money raised will go toward Volunteers' projects. Our calendar is available for US$15. Your support of this fundraiser would be truly appreciated, and will make a difference in the lives of Namibian youth."

Lauren will be returning to Boston for a visit in December, and will bring calendars (fantastic gifts for the holidays!) to anyone who would like to support this fundraiser. If you wish to purchase a calendar, please contact: Peggy Hutaff @tufts.edu
the sociological trend known as the “feminization of poverty.” Female vulnerability to poverty is encouraged by the unpaid status of “women’s work” within the home, the tradition of paying women less than their male counterparts, and the modern dual role of women as both caretaker and worker. The global phenomenon of the feminization of poverty demonstrates to us that the traditional dependency of women on men has resulted in conditions that make women’s impoverishment inevitable. Welfare policies that fail to address the underlying challenges to female economic self-sufficiency have been unsuccessful for insuring the wellbeing of American women.

Unfortunately our policy makers have not seriously considered the above analysis and women, men and children in America continue to suffer for it. In 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) completely transformed social policy in America from a guaranteed social safety net for all U.S. citizens to a block of funds distributed with discretion by the states. By terminating the reliability of benefits, legislators could more easily enforce moral agendas aimed at influencing beneficiary behavior. Even today, welfare reauthorization legislation increasingly emphasizes the traditional structure of families and the creation of marriage promotion programs. Marriage incentives in welfare policy were given shape in two forms: as a tax credit to “intact” families (married parents and their biological children) and as community programs for marriage counseling and healthy marriage skills instruction. During the 1996 welfare reform, the Catholic Church engaged in ethically and theologically grounded policy analysis and lobbied at the national level to strengthen the welfare system through the moral principles of marriage, responsibility, work, sexual restraint, and sacrifice for children. Widespread Catholic support for social programs like marriage incentives is a result of one of the foundational principles of Catholic social teaching: family as the basic social unit, “the original cell of social life.” Non-traditional family structures like single-motherhood symbolize the breakdown of the family unit, and are viewed by the Catholic Church as symptoms of larger social ills.

Yet, a study by the Catholic social justice lobby NETWORK on the status of beneficiaries since the 1996 reform found that the enforcement of pro-family policy in place of added job training and further promotion of employment opportunities was insufficient to change the reality of poverty. With regard to a policy where 90% of the adult recipients are women, marriage promotion programs suggest that the government’s primary concern is not the economic and social wellbeing of women, but instead, is aimed at shifting female dependence from the government back to men as the solution to ending welfare.

My research led me to conclude that the success of Catholic social teaching depends unambiguously on overcoming this destructive gender theology and creating one that promotes the wellbeing of women. Marriage promotion programs are the result of at least one undeniable fact: job training, education, and child-care stipends will not always be enough to defeat poverty. Programs that focus solely on the economic dimensions of self-sufficiency have already been shown to be unable to fulfill the needs of our community. But by promoting traditional heterosexual marriage above all other love relationships, welfare legislation ignores the many other human relationships upon which the success of our entire communities depends. Just as society is arguably strengthened by the affirmation of love as expressed through marriage, it is weakened by the denial of love that does not fit in a patriarchal heterosexist context. By critically re-examining traditional gender roles in our theology, we can begin a tradition of balancing work and home responsibilities between men and women, and can create an atmosphere in which a more inclusive and just social policy can be envisioned.

As a result of my research, I suggest we take Catholic feminist theologian Mary E. Hunt’s model of friendship as a foundational way to orient both our personal and political lives. Her theological concept of friendship assumes a communal responsibility for the common good outside of the often patriarchal hierarchy of family relationships. Hunt hopes to encourage a shift from heterosexual marriage as a normative social structure to friendship as the most desirable of human relationships. Friendship as the basic unit of society would provide space for women to adequately define themselves outside of motherhood and marriage, and would encourage female economic
Summer Vacation:
From Memorial Drive to Honduras to Hong Kong ... and Back

In terms of vacation -- and vocation -- summer was a busy and challenging time for Matthew Kruger, '06, CR major. He spent a week on Cape Cod; a month in an Episcopal monastery in Cambridge, MA; ten days in Honduras on mission work; and two weeks in Hong Kong and Thailand, just for fun. He also began the process toward ordination in the Episcopal Church.

Matt was welcomed by the monks of the Society of St. John into their monastery on Memorial Drive in Cambridge for a month-long taste of their distinctive religious vocation. Richard Benson Meux, an Anglican priest living in Cowley, England, in the 1800s, started this small order, also known as the “Cowley Fathers.” The Society spread to America in the 1920s, and currently consists of three monasteries (for monks) and several convents (for nuns). The original “rule,” the regulations for the order’s life, was, as Matt says, “pretty extreme”; members revised it in the early 1990s to make it more expressive of contemporary experience and renewed understandings of the monastic vocation.

World’s tallest outdoor seated bronze statue of the Buddha, on Lantau Island, Hong Kong. Unveiled in 1993, it took 10 years to complete and weighs 220 tons.

“Life in a monastery is a startling change from college life,” Matt says. “I was up at 5 a.m. and asleep by 10. I attended church five times a day. I had assigned work duties while there, so I spent a good amount of the day cleaning, something that was definitely new for me. All of your day is planned out; there is little room for free time. This is part of what makes life in a monastery so peaceful and appealing. I think I fit in at the monastery, and definitely enjoyed my short time there, but it is certainly not for me. I enjoyed the order of life, and the simplicity and direction it offers, but monastic living is too simple and too direct for me at this age.”

Matt’s summer also included a ten-day mission project near Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. This is the fifth year of the program, sending ten to fifteen volunteers, sponsored by Christ Church Cambridge, to work with the Anglican diocese of Honduras. Matt’s group dug holes in wet, sticky clay to anchor columns for the second story of a small church at San Pedro cerca Del Rio.

For enjoyment and adventure, Matt traveled to Thailand, and to Hong Kong, (Continued on page 12)
which offered him another view of monasticism, a spiritual practice participated in by both Christians and Buddhists. This time, he was far from the Cowley Fathers on Memorial Drive in Cambridge. "I visited a Buddhist Monastery and the famous Big Buddha which resides there on Lantau Island. The Buddha is about 35 feet tall, and sits on a lotus blossom, surrounded by several other Buddhas. I also went into the monastery and marveled at its gold statues and adornments. We got to see their ‘dining hall,’ which was furnished with low tables and cushions surrounded by lots of gold statues. Also there was their famous mummified monk. He died while meditating, and they kept him in that position, although he now has a pair of sunglasses on while he sits in his glass case."

Back in Boston, Matt is beginning the process toward ordination in the Episcopal Church. He will hopefully be accepted into the ordination process, he will become a "postulant." The period of postulancy is generally three years. During this time, the postulant, in consultation with the bishop, begins seminary or divinity school. She/he also meets regularly with the bishop and the commission on ministry (a group of 30 priests and lay leaders) for guidance, support, and evaluation. After postulancy, the first level of ordination is to the office of "deacon," followed by ordination to priesthood.

This semester, Matt is working on his Senior Thesis on early Christian sayings traditions, and doing a directed study on feminist interpretations of mysticism and mystics. For recreation, he is coaching soccer at Bedford High School.

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Majors and Minors (Continued from page 7)

On return, she worked for a real estate company in Brookline, and greatly enjoyed a course on Genetics, Ethics, and Law in our summer school. She currently volunteers as an area representative for ASSE, an International Student Exchange Organization.

Though life has taught Katerina not to plan too far ahead—"If I had followed my original plans, I would be studying Economics, not Religion and Philosophy."—she hopes to attend graduate school in the future. Her "ultimate dream come true" would be to attend Harvard Divinity School and/or the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

**Abeni Wickham, ’08, double major in CR and Biomedical Engineering,** served her community last summer by teaching swimming to children and adults. She also took a chemistry class and worked at a dental office to prepare for a future career in dentistry. Abeni is a Fellow this year in the Health Community Opportunity Program (HCOP), which offers review sessions for science courses, and gives students an extra hand toward successful completion of prerequisites for entry into the health professions. Her goal is to attend Tufts Dental School. Abeni is currently Public Relations Officer of the Tufts Caribbean Club.
review, close critical scrutiny, and rigorous re-assessment. To find at the end of this process that one has been recognized is both gratifying and humbling.

**Q:** Current CR students are meeting you this term for the first time. Tell us about your personal and academic background and your previous career experience. What academic areas are you especially interested in?

**MM:** I did my undergraduate study at Khartoum University and my Ph.D. at the Oriental Institute at Oxford University. Before coming to Tufts, I taught at the Faculty of Arts at Khartoum University and at the Oriental Institute at Oxford University. My academic interests center on literary theory and social theory and hence approaching the phenomenon of religion in its textual, scriptural and social manifestations.

**Q:** During your extended sabbatical in England, you completed a major project: a new book. What is it about? What scholarly topics and problems were you working on in this new work?

**MM:** My book was a critical examination of the thought of the late Sudanese mystic and philosopher Mahmud Muhammad Taha (d. 1985). Taha made major contributions in two important areas: the centering of Islamic mystical thought around the notion of “individual freedom” (and hence providing it with an immense liberative potential) and the insistence on re-constructing Islam in the light of the principles of freedom and equality (hence, particularly stressing the importance of democracy and socialism in his re-formulation of Islam). In my book I wasn’t only working on what Taha said but also on the problems and limits of his project. Taha is undoubtedly a key figure in what may be described as the “modernity project” of Islam. I hope my book (the first on him in English) will bring him to wider audiences not just in the West but also in many parts of the Islamic world where he is not well known.

**Q:** What will you be teaching next semester?

**MM:** Next semester I’ll be teaching a course on “Islam and Modernity” and a course introducing Islamic Law (shari’a).

**Q:** What do you enjoy most about teaching in the field of Religion?

**MM:** I’ve always been fascinated by the phenomenon of religion (in all its manifestations). I’ve always been attracted by the exploration, understanding, and analysis, of the explicit and implicit beliefs and assumptions of religion and its immense power in shaping and conditioning people’s consciousness and value systems in all societies and throughout most of human history. What I find fascinating and ever stimulating in teaching religion is that the teaching itself becomes a constant process of learning -- one is in a constant process of interaction, engaging some of the best minds in the field (through the readings one assigns to one’s students) and the fresh and critical perspectives of one’s students. It’s this constant engagement and constant expansion of one’s knowledge horizons that I enjoy most about what I’m doing.

**Q:** What academic endeavors do you have planned for the future?

**MM:** Currently I’m working on a projected book on the Qur’an. It’ll be part of a larger project of a re-examination of the Qur’an, its conceptual universe, and how that conceptual universe relates to a modern, post-religious world.

**Q:** How does it feel to be back home at Tufts?

**MM:** I sum that up in one word: exhilarating.

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**Reflections at Goddard Chapel**

Wednesday, December 7, Noon

**Prof. Mohamed Mahmoud**

Department of Comparative Religion

"Reflections of the Future of Religion"

(Light lunch and discussion, 12:30 – 1 p.m.)
It’s All Happening in CR ... With Our Alumni

Last spring, Sarah Affel, '05, double major in CR and Political Science, gave a presentation for "Beyond the Classroom," the annual Women’s Studies symposium of student papers and projects addressing women and gender, drawn from courses across the Tufts curriculum. Her topic was the failed attempt of the American Catholic bishops to write a pastoral letter on women (1998-90).

Sarah was honored at the Annual Ceremony of Academic Awards last April. She was one of four recipients of the Alex Alias Memorial Prize, presented to juniors and seniors who best display high standards in community service, athletics, and scholarly pursuits.

The Tufts Alumni Association also honored Sarah at their Senior Awards Dinner. She and eleven others were recognized for “academic achievement, wide participation in campus and community activities, outstanding qualities of leadership, and potential for future alumni leadership and service.” This fall, Sarah began law school at Northeastern University in Boston.

Daniel Black, '05, CR major, is working for a local weekly newspaper, The Newton TAB, as a full-time reporter, covering all sorts of issues — schools, politics, "town life," and even some religion topics. “Though I enjoy my job very much, I would like to become a lawyer," says Dan, who recently took the LSAT in preparation for a future application to law school.

Tim Bouley, '02, Biology major and CR minor, graduated from Harvard Divinity School in May '04 with a Master of Theological Studies Degree. He also earned a Certificate in Science and Religion in bioethics from the Boston Theological Institute.

Tim is “busy exploring life and making plans for the future.” Last summer, he moved to San Francisco to pursue work with the Al Gore television network. “I wrote and executive produced a segment for them, which has not yet made it to air because of some post-production difficulty at the studio. However, I’ve maintained close relations with several people at the network, and there is potential for future work. Right now, I’m working on a piece about ‘intelligent design.’”

Tim is studying to take the MCAT, and will apply to enter medical school in fall '07. His special interests are bioethics and biotechnology. Recent temp assignments have taken him to the University of California/San Francisco; work at its medical center has provided valuable exposure to medical administration and the insurance system, and to the medical school admissions process.

In his spare time, Tim has been exploring the natural beauty of California, dancing, reading, cooking, learning about wine, and taking advantage of the abundance of his new city’s art and culture. In July, he ran the San Francisco Marathon. “It was my fourth, as I’ve done Boston three times before; the hills out here were killers.” Tim has found a website (http://www.associatedcontent.com/) that is a forum for anyone to publish articles (after screening by an editorial board). The site now features one of his Harvard papers, a comparative piece about Mel Gibson’s “Passion of the Christ” and the Gospel of John.

Lynn Cooper, '02, double major in CR and English, is currently a volunteer for Massachusetts Campus Compact, working with the service and service learning initiatives taking place among the Colleges of the Fenway in Boston. Next fall, she will return to Harvard Divinity School to complete her Master of Divinity Degree. “I miss the intensely alive atmosphere of the Divinity school, but it is also refreshing to take a break and prepare to savor my final year,” Lynn says. A voracious reader, she is enjoying reading at a leisurely pace, and is indulging a renewed interest in American history, especially through the works of Howard Zinn.

Tom Crawford, '04, CR major, is studying at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, TN. Next semester, he will be working on a thesis on Gnostic thought and the New Testament, which is his special area. Tom will graduate next May with his Master of Theological Studies (MTS) Degree, and hopes to pursue a doctorate in New Testament studies.

“Much to the surprise of my friends,” Tom reports, “I have started running. I find it relaxing and less time consuming than bicycling, which I do not do any more at all.
My sister and I did an ultra marathon (50k) this summer in Oregon, and I'm trying to win a running race before I hang up my shoes."

"Honestly, the smartest decision I made was to major in CR," Tom says. "I feel like I learned so much more than I would have in any other field. Religion is great because it combines philosophy, psychology, history, political science, current events, languages, and writing."

Alexis Gerber, '05, double major in CR and Clinical Psychology, was elected last spring to Phi Beta Kappa. This fall, she began studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, in hopes of becoming a rabbi. Her work includes courses on the Bible and the Talmud, and Hebrew language. She spent the summer in Israel working on her conversational skills.

Mark Goldberg, '03, double major in CR and Peace and Justice Studies, is in his second year of a two-year internship as a writer for The American Prospect Magazine in Washington. He recently composed an article about the dynamics between the Bush administration and the International Criminal Court, as the ICC seeks to apprehend its first indictee, an unsavory warlord in northern Uganda. Other articles of Mark's have focused on human rights issues, such as the crisis in Darfur and the United Nations world summit.

Mark reports that he is "enjoying life in a town that feeds itself on public policy and politics." His future plans may include pursuing further work in political journalism or attending law school. Last summer, he visited California for the first time, driving the coast from San Diego to San Francisco, and stopping to camp in Big Sur State Park.

Susan Hayward, '02, double major in CR and English, is on leave from Harvard Divinity School's M.Div. program to pursue a Master of Law and Diplomacy Degree at the Fletcher School. "At Fletcher, I'm focusing on Conflict Resolution and SW Asia and Islamic Civilizations, with a particular focus on South Asia. I'm writing my thesis on the role of the Buddhist monastic community in upsetting the Norway-led peace process in Sri Lanka. I also coordinate a Religion and Conflict Resolution group through the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School."

"After graduating from Fletcher this May, I will return to HDS to finish my degree, and am planning on focusing my M.Div. thesis on the role of religious leaders as prophetic political voices of conflict prevention throughout Africa. This summer I worked with the Conflict Resolution Program at the Carter Center (President Carter's center) in Atlanta, GA, helping them with a religion and conflict resolution initiative."

Susie has decided to pursue ordination in the United Church of Christ. "I plan on seeking sponsorship from my new wonderful local church: First Congregational Church over on College Ave. She is currently living on campus, as a Resident Director in Bush Hall. "If any current CR majors/minors ever have any questions about classes, continuing education, or professional prospects in the field, they should feel free to stop by."

As far as the future goes, Susie plans "to work with conflict resolution NGOs to bring religious leaders/communities and secular peace makers and institutions into dialogue (where relevant—that is, where conflicts have a religious dimension) in order to help ensure that religious communities support and not undermine political peace processes, as well as to ensure that their concerns are addressed in a more comprehensive peace process."

After graduation, Alwin Jones '02, double major in CR and English, interdisciplinary minor in Africa and the New World, taught English language arts and creative writing at his alma mater, Boys and Girls High School in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. In spring '03, he entered the Ph.D. program in English Language and Literature at the University of Virginia. His focus is on writers of Caribbean-American heritage from the late 18th century to the present. He is currently teaching a freshman writing course, "The Caribbean as an American Immigrant."

Known at Tufts for his poetic talents, Alwin continues to write and perform his work. He is "still interested in the political/revolutionary aspects of the prophetic/poetic." In September, he joined an ad-hoc committee of students, staff, and faculty at UVA to organize a benefit concert to raise funds and support for Dillard, Xavier, and Southern Universities in New Orleans—prominent historically black institutions in the wake of hurricane Katrina. The concert featured artists and scholars from the university community.

Hmm! What can be the value of a CR major/minor in a world that seems to be rife with conflict that carries religious rhetoric in both its underbelly and emblazoned on its chest? Who would (not) want to study Religion and: economics, politics, ethnicity, race, nationalism, identity, patriotism, cronyism, democracy, and democratization? Basically, religion matters. In the current Geo-politics, and/or Political Geography, religion (or the language of "belief") becomes a critical marker of boundaries, of establishing "us" and "them," aligning and maligning bodies, countries, ways of being. Comparative Religion can and should function as a discipline through which students, scholars, and citizens alike examine critically religion and these (changing?) realities.

-Alwin Jones, '02
Last March, Alwin participated in Tufts' first annual Emerging Black Leaders Symposium (EBLS), comprised of four panel discussions: health care, education, criminal justice, and economic empowerment. Alwin was part of the education panel, focusing on issues surrounding inequality and the low participation of people of color in academia. The goal of EBLS is to dialogue about how young African Americans can become successful, and then give back to their own communities.

Alwin writes that he is enjoying life in his new role as a husband since his marriage last June, and he sends "thanks to all faculty and staff, especially those in CR, who definitely helped in my journeys to now."

Lauren Lerner, '04, Child Development major and minor in CR, is living in Manhattan, working at the JCC Association (the umbrella organization for the Jewish Community Center Movement), sponsor of the JCC Maccabi Games, the equivalent of a Jewish junior Olympics. Last summer, she traveled to St. Paul and Dallas to represent her team. (Other games were held in San Antonio and Richmond.)

Lauren hopes to begin graduate school in Education in the New York area next fall. She plans to earn a master's degree in early childhood education, with the goal of teaching or working in publishing in the field of children's books. She would also like eventually to pursue graduate study in Religion, and stays in touch with scholarship through her brother, who is concentrating in CR and Middle Eastern Studies at New York University. "We have great discussions about religion and belief. It's a lot of fun!"

Ben Lewinger, '02, CR major, is pursuing his master's degree in Asian Religions at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. He is enjoying taking "great courses from great professors," and may spend a future semester in China or Taiwan to focus on language skills. Ben is also serving as a teaching assistant for the introductory course in Religion. He continues to work as program coordinator at the Mo'iliili Hongwanji Mission, a Jodo-Shin (Buddhist) temple.

Ben is recovering from being struck by a car in mid-October, and we send him our best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery!

Megan Liotta, '03, double major in CR and English, has begun a master's program in European Historical Archaeology at the University of Sheffield in England. She finds the post-medieval period very interesting, and may write her thesis on the African slave trade in Britain.

"I would never be where I am without my CR major," Megan says. "It opened up a whole other world of study to me, and inspired me to go back and re-evaluate the dreams I had considered impractical. Now I'm getting a degree in something I've always loved."

Kathleen Lonergan, '01, double major in CR and History, received her Master of Divinity Degree from Harvard Divinity School in June. She will pursue ordination to the Episcopal Priesthood.

Katherine Mason, '04, graduated in February with a double major in CR and Art History. After working briefly at an art gallery in Boston's South End, she began a full-time job at Big Brothers of Massachusetts Bay (part of Big Brother/Big Sister) as a volunteer enrollment specialist. "Basically I enroll the volunteers into the program, conduct the background check, and match them up with their Little Brother or Little Sister. Then (the best part of the job) I go with them to introduce them to the family for the first time and help them get settle in with their new mentoring relationship. It's been working out really well so far. I've met a lot of interesting and great people. And it's been a really amazing experience to work with some of the families and see the difference our volunteers are making in their lives."

Katie is also studying massage therapy at the Palmer Institute of Massage and Bodywork in Salem, MA. She is about half way through her degree, specializing in Shiatsu with some influence from Swedish Massage, Thai Massage, Reiki, and basic TCM practices. "For the past four years, I have been really interested in massage and bodywork, and having had many influential experiences in this field, I decided to learn massage myself. One of the greatest influences on me was taking the course on Religion, Health and Healing with Professor Galarneau; we toured Oriental Medical Therapy Associates in Cambridge, and I was exposed to a new style of medicine and healing. This is just one of the many things I've taken in from my CR education."
Katie ran the Boston Marathon (her first) last April, and the New York City Marathon last month. She also participated in several triathlons this summer, as well as a 100-mile bike ride for charity, the Rodman Ride for Kids in Foxboro, which she did for Big Brothers.

Katie’s other activities include “lots of fun weekend trips and adventures. I’ve gone to visit my sister in Canada, visited friends in New York, gone hiking, gone kayaking, and run a relay around lake Winnipesaukee in New Hampshire.” In December, she will travel to Costa Rica to visit her younger sister, who is studying abroad.

Amanda Miller, ’03, double major in CR and Anthropology, is in New York working for David Bowler Wine. She is enjoying being part of a very active book group, and continues to express her performance skills by volunteering for “Groove With Me” in East Harlem, a program dedicated to teaching dance to young girls.

Theodore Olson, ’02, CR major, says that he and his wife are “very, very busy” and sleep deprived following the birth four months ago of twin daughters Katie and Faith. Their son Thomas is two and a half.

Ted received a major promotion in October; he is now service manager at Mercedes-Benz of Norwood. His 150-page manual on Service Writing for Mercedes-Benz goes to print soon.

Ted engages in “lots of religious reading — presently studying the Christian, faith-based point of view, and meeting with a religious scholar/pastor. Many interesting points, but little gets past my Tufts scholarly skepticism.”

David Schwartz, ’01, double major in CR and Philosophy, is in his final year of the Master of Divinity program at Harvard Divinity School. Dave is a candidate for the Unitarian Universalist ministry. After graduation, he will seek preliminary recognition from the church’s ministerial committee, and will then enter a years of internship, working full time in a parish as his last step toward ordination.

At HDS, Dave is participating in the Program in Religion and Secondary Education (PRSE, check it out at www.hds.harvard.edu/prse/), which trains secondary school teachers to teach about religion in the context of the public school classroom. “I’m student teaching ninth grade world history this fall out in Lexington,” Dave says. “It’s a great class, because as part of the history survey, we spend time looking at the major religious traditions of the world. By the time I finish teaching in January, we will have worked Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism into the world history curriculum.”

“One thing I hadn’t realized about the CR department at Tufts when I was a student there,” he says, “was how much access to faculty we had — that the professors were available for discussion and interested in forming teaching, advising, and collegial relationships with students. That was a great thing as an undergrad!” Dave extends an open invitation to the CR community: “If there are any CR students or alums interested in HDS, curious about the PRSE, or considering preparing for UU ministry, whether at HDS or elsewhere, I’d love to chat. Feel free to contact me at dschwartz@hds.harvard.edu.”

Megan Sullivan, ’04, double major in CR and Child Development, returned last April from seven months in Asia. She taught kindergarten for five months in Bangalore, India, at a school for the deaf, and then traveled for a month, largely in Rajasthan. Her last month was spent in Thailand. “My trip was fabulous, beyond words,” Megan says, adding that she credits her experience in CR with giving her “the background knowledge of both the country and the religions that helped enhance my trip and make it that much better.”

Megan recently returned to live in the Boston area, where she is working for TriCity Early Intervention Center.
It's All Happening in CR... With Our Faculty and Staff

Jessica Gugino reports that she is "beginning to re-dabble again with my novel-in-progress." She recently took her first balloon trip and "found it to be a beautiful, fantastic experience, in spite of having to sign away legal repercussions in the event of my untimely death by falling overly-hastily from the sky." This spring, Prof. Gugino will be leading a seminar on Psychology of Religion.

Last spring, Peggy Hutaaff presided over a panel for "Beyond the Classroom," a symposium sponsored by Women's Studies. The annual event features presentations of student papers and projects addressing women and gender, drawn from courses across the Tufts curriculum. Her panel included two presentations dealing with religion: one by CR major Sarah Affel, '05, whose topic was the ill-fated attempt of the American Catholic bishops (1988-90) to write a pastoral letter on women; and the other by Deirdre Brodie, '05, who spoke about her Independent Study on the intersection of gender, faith, and HIV/AIDS in southern Africa. Deirdre's project was mentored by CR's David O'Leary.

Peggy is serving on the committee for the Senior Honors Thesis (in Classics) of Kara Dardeno. Kara's work is a comparative study of the Greek deity Dionysos and early Christian understandings of Jesus. Peggy will also serve as mentor for the Senior Project in Women's Studies of Lauren Albertini, who will be studying issues of women's health in South Africa.

In August, Peggy traveled in the southwest of England, visiting sites of prehistoric importance and ruins from the first-century occupation of Britain by the Romans. Next term, she will be teaching Introduction to the New Testament and Feminist Theologies.

Elizabeth Lemons is working with Matt Kruger, '06, this semester on his Independent Study on feminist interpretations of mysticism. Last term, Prof. Lemons chaired the mentoring committee for the Senior Honors Thesis of Lauren Dunn, '06. Lauren is a joint degree candidate in CR and painting (through the School of the Museum of Fine Arts). Her thesis reflected on Catholic social teaching and U.S. welfare policy, viewed through a feminist theological lens. Also serving on Lauren's committee were Peggy Hutaaff of CR, and Charlene Galarneau of Community Health.

This year, Prof. Lemons will be a reader for a thesis in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning by Master of Arts candidate Shannon Barry on the role of Christian churches as forces for progressive environmental change in the contemporary U.S. This spring, she will be teaching Philosophy of Religion and Contemporary Religious Thought.

Gary Leupp visited family in Colorado last summer, took in a couple of Broadway musicals with his family in New York, did a lot of writing, and taught both summer school sessions. His article "Apocalypse Now," discussing the use of the Book of Revelation by the religious right to justify and promote U.S. military aggression in the Middle East, will appear in With God on Our Side: Politics & Theology of the War on Terrorism, edited by Aftad Ahmad Malik (Bristol: Amal Press, 2005). Prof. Leupp is also continuing his work on a book manuscript on "The Weavers of Nishijin: Wage-Labor in Tokugawa Japan." In spring, he will teach Religion in Japanese History (History 132, co-listed with CR) and Japan from 1868 (History 48).

This fall, the department welcomed back Mohamed Mahmoud, who has returned from England to Tufts after a four year absence. Last May, he was granted tenure by the university. Congratulations, Mohamed! Welcome home!

David O'Leary taught two summer session courses: World Religions and Sexual Ethics, and Mystics and Mysticism. His new book, A Study of Josef Fuchs' Writings on Human Nature and Morality, was recently published by University Press of America. Prof. O'Leary has contributed 16 articles to the Encyclopedia of Spirituality, due to be published in 2006. He has also been elected to membership in the Society of Christian Ethics, a professional group of scholars who specialize in moral theology and social ethics. He has given numerous lectures and presentations on end-of-life Issues in Massachusetts and for the National Institute of Health in Maryland/Washington D.C. This spring, he will be teaching a new course: Roman Catholic Moral and Social
Teachings.

On a personal note, Fr. O’Leary presided last summer at the marriage ceremony of his first Tufts students (from 1998) in Buffalo, NY. In September, he officiated at the “renewal of vows” of his parents, who were celebrating - with many friends - their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

On October 16, Beverley O’Riordan, Administrative Assistant for CR, joined others in her family, along with hundreds of pledge walkers, for “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.” The walk, covering a 5.7 mile course along the Charles River, is an American Cancer Society event to raise awareness and dollars to fight breast cancer. This year, Bev’s family contingent raised over $5,000 for education and research.


Last November, Prof. Walser presented a paper on “Nagarjuna in Mathura” at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in San Antonio, TX. In December, he spoke on “Mahayana Buddhism and the Law” in Tufts’ Religion and Law lecture series.

Last summer, he traveled to Thailand and India to do research. His future projects include a book on the social history of early Mahayana. Later this month, he will chair a panel on “Religion and Money in South Asia” at the AAR’s Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. His entry on “Meditation” will appear in An Encyclopedia of Spiritual and Religious Development in Childhood and Adolescence, edited by Elizabeth Dowling and George Scarlett, eds. (forthcoming, Sage Publications).

Prof. Walser is mentoring an Independent Study this semester with CR major Arun Brahmbhatt, ’06, translating the first section of Ramanuja’s Vedarthasastra from Sanskrit. He is also working on perfecting his Punjabi cooking. Next term, he will be on sabbatical.

During the year, faculty members Peggy Hutaff, Elizabeth Lemons, and David O’Leary will be advising CR students who are writing Senior Honors Theses. Ben Foote is comparing aspects of contemporary Judaism and Christianity. Nawatee Fritz is looking at the responsibility of the Catholic Church in relation to the genocide in Rwanda. Matthew Kruger is studying sayings traditions in early Christianity. His focus is on the sayings attributed to Jesus in the “Sermon on the Mount,” present in differing versions in the New Testament gospels of Matthew and Luke.

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**Goddard Chapel Forum on Religion and Medicine**

*Goddard Chapel, Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December 7</th>
<th>January 18</th>
<th>February 15</th>
<th>March 15</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lance D. Laird, Ph.D., Sr. Consultant Boston Healing Landscape Project Dept. of Pediatrics Boston Medical Center &quot;Muslims, Culture, Health and Healing&quot;</td>
<td>Phil Davis Christian Science Practitioner and Teacher Committee on Publication for The First Church of Christ, Scientist &quot;Christian Science and Medicine&quot;</td>
<td>Dana Moore MAR, OSB, Oblate Yoga Instructor &quot;Yoga and Self-Care: The Cultivation of Will Power&quot;</td>
<td>Reverend Gloria White-Hammond, M.D Bethel AME Church, Roxbury 2006 Russell Lecturer &quot;Religion and Medicine: Local and International&quot;</td>
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<td>F+ T/R</td>
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<td>CR 10-05</td>
<td>Introduction to Islamic Law</td>
<td>MAHMOUD</td>
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<td>CR 11</td>
<td>Buddhist Art</td>
<td>KAMINISHI</td>
<td>I+ M/W</td>
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<td>CR 20</td>
<td>Image and Icon</td>
<td>MANUELLIAN</td>
<td>J+ T/R</td>
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<tr>
<td>CR 22</td>
<td>Introduction to the New Testament</td>
<td>HUTAFF</td>
<td>F+ T/R</td>
</tr>
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<td>CR 23/121</td>
<td>Early Islamic Art</td>
<td>HOFFMAN</td>
<td>G+ T/R</td>
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<td>CR 29/129</td>
<td>Gender &amp; Medieval Art &amp; Literature</td>
<td>CAVINESS/ NELSON</td>
<td>12+ W</td>
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<td>CR 78</td>
<td>Jewish Women</td>
<td>ASCHER</td>
<td>J+ T/R</td>
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<td>CR 98</td>
<td>Music &amp; Prayer in the Jewish Tradition</td>
<td>SUMMIT</td>
<td>H+T/R</td>
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<td>CR 106</td>
<td>Contemporary Religious Thought</td>
<td>LEMONS</td>
<td>1+ T</td>
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<td>CR 111</td>
<td>Catholic Moral &amp; Social Teaching</td>
<td>O’LEARY</td>
<td>E+ M/W</td>
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<td>CR 126</td>
<td>Roots of the Jewish Imagination</td>
<td>ROSENBERG</td>
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<td>Religion in Japanese History</td>
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<td>Feminist Theologies</td>
<td>HUTAFF</td>
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<td>GUGINO</td>
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<td>Islam and Modernity</td>
<td>MAHMOUD</td>
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<td>Senior Honors Thesis</td>
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**CORE COURSES / CROSS LISTED COURSES**

*Be sure to check our website for updates!*
CR 06  Philosophy of Religion -LEMONS
This course offers an introduction to the philosophical analysis of major religious issues, such as the nature of religion, religious experience, and ultimate reality, as well as the problem of evil or suffering and the relationship of faith and reason. By exploring different philosophical approaches to the study of religion—including existential, phenomenological, linguistic and comparative, students will develop constructive responses to the variety of ways in which philosophers analyze religious beliefs and practices in diverse world religions.  Co-listed as PHIL 16

CR 10-05  Introduction to Islamic Law -MAHMOUD
This course examines the origins, theories, and development of Islamic law. The course also deals with the practice of Islamic law. The student will learn about the sources of Islamic law and the major legal schools of Sunnite and Shi'ite Islam. The theoretical and practical problems raised by the modern context will be explored. Attention will be paid to Muslim minorities in the West, their attempts to secure recognition to implement some aspects of Islamic law, and the problems raised by such attempts.

CR 22  Introduction to the New Testament -HUTAFF
We will investigate the origins of Christianity and trace the evolution of its earliest beliefs and ultimately selected for its "canon." Topics will include Jesus and his interpreters, the career of Paul the "apostle," beginnings of the "church," the interactions between Christians and their Jewish and Greco-Roman environments, and women's participation in the shaping of early Christian history. Occasional readings from non-canonical literature, such as the Acts of Thecla and the Gospel of Thomas, will broaden our perspective.

CR 106  Contemporary Religious Thought -LEMONS **Spaces available
This course offers an introduction to some key themes and figures in recent religious thought in the United States. It considers representative positions concerning the relationship of religion and public life and focusing on the topics of violence and sexuality. The course aims to show that religion is both a problem and a resource in American public life, and to foster students' capacity to analyze and discuss selected religious / political issues.

CR 111  Catholic Moral & Social Teaching -O'LEARY
Catholic moral and social teaching from the official magisterium and the full spectrum of Catholic theologians. The history of Roman Catholic moral theology and the origins of Catholic social, sexual, and medical ethics. Tensions between the official teachers in the Church, the bishops, and the scholars/theologians.

CR 192-01  Feminist Theologies -HUTAFF
"Feminism," says theologian Judith Plaskow, "is the process of coming to affirm ourselves as women/persons – and seeing that affirmation mirrored in religious and social institutions." This course will survey the impact which the growth of feminist/womanist consciousness during the last three decades has had on the religious commitments of women, as well as on traditional institutions, beliefs, and practices. We will explore new approaches and methods which recent feminist scholarship has brought to the study of ancient religious texts and other historical sources, and will assess how the inclusion of women's perspectives is challenging, enlarging, and enriching the craft of theology itself. Also to be considered: the rise of new women's rituals and alternative spiritualities, and the relationship of religious feminism to other struggles for human dignity and liberation. (No prerequisites.)

CR 192-04  Psychology of Religion -GUGINO
What is religious experience, and why are human beings religious? This course will explore such questions through readings and discussion of a variety of theorists who employ a psychological frame in the study of human religiosity. Theorists will include Augustine, Freud, Jung, James,

CR 192-05  Islam and Modernity -MAHMOUD
This course examines the encounter between Islam and modernity and the diverse ways in which Muslims have responded to the challenges posed by modernity. The discourses of various Muslim thinkers from the Middle East, Africa, the Indian subcontinent, south east Asia, and Europe will be examined. The course is designed to expose the student to the variety and complexity of Muslims' responses to modernity. It is also hoped that the student will acquire a comparative perspective that will enable him/her to examine parallel issues in other religious traditions.
Comparative Religion Congratulates
Our 2005 Graduates!

Sarah Affel • Daniel Black • Alexis Gerber • Elizabeth Sutton
Alums Share Experiences with CR Community

On Wednesday evening, November 15, three CR graduates were guests of the department for supper and conversation with students, faculty, and friends of CR. Lynn Cooper, '02, Susan Hayward, '02, and David Schwartz, '01, returned to share their experiences of graduate study at Harvard Divinity School. They candidly addressed issues such as: the benefits of taking time out before or during a graduate program, deciding which advanced degree to pursue and where, how to write an effective application essay, investigating joint degree programs, financial planning and the in's and out's of paying for graduate study, internships and field education opportunities, and career possibilities for graduates in CR. Our grateful thanks go out to Lynn, Susie, and Dave for their time and wisdom, and for an evening that was informative, enjoyable, and just downright plain fun!!