Top book lover dies

Despite never earning a PhD, Daniel J. Boorstin was a history professor at the UofC for 25 years, before moving on to Washington to become the director of today’s American History Museum as well as becoming the Librarian of Congress until 1987. He is most widely known, however, as a popular historian and winner of the 1973 Pulitzer Prize in history. He is quoted in his NY Times obituary as prizing books, our “single greatest technical advance”, as the basis for preservation of culture. “For each of us,” he said, “reading remains a private, uniquely qualitative nook of our life... With a book, we are at home with ourselves.”

Everybody loves Obama

UofC Law professor and state senator Barack Obama received a major boost to his campaign with the endorsement of both the Sun-Times and the Tribune, the two largest newspapers in Illinois. The Sun-times said that Obama “seems best poised to outshine Hull [the leader in polls].” Obama’s background and experience can trump Hull’s money.” The Tribune qualified its endorsement of Obama as “one of the strongest Democratic candidates Illinois has seen in some time,” noting that there are specific areas of disagreement between the editorial board and Obama such as his opposition to NAFTA and the invasion of Iraq. Notwithstanding, the Tribune states “Obama has a proven record of spiritual, principled and effective leadership in the legislature, and he is the only Democrat in this race who can make this claim.” Obama’s biggest challenger for the democratic nomination is Blair Hull, the frontrunner, according to the Tribune, “virtue of the nearly $24 million of his own money he has poured into this race.”

A lawyer’s legacy

UofC Professor of Law and Criminology and former Dean of the Law School Novai Morris died February 21. While on the Law School faculty, he received international recognition for his work on criminal justice and prison reform, as well as notoriety as one of the most prolific and knowledgeable writers on criminal law. In addition to his academic legacy, Morris is also remembered and celebrated as having been a remarkable human being. Said Saul Levrone, Dean of the Law School and the William B. Graham Professor of Law, “Novai was our good friend, our colleague and an extraordinary human being, and we are all the better to have had him in our lives.”

The message

From newspapers to Arnold with the CSMT

By Crystal Moy

The most often referred to as if it were some omnipresent personality. It is everywhere, surrounding us, eerily lurking in the background of our daily lives... Even this copy of Chicago Weekly represents a media-type. The funny, metallic smell of newsprint, the flimsy and cheap quality of the paper and how it so easily creases at your touch, the ink smearing and rubbing off on your fingers—all influence your subconscious experience of this CW edition. Reader, you are not simply absorbing the words in this article. Sensory devices are operating on you, whether you realize it or not. Perhaps you, too, savor the sensual moment of cracking open a brand new newspaper, still hard in its pristine form. The “media” affects you in perhaps more subtle ways than you know.

Probing the media and its rather fluid definition is precisely what Professor W. J. T. Mitchell’s “Theories of Media” course and the Chicago School of Media Theory (CSMT) seek to do. The CSMT is a student organization that grew out of Professor Mitchell’s winter of 2003 class. Students had been so intellectually provoked by the course material and wanted to continue the discussion that they, along with Professor Mitchell and course assistants Eduardo de Almeida and Rebecca Reynolds, founded the CSMT working group.

Members of the CSMT research collective include a group of undergraduate students—Mal Ahern, Ben Buckley, Dan Clinton, Roberto Kutcher, and Nick Oberly—some grad students, faculty at the UofC from a variety of disciplines, as well as distinguished faculty from other universities including Hans Belting, who currently teaches at Northwestern, and James Elkins from the Art Institute of Chicago. Members of the Chicago School of Media Theory give presentations and meet with Professor Mitchell on a weekly basis in a formal seminar format to discuss topics of interest and research projects. The members have been involved in creating their own reading lists, taxonomy models, and a keywords glossary that aims to define such elusive, abstract terms as “mediation” and “representation.” “The keywords glossary is now an online referenced resource for media studies programs all over the world,” said Professor Mitchell, indicating how the CSMT is gaining public notoriety and influence.

One of the most ambitious projects currently underway for the CSMT is the Hypercube media taxonomy model, which is now applying for a grant to fund its implementation. The new taxonomy model seeks to bring consciousness to the characteristics, aspects and effects of different media types, serving as a tool “for discovering things, for noticing things that weren’t so evident until you begin to put them together,” said Professor Mitchell. The model is a “conceptual space for making tacit knowledge explicit.” The model was inspired by OCHS member and former student Mal Ahern’s version of Professor Mitchell’s spreadsheet, which listed different media types and their characteristics. Ahern proposed an alteration: a three-dimensional conceptual structure as opposed to the two-dimensional spreadsheet. Another dedicated pursuit of investigation within the media-theory working group is the topic of the role of the body in the media process. Said Mitchell, “Some of the members in the collective were interested in pursuing the role of the body in relation to these sources because they felt that particular sort of mode of media has been under-theorized and under-acknowledged. So one way, for example, to start think-... continues on page 3
PEARL OF WISDOM
with Lila Pearl

If you only know how many questions of exactly this nature she received you'd feel... well, less alone. —Frankly, Lila Pearl

Dear Lila Pearl,

My boyfriend and I have been consider-
ing inviting a certain “third party” into our love nest; you know—just a one-time thing. Problem: this young thing is, um, “coupled,” as it were. As far as inviting his girlfriend is concerned—well, let’s just say, not an option I’d be eager to consider (to put it kindly). Is there any way we can make our dreams come true without including said sig-
nificant other?

—Yours, Minage-a-quatre(?)

Dear Minage,

Lila Pearl thinks—this is a bit of a tricky situation, and it could easily prove impossible to work out, depending on the type of arrangement you and this young thing’s significant other. Probably the most effective way of attaining your potential third wheel sans partner would be to tell him out-right that you (and boyfriend) would be inter-
ed in sleeping with him (and only him). If he seems interested in the proposal but won-
ders why you don’t want to add one more to the party, you could explain your reasoning (but run the risk of the young one becoming offended and calling the whole thing off). Conversely, you could create a quick diversion for the undesirable lady and run off into the sunset—though Lila Pearl wonders...

—Wanderingly, Lila Pearl

Dear Lady Pearl,

Like most men, I find girls to be dam swell and damn near irreparable. In fact, as you probably know, most of our accom-
plishments up to this point have been not to replace women but to find a more consistent way to attract them. The latter works well for some, less so for others, but I feel that tech-
ology has opened up new avenues in the former. Consider this: A company based in California will use state-of-the-art George Lucas-quality special effects to build for you a startlingly realistic partner for no small fee (about $5,000), capable of all the sexual functions of a bona fide breathing gal. Now, I understand women have more to offer can just their sexual abilities, but in doing some comparative statistics in the long run, the dummy might just more than pay for itself. Is this the future of sexual interac-
tions? And if this is our destiny should I just pounce on and buy the doll now? If so, how, would I explain it to my roommates?

—Hopelessly, Frustrated

Dear Hopeless,

Lila Pearl can see the advantages of your robot-lover: you won’t need to feed her, you won’t need to pleasure her (sexually or oth-
erwise) and you certainly won’t need to involve yourself in any sticky emotional puck-
iness (i.e. romance, PMS, relationship talks, love, The Real, what have you). Here’s some-
ting to consider: upon publishing Madame Bovary, Flaubert received hundreds of letters from women all over France claiming that he had stolen their story—how did he know them so well? To these Flaubert only shook his head sadly.”Non-Madame Bovary c’est moi!” And this; Morrissay sings “Girlfriend in a coma I know, I know—it’s really serious... But there were times when I could have murdered her.” Between Madame Bovary’s yearn-
ing for bourgeois fantasy love and Morrissay’s longing for a comatose lover we find the absent presence of your question.

—Vitally, Lila Pearl

GETTING QUESTION YOU’RE DYING TO HAVE ANSWERED? E-MAIL LILA AT LILA@UCHICAGO.EDU.