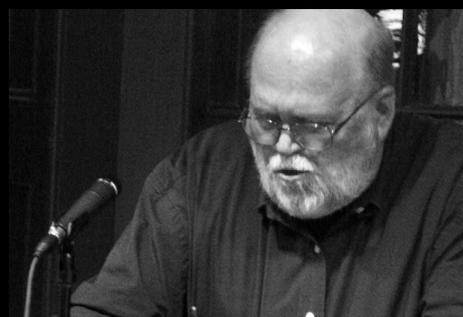
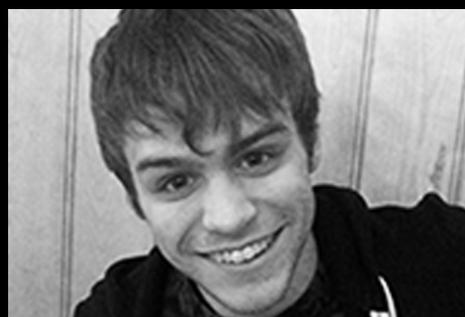


KELLY WRITERS HOUSE



2009 ANNUAL

Dear Friends of the Writers House,

WE CALL THE WRITERS HOUSE an incubator, a sandbox, and a learning community, because the innovative projects and ideas that emerge from this space enact the full potential of the literary arts in ways that are thoughtful, playful, and deeply connective. Enter the Writers House and someone might lure you into a debate about the use of language in the work of experimental novelist Robert Coover or into the kitchen for a cup of coffee and an analysis of Emily Dickinson's "I dwell in possibility." You'll wander into a rollicking recording of a radio program for WXPB 88.5 or join a conversation with Dick Polman about journalism in the age of new media. A student will invite you to a Hub meeting to help organize a marathon reading or a book drive or an art happening or Thanksgiving dinner. In this communitarian cottage you'll find literary enthusiasts, writing activists, and culture aficionados, all bursting with ideas about how you can get involved with the arts scene at Penn and in Philadelphia.

This may have been our most ambitious programming year yet. Our featured visitors included broadcast journalist Connie Chung, who deftly fielded our tough questions about the state of TV news reporting. Over tea, cookies, and hand-dipped chocolate strawberries, graphic novelist Marjane Satrapi spoke to us about the difference between telling the truth in memoir and sticking to the simple facts, a distinction that helped several students resolve their questions about authenticity in nonfiction story-telling. Essayist and novelist Joan Didion floored us with her moving reading from *The Year of Magical Thinking* during a two-day visit that included an intimate conversation with students in the Kelly Writers House Fellows Seminar. And we mounted several literary tributes, including birthday celebrations for Edgar Allan Poe and William Carlos Williams, and a memorial for David Foster Wallace.

We've had great partners this year – from Penn, Philadelphia, and beyond – who helped us promote and support expansive literary initiatives. Collaborating with Penn's Fine Arts Department, we developed the ArtsEdge Residency project, an experiment that encourages young writers and artists to live and work in West Philadelphia. PoemTalk, our joint venture with PennSound and the Poetry Foundation, brought 25-minute podcast conversations about poetry to listeners around the world. Thanks to help from Penn's Middle East Center, Women's Studies Program, Critical Writing Program, and Office of the Provost, we invited writers from across the globe – including China, South Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, and New Zealand – to visit as featured readers in our international writers series, Writers Without Borders.

Remembering the year, we marvel that it's possible to get it all done. And we know that we have you to thank for the success of this project. Year after year, we are grateful to the enthusiasm and generosity of our many friends – the alumni, students, parents, neighbors, visiting authors, audience members, and volunteers who are central to everything we do here. Thank you for all you do as a friend of the Writers House! We look forward to the years, projects, and collaborations to come.

On behalf of the Writers House Planning Committee,

Jessica Lowenthal, Director

Al Filreis, Faculty Director
Kelly Professor of English



KWH PEOPLE

Staff

Visit the Writers House and you'll be greeted by a talented troop of shape poets, journalists, visionaries, YouTube aficionados, vegan chefs, costume designers, linguists, and scholars. Our staff works tirelessly to welcome writers and readers of all types to our house, which is your house, too. This year our undergraduate staff members included Program Assistants **Amaris Cuchanski** (C'12), **Zoe Dare-Attanasio** (C'10), **Nelson Fernandez** (C'10), **Rivka Fogel** (C'11), **Max McKenna** (C'10), and **Chaia Werger** (C'11); Multimedia Assistants **Florentina Dragulescu** (C'12) and **James La Marre** (C'11); Archivist and Calendar Designer **Violette Carb** (C'11); Calendar Designer **Lee Huttner** (C'10); Webmasters **John Bang** (C'12), **Jillian Blazejewski** (C'10), and **Kathryn Lipman** (C'10); Development Assistant and Resident Baker **Sarah Arkebauer** (C'11); PR Assistants **Stephen Luban** (C'12) and **Thomson Guster** (C'11); Project Assistant and Summer Intern **Kristen Martin** (C'11); Summer Interns **Chris Milione** (C'11) and **Trisha Low** (C'11); Gallery Curator and Calendar Designer **Kaegan Sparks** (C'10); and Book Ordering Managers **Andrea Amanullah** (C'12) and **Zach Ferris** (C'09). Our nonstudent staffers were Night Manager **Peter Schwarz** (CGS'05), Multimedia Assistant **Michael Thomas Vassallo** (C'08), Summer Projects Assistant **Pamela Takefman** (C'09), Administrative Assistants **Allison Harris** and **Elizabeth McDonnell**, Assistant to the Director **Michelle Taransky**, Assistant Director for Development **John Carroll** (C'05), Program Coordinator **Erin Gautsche** (CGS'06), Director **Jessica Lowenthal** (GR'08), Faculty Director and Kelly Professor of English **Al Filreis**, and Assistant to the Faculty Director **Jamie-Lee Josselyn** (C'05).



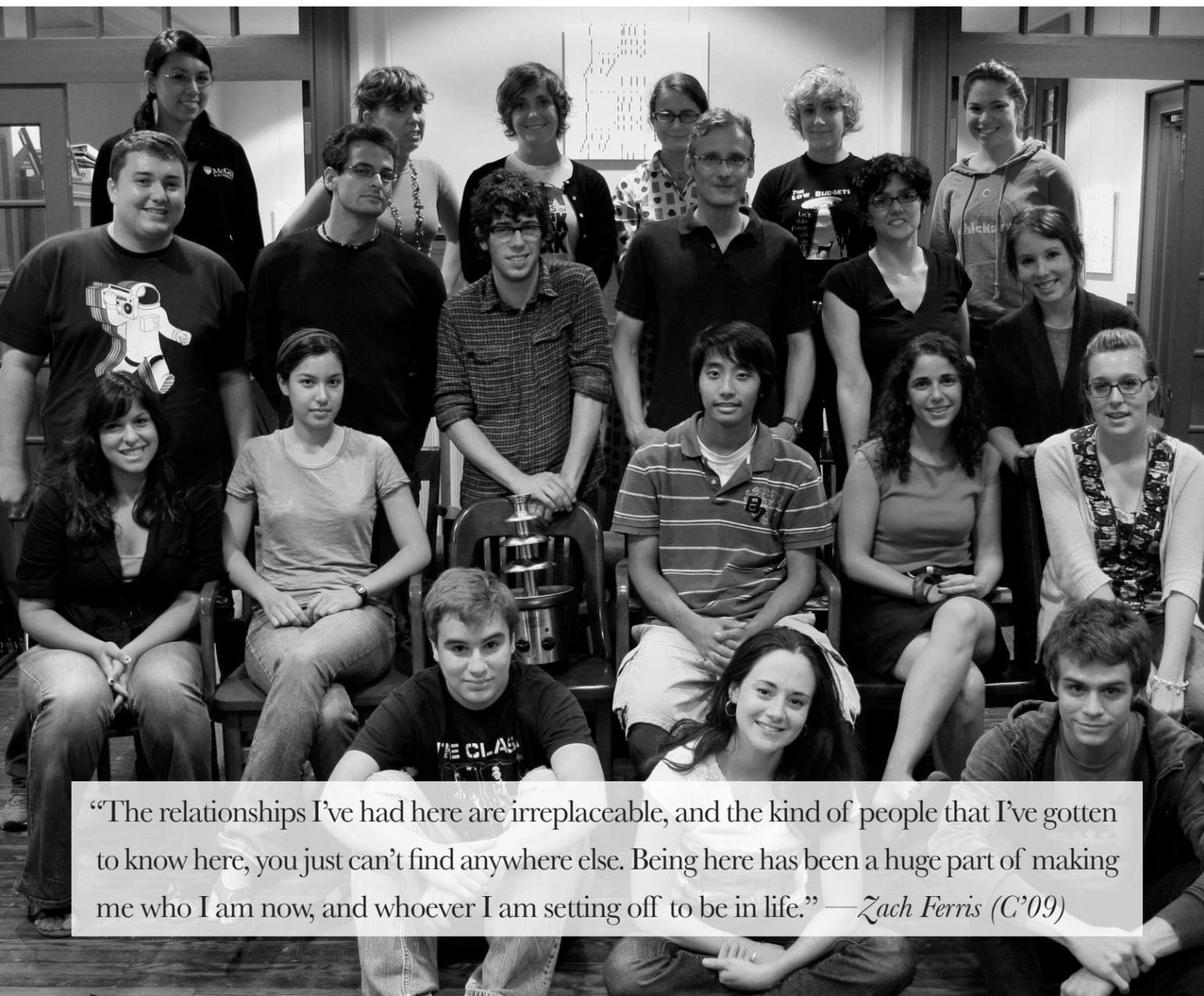
Sarah Arkebauer and Michelle Taransky

The Writers House Planning Committee

The Writers House Planning Committee – also known as “the Hub” – is the core group of writers and writing activists who make things happen here. Combining the qualities of an advisory board and an idea-generating machine, the Hub meets monthly over pizza (and virtually, anytime, through lively email conversations) to initiate and plan projects. This year “Speakeasy” coordinators **Lee Huttner** (C'10), **Dan McIntosh** (C'09), and **Amelia Williams** (C'12) hosted an exciting slate of open mic nights, including a Halloween “Spookeasy” with ghostly readings and a ghoulish-themed reception. Lee also worked closely with English professor **Emily Steiner** to organize our first annual “Media Res” program, an evening of talks and food celebrating medieval literature and culture. Hub members dreamed up two other celebratory events: former KWH Program Coordinator and Penn Writing Fellow **Tom Devaney** invited local luminaries (including former Creative Writing Director Dan Hoffman) to present creative interpretations of “The Raven” in honor of Edgar Allan Poe’s 200th birthday. Graduate student **Adrian Khactu** arranged a beautiful tribute to the late David Foster Wallace that allowed community members to come together in remembrance. And the Hub made things too. **Brooke Palmieri** (C'09) completed an ambitious letterpress reprinting of George Herbert’s 17th-century anthology *The Temple*, which became the touchstone for a panel discussion exploring the inky history of printing practices. Summer intern **Trisha Low** (C'11) baked cookies and treats throughout the summer, inspiring other staffers to follow her culinary lead; **Sarah Arkebauer** (C'11), **Andrea Amanullah** (C'12) and **Michelle Taransky** concocted weekly sweet indulgences throughout the year, including G=U=P=C=A=K=E=S frosted with lines of poetry by **Bob Perelman** and **Charles Bernstein**.

Alumni

We’re constantly astounded by generous alumni who contribute to the Writers House project as mentors, visiting authors, online book group leaders, audience members, and “Friends of the Writers House” (supporters of our annual fundraising campaign). The KWH community is sustained by the energy and enthusiasm of its alumni participants – and we’re grateful for everything they do. The extraordinary **Stephen Fried** (C'79), who helps deepen our relationship with Penn’s alumni nonfiction writers, organized another all-star lineup for Homecoming weekend. “Extreme Sportswriting” featured a full-contact panel discussion about the future of sports and journalism, with **Stefan Fatsis** (C'85), **Buzz Bissinger** (C'77), and **Jon Wertheim** (Law'97), moderated by Fried. Philadelphia restaurateur and author of *Forklore*, **Ellen Yin** (W'87, WG'93), tantalized us in September with mouth-watering details about her experience as a food writer. **Gerald M. Stern** (W'58) visited in October to share the remarkable story of a lawsuit against “big daddy coal,” which he chronicled in his book *The Scotia Widows*. Several alumni shared their experiences as authors and editors by volunteering as mentors, including painter and graphic novelist **Emily Steinberg** (C'87, GFA'91), filmmaker **Paul Zaentz** (W'72), medical journalist **Randi Hutter Epstein** (C'84), book publishing professional **Lynn Rosen** (C'83), screenwriter **Mark Rizzo** (C'92), novelist **Julie Buxbaum** (C'99), and journalist **Stephen Fried**. Other alumni authors joined us on the road to talk up the KWH and demonstrate a network astonishingly deep with writerly talent. Alumni readers for KWH salon-style events in New York and Chicago included **John Carroll** (C'05), **Lee Eisenberg** (C'68, ASC'70), **Paul Elsberg** (C'00), **Randi Hutter Epstein** (C'84), **Danny Goldstein** (C'08), **Caroline Rothstein** (C'06), **Nancy Rothstein** (CW'75), and **Ellen Umansky** (C'91).



“The relationships I’ve had here are irreplaceable, and the kind of people that I’ve gotten to know here, you just can’t find anywhere else. Being here has been a huge part of making me who I am now, and whoever I am setting off to be in life.” —Zach Ferris (C'09)

Joan Harrison Award: Lee Huttner (C'10)

Thanks to a gift from **Joan Harrison** (C'81), the Writers House awards a yearly stipend to support an outstanding writing project proposed by an undergraduate member of the KWH community. This year, our Harrison award winner, **Lee Huttner**, plans to re-imagine and rewrite Christopher Marlowe's Renaissance drama *Edward II*. His new play will reference the original while challenging our ideas about what can and should be put into a script by experimenting with language, textuality, and the relationships between space, word, and image. To prepare for this work, Lee will convene a series of seminar-style discussions about Marlowe and Renaissance drama, and, to cap off the project, he'll stage a performance of the material that will emerge from his reconstruction and deformance of Marlowe's text.



Joan Harrison Award winner Lee Huttner

The Kerry Prize: Jillian Budd (C'09)

The Kerry Prize honors the work and legacy of the first Writers House Director, **Kerry Sherin Wright**, whose capacious literary imagination continues to infuse our community. This year's Kerry Prize winner, **Jill Budd**, spent the summer of 2008 researching the history and production of radio plays before developing her own script. *A Few Small Calculations* is a play about a slightly mad (and somewhat lonely) scientist devoted to the creation of a perfect calculating machine, in the misguided hope that the resulting success and fame will change his drone-like days in the laboratory. We held the premiere live reading of *Calculations* in the KWH Arts Café, with parts played by Hub members **Jamie-Lee Josselyn** (C'05), **Richard Lawrence** (C'07), and **Seth Laracy** (C'04), who channeled the grand old days of radio with their campy vocal stylings.

Writers House Junior Fellow: Matthew Abess (C'08)

Funded since 1998 by Kelly Writers House supporters **Bette and Ralph Saul**, the **Kelly Writers House Junior Fellows** project enables recent Penn alumni to continue their study of literary arts. For his ambitious Junior Fellows project, **Matthew Abess** designed and taught an undergraduate seminar about testimony and witness, which examined, among other things, the exigencies of bearing witness within the strictures of the classroom setting. "Topography of Testimony" culminated in a lunchtime presentation of student work and course research, which introduced audience members to some of the forms and strategies of Holocaust testimonies the course explored.

CPCW Literary Journalism Fellowship: Chaia Werger (C'11) and Jessica Yu (C'10)



Fellowship winner Chaia Werger

Each year, the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing sponsors two fellowships for writers of literary or "long-form" journalism. Fellowship recipients set out to write an ambitiously reported piece, working closely with "Assigning Editor" **Lee Eisenberg** (C'68, ASC'70), who helps mold their work into writing of publishable quality. Penn junior **Jessica Yu** produced a remarkably researched piece about the gradual (and often gloriously violent) destruction of American smokestacks, symbols of an industrial era in which factories, power stations, and grimy architectural feats defined the American ego. Sophomore **Chaia Werger** pursued knowledge about death and dying, a deeply personal project that compelled Chaia to confront her own fears about mortality in the process.

Behrman Scholars: Florentina Dragulescu (C'12) and Rebecca "Rivka" Fogel (C'11)

The Behrman Family Scholarship Fund for a Young Writer, established by **Grant Behrman** (WG'77) on behalf of his family, provides three years of financial support for two undergraduate students involved in KWH projects and programs. Our newest Behrman Scholar is **Florentina Dragulescu**. Born in Romania, Florentina joined the Writers House staff at the beginning of her freshman year and has quickly become involved in many Writers House groups and campus publications, including *Kedma*, Penn's journal of Jewish thought and culture. Florentina has also become an indispensable editor of our digital media; if you watch KWH-TV or listen to our MP3s, you've seen evidence of her handiwork. Our returning Behrman Scholar, **Rivka Fogel**, continues to contribute her considerable poetic sensibility to the KWH community. This year, she studied closely with CPCW Fellow in Poetry and Poetic Practice, **Rachel Levitsky**, and produced a stunning and audacious handmade accordion book, *occupational disease*, which loops and reuses linguistic fragments from ads, web applications, and texts about genocide.



Behrman Scholar Rivka Fogel

CPCW Writing Apprenticeships

CPCW's **Writing Apprenticeships** project promotes advanced research, mentorship, and apprenticeship experiences for Penn students, especially during their junior and senior years. This year, the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing sponsored three semester-long apprenticeships with faculty members affiliated with Penn's writing programs. **Elizabeth Van Doren**, editor and writer of children's books, took on Penn senior **Heather Schwedel** as part of her New York publishing team. Heather learned how books are acquired, edited, illustrated, and made, and contributed to the production of several books to be published in 2009. Sophomore **Emily Schultheis** apprenticed to political journalist **Dick Polman** and immersed herself in the tight cycle of a daily news blog by researching national news items and contributing fresh story ideas for Dick's political blog, "The American Debate." Senior **Aaron Walker** delved into archives and collected primary data – letters from Peace Corps volunteers, for example – for political and science writer **Peter Tarr**. Writing apprenticeships are made possible through a generous grant from **Reina Marin Bassini** (CW'72, GED'72) and **Emilio Bassini** (C'71, W'71, WG'73).

Caterfino Scholar: Kristen Martin (C'11)



Caterfino Scholar Kristen Martin

The **Douglas W. Caterfino Endowed Scholarship Fund for a Young Writer**, created by **Elissa Caterfino Mandel** (C'83) in loving memory of **Douglas W. Caterfino** (W'83), provides financial support to an undergraduate who is a member of Penn's extended writing community. Our current Caterfino scholar, **Kristen Martin** (C'11), is a KWH staffer, an English major with a creative writing concentration, and a story editor for Penn's food magazine *Penn Appétit*. Through the Critical Writing Program, Kristen serves as a Peer Tutor in the Penn Writing Center, where she helps other students discover and sharpen their writing talents. In April, Kristen wowed a packed Arts Café with her discerning introduction of **Mary Gordon**, the third and final Kelly Writers House Fellow of the year, who, as Kristen said, "works the quirk... and allows her readers to see her innermost thoughts."

“It is so refreshing in our current world, with its shallow and divisive public discourse, to be in the company of those who love to explore subtlety, nuance, and even -- yes -- the semi-colon.”

—Ann Hostetler (GAS’96)

“I certainly wouldn’t have developed into the writer and the person I am today if the Writers House hadn’t taken my ideas seriously and made the writing life seem possible.”

—Aichlee Bushnell (C’09)

NEW INITIATIVES

Dial-a-poem

When our Faculty Director, **Al Filreis**, announced new Writers House initiative **6-POEM** (aka DIAL-A-POEM), responses from the community included: “Geez, this is so retro it’s cool”; “Everything seems to be converging on the phone”; and “Telephony rocks.” Calling 6-POEM from Penn’s campus, or 215-746-POEM from outside campus, listeners can choose to hear what’s happening at the Writers House that night (or very soon), highlights of upcoming events, a featured poem read at the Writers House from our archives, or a selected recording of Writers House-affiliated students. Through 6-POEM, we hope to have updated (and complicated) John Giorno’s “Dial-a-poem” project from the 1960s: to change poetry’s position in the world by making it accessible by everyday means like the telephone.

KWH-TV

Thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous, tech-savvy donor, we equipped the Arts Café with a remote-operated HD video camera to stream programs live online to our extended community. Anyone can tune in to **KWH-TV** from anywhere in the world for live programming and “re-runs” of past projects. With this cutting-edge technology, **Al Filreis** and **Jessica Lowenthal** (GR’08) led a webinar on the poetry of Emily Dickinson in which listeners could call in to join the conversation. We also made all of our readings and public programs available live online to viewers worldwide and captured the videos to add to our growing KWH-TV library. Tune in to KWH-TV at writing.upenn.edu/wh/multimedia/tv.

ArtsEdge Residency

ArtsEdge is a collaborative residency project designed to nurture the careers of emergent writers and artists. Through ArtsEdge, the Kelly Writers House, the **Fine Arts Department of the School of Design**, and Penn’s **Facilities and Real Estate Services** have teamed up to offer rent subsidies to young practitioners that will allow them to devote time to their craft. Residencies for each artist last for one year and include a studio, living space, and close affiliation with the writing and artistic communities at Penn. Our first ArtsEdge writer, **Greg Romero**, quickly jumped into Penn’s writing scene. He presented two works-in-progress at KWH (*The Travel Plays* and *Dandelion Momma*) and helped us forge a new relationship with the lovely people of the **Philadelphia Dramatists Center**. Greg also received high marks as a creative writing instructor; his course sent students exploring secret stairwells and nooks around campus to write about space and its potential uses.

Conversations about Film with Kathy DeMarco Van Cleve

Novelist, film producer, and Penn screenwriting professor **Kathy DeMarco Van Cleve** (C’88, W’88) launched an exciting new initiative this year to invite industry professionals to KWH for insider discussions about the business of filmmaking. In partnership with Penn’s **Cinema Studies Program**, **Conversations about Film** brought **Alexis Alexanian** to talk about her work as a film producer, which includes production credits on *Mississippi Burning*, *Jacob’s Ladder*, and *A League of Their Own*. When actor, writer, and director **Tom McCarthy** visited, he shared invaluable tips about screenwriting and directing, drawing on his award-winning work on the critically acclaimed independent films *The Visitor* and *The Station Agent*.



Kathy DeMarco Van Cleve introduces Tom McCarthy

2008 - 2009 PROGRAM & PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS —

Bok Visiting Writers Series

The **Bok Visiting Writers Fund**, established by **Scott** (C'81, W'81, L'84) and **Roxanne Bok**, allows us to support the full breadth of contemporary writing by paying honoraria to visiting authors working in every conceivable genre. This year with the help of the Bok fund we marked the 125th birthday of William Carlos Williams by presenting readings and talks by four poets – **Jena Osman**, **Michelle Taransky**, **Sarah Dowling** and **Pattie McCarthy** – who described their poetic relationships to the Williams legacy. Fiction writer and essayist **Gail Scott** helped us explore the overlaps and differences between poetry and prose, as well as the practical concerns of working within (and without) these intersections. We invited filmmaker **Fred Barney Taylor** and novelist **Samuel Delany** for a screening and discussion of Taylor's film *The Polymath, Or The Life and Opinions of Samuel R. Delany, Gentleman*. Critic/theorists **Laurie Shannon**, **Lytle Shaw**, and **Christopher Wood** visited as part of the vibrant, graduate student-led “Theorizing” lecture series, which continues to introduce our community to cutting-edge work in philosophy and literary theory. And young poets from the SUNY Buffalo Poetics Program – **Divya Victor**, **Andrew Rippeon**, **Steve Zultanski**, and **Chris Sylvester** – piled into a van and trekked down to KWH to read from their work and lead us in a state of the union discussion of emerging poetry communities.

Bernheimer Symposium: Food Writing



Erin Gautsche

One visit to KWH is enough to show you how important food is to everything we do. Our community has become increasingly interested in food writing, and this year's **Annual Symposium in Memory of Charles Bernheimer**, made possible by Advisory Board member **Kate Levin** (GAS'96), was a full-day celebration of cooking, eating, and writing. During a lunch program featuring local food writer **Dynise Balcavage** of the blog (and forthcoming cookbook) *Urban Vegan*, we feasted on a vegan buffet and learned how to start and market food blogs. In the afternoon, Program Coordinator **Erin Gautsche** (CGS'06) led volunteers through a “KWH Reception Bootcamp” to learn how we prepare thoughtful receptions on a shoe-string budget. The food, cooked entirely from the cookbook *Forklore* by **Ellen Yin** (W'87, WG'93), was served during a reception following our evening discussion with Yin, who is also co-owner of *Fork*, a nationally acclaimed New American bistro in Philadelphia.

Hub Thanksgiving

Our annual Hub Thanksgiving dinner gives Writers House students, faculty, staff, and friends the opportunity to gather for a potluck meal with as much pumpkin pie and grandma's stuffing as conversation and thankfulness. **Chaia Werger's** (C'11) gooey pumpkin butter cake and **Michael Tom Vassallo** (C'08) and **Rivka Fogel's** (C'11) collaborative shepherd's pie (marked “Veganism and Kosherism unite”) proved to be among the culinary highlights of the occasion, while speeches and toasts by Hub members led by **Al Filreis** were heartfelt and witty, encompassing everything we love about the Writers House and its community.

Cheryl J. Family Fiction Program: Ben Fountain

In the summer of 2007, **Ben Fountain**, the father of a current Penn student, stopped by the Writers House to introduce himself and gift us a few copies of his first short story collection, *Brief Interviews with Che Guevara*. We passed the books around the house, at first generally, and then with increasing fervor and excitement, as *Brief Interviews* became one of our favorite books of the year. Others agreed with us; the book was awarded the 2007 Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for a distinguished first book of fiction. We invited Ben back to the Writers House as this year's featured reader for our annual Cheryl J. Family Fiction Program, a project supported by Kelly Writers House Advisory Board member **Cheryl Family** (C'91). Not only were we treated to a wonderful reading, but a group of us also convened in the dining room afterward for a memorable dinner of Senegalese food and much political discussion.



Violette Carb



Steve Earle

Blutt Singer-Songwriter Symposium: Steve Earle

The Blutt Singer-Songwriter Symposium, made possible through a grant from **Mitch** (C'78, M'82, WG'87) and **Margo Blutt**, brings eminent and lauded songwriters to KWH for a conversation about the work and the form – and, if we're lucky, some singing and strumming, too. This year, Grammy award-winning artist **Steve Earle**, noted for his rock and country music as well as his political activism, fielded questions from rock critic and Penn faculty member, **Anthony DeCurtis**, about some of his past and future projects. Playing a song from his new album, *Townes*, led Earle to reminisce about **Townes Van Zandt**, one of his early mentors.

RealArts@Penn

Often it's true that a university's arts curriculum is good and beautiful and sufficient unto itself. But perhaps just as often, learning the arts – truly coming to know the importance, value, and potential impact of creative work and ideas – will depend on whatever connections a university can help students make to the world beyond the university, where people work in the realm of practice, where business is relevant, and where businesspeople don't always know how to talk to “the creative people” and vice versa. **RealArts@PENN** is a project designed to help some of Penn's most creative students make those connections. Through RealArts, and with the help of grants from **Paul** (W'76) and **Ossi Burger**, **Alan and Phyllis Berger**, **Dirk Wittenborn** (C'72) and the **Cape Branch Foundation**, we set up (and pay stipends) for summer internships at leading organizations in the arts, putting Penn students to work at **MTV Networks**, **Rolling Stone magazine**, **Brooklyn Films**, **Shore Fire Media**, **Grand Central Publishing**, **Women Make Movies**, and with screenwriters **David Stern** (C'89) and **Stuart Gibbs** (C'91). Penn alumni and faculty – including **Caryn Karmatz Rudy** (C'92), **Cheryl Family** (C'91), **Jon Avnet** (C'71), **Anthony DeCurtis**, and **Karen Beckman** – have been vital in helping us make connections at these and other arts organizations.

The 15th Room Press

The Writers House teaches young writers and readers the importance of setting type, getting your fingers inky, and experiencing the feel of type impressed on paper, if only to remind these students of what is generally true behind the mission for all KWH projects: writing is a communal rather than a solitary act and the work of bringing writing to readers is a practical art that requires concrete skills. This year, through **The 15th Room Press**, our imprint of The Common Press, we supported the letterpress edition of George Herbert's *The Temple*, a handset book conceived by **Brooke Palmieri** (C'09). We continued to celebrate the work of local and visiting poets through our broadside publication series, an ongoing venture that introduces printing practices to students new to presswork. **Michael Tom Vassallo** (C'08) envisioned a collaborative book project about paranormal Philadelphia that invited Hub members and others to contribute writing about quirky local lore. And, for next year, we accepted a book proposal by **Trisha Low** (C'11) for a project about feminism and body image.



Brooke Palmieri

Bob Lucid Memorial Program in Fiction

Bob Lucid's generous vision helped imagine the Writers House into being – and we miss him terribly. Thanks to gifts from **Susan Small Savitsky** (CW'75) and **Ed Kane** (C'71), we will honor Bob as a founder of the Writers House each and every year. For our first annual **Bob Lucid Memorial Program in Fiction**, we invited acclaimed writer **Stuart Dybek**, who was introduced by his dear friend, Penn faculty member **Max Apple**. Dybek read “We Didn’t,” a story sustained by its competing emotional valences, heading first to the shores of Lake Michigan, where a teenaged Perry Katzek and his girlfriend are attempting to sleep together for the first time. The comedy of their inexperienced coupling, and Dybek’s droll delivery had us laughing hysterically – “This is a funny story!” we thought – until a dead body washes up on the shore and changes everything. Dybek made everyone in the room feel that brutal transition: the delirious high giving way to embarrassment, confusion, and disgust, followed by the leaching of love and lust from a relationship too new and fragile to last. We were in the presence of a truly musical writer, whose pathos and irony had given new meaning to the age-old tango of desire and disappointment.



Professor Max Apple introduces Stuart Dybek

Writers Without Borders: The Provost’s International Writers Series

Encouraging a wide readership of often-underrepresented aesthetics and regions of the world, Writers Without Borders initiates conversations and exchanges between international authors and members of our community. When poet **Zhimin Li** visited from China, Hub members, local poets, and Chinese scholars alike gathered in the Arts Café for his presentation, followed by a cozy dinner in our dining room. Program Coordinator **Erin Gautsche** (CGS'06) prepared a gorgeous reception of Middle Eastern delights to celebrate **Hanan Al-Shaykh's** two-day visit to Penn, which included a special conversation between the novelist and her translator, Penn professor **Roger Allen**. South African activist and writer **Breyten Breytenbach** enthralled his audience with a description of his imprisonment under apartheid and shared work from a recent collection of poems. Students and community members who attended a teatime discussion with graphic novelist **Marjane Satrapi** are still marveling at her candor and strength. We are grateful to **Seth Ginns** (C'00) for a start-up grant that has helped make these and other visits possible.

LIVE at the Writers House

LIVE at the Writers House, our long-standing collaboration with the folks of **WXPN 88.5**, made possible through the generous support of **BigRoc**, continued to showcase Philadelphia-area writers working in almost every genre. Every month between September and April, we aired a one-hour broadcast of poetry, music, and other spoken-word art, produced by our Program Coordinator **Erin Gautsche** (CGS'06) and hosted by WXPN's “Morning Show” star Michaela Majoun, straight from our Arts Café onto the airwaves. Through LIVE we highlighted many of Philadelphia’s literary communities, including writers from the **Writing from Prison** project, **Art Sanctuary**, and the **Leeway Foundation**. LIVE now boasts an archive of more than sixty episodes and shows no signs of slowing; visit writing.upenn.edu/wh/involved/series/live to listen in.

KWH Art

Curated by **Kaegan Sparks** (C'10), **KWH Art** explores the relationships between visual and literary arts by pairing monthly visual art shows with interdisciplinary programming, such as discussions between poets and painters. This year’s first show, “Word Each to Cling I,” featured a series of photographed player piano rolls by New York artist **Erica Baum**. The opening included presentations on automatic instruments and experimental musical notation by two members of Penn’s Music Department, as well as a live demonstration of a player piano. In late fall, the gallery hosted a giant collaborative exhibition of verbal and visual art pieces generated by the proposals in **Darren Wershler-Henry's** book *The Tapeworm Foundry: and/or the dangerous prevalence of imagination*. Our final gallery show of the year, “Spin Glasses and Other Frustrated Systems,” was an exhibition of wallpaper patterns created using graphics and schemata culled from thirteen books selected from Strand Bookstore in NYC. The opening incorporated thirteen different writers performing and interpreting texts from the thirteen books. Through these and other interactive programs, KWH Art invited Writers House visitors to experiment and engage with the visual arts.

Marathon Reading: Slaughterhouse-Five

For our third annual marathon reading, we selected Kurt Vonnegut’s irreverent novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Led by Hub member and KWH staffer **Allison Harris**, a dedicated committee of Hub members readied the house for an inspired treatment of the book’s themes: while some volunteers prepared a delicious feast of foods mentioned in the book (including Milky Ways, bananas, Coca-Cola and American cheese), others covered our walls in military gear, WPA ads, propaganda, and camouflage, and set up TVs to loop commercials from the 1940s. With the help of a big whiteboard set up at the front of the room, community members signed up to read for 5-minute slots – reading and eating bologna sandwiches and reading and eating beef stew and reading and eating and reading and eating – until the book was done. Dozens of people stopped by to participate in the festivities, to marvel at the decked-out house, and to relax and listen to their friends recite from Vonnegut’s provocative and surprisingly timely novel.



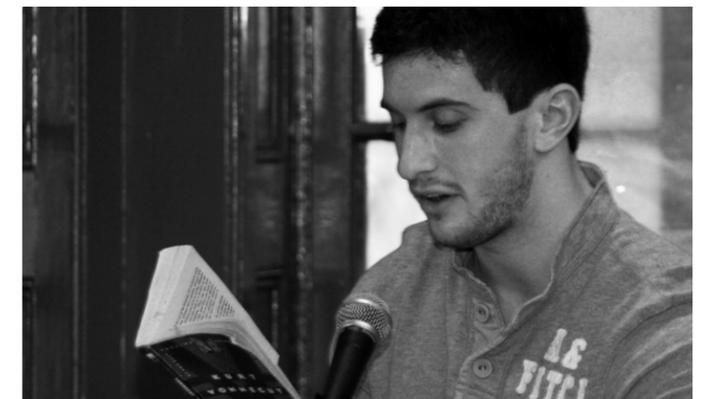
Max McKenna



Allison Harris



Trisha Low



Chris Milione

The **Kelly Writers House Fellows Program**, funded annually by **Paul Kelly** (C'62, W'64) since 1999, brings three of the most influential contemporary writers to 3805 Locust Walk for two-day visits. The Fellows Program allows us to realize two unusual goals. We want to make it possible for the youngest writers and writer-critics to have sustained contact with authors of great accomplishment in an informal atmosphere. We also want to resist the time-honored distinction – more honored in practice than in theory – between working with eminent writers on the one hand and studying literature on the other.

This year, the Fellows project hosted experimental writer **Robert Coover**, nonfiction writer and novelist **Joan Didion**, and memoirist and novelist **Mary Gordon**. Undergraduates in the Writers House Fellows seminar, taught by **Al Filreis** and his assistant **Jamie-Lee Josselyn** (C'05), spent more than a month preparing for each visit by reading and discussing the Fellow's work and meeting weekly in the Arts Café for intense analysis and debate. The class then welcomed each Fellow into their classroom for an anything-goes discussion that allowed the students to delve more deeply into the particular issues raised in their month-long explorations. Several students also joined our Fellows for home-cooked dinners in the Writers House dining room prepared by their classmates and chef **Myra Lotto** (C'99, GR'11).

We invited the Penn and Philadelphia communities to participate in these visits as well. Members of our extended community crowded into the Arts Café on both days of each Fellow's visit, for a public reading on day one and a brunch and interview on day two. Viewers from all over the world tuned in as well, through live broadcast on KWH-TV.



Professor Al Filreis leads the Fellows Seminar



Joan Didion signs an autograph for Amy Gutmann



Mary Gordon talks with an audience member

We spent a lot of time on the road this year to bring salon-style programming to our many friends and advocates across the country. For the seventh year in a row, Susan and Louis Meisel sponsored a benefit at the Louis K. Meisel Gallery in SoHo to raise money in support of the Kelly Writers House Young and Emerging Writers Fund. Thanks to the generosity of Susan and Louis, who donated the use of their gallery and hosted a fantastic reception, all of the money raised from this benefit went directly toward the Young Writers Fund.

Our annual "Writers House New York" at the Meisel Gallery recreated the spirit and community of a reading in our Arts Café by gathering together our New York-area friends for readings and conversation. This year's featured guests included eminent author of fiction and 2008 Kelly Writers House Fellow **Lynne Sharon Schwartz**; poet **Gregory Djanikian** (C'71), Penn's Director of Creative Writing; medical journalist, Columbia professor; and Penn alumna **Randi Hutter Epstein** (C'84); grad student and Writers House Hub member **Adrian Khactu**; recent Penn alum and former Writers House staff member **Danny Goldstein** (C'08); and current Penn student and blogger **Alex Goldstein** (C'10). We ended the evening with a discussion of William Carlos Williams' poem "The Red Wheelbarrow," led by **Al Filreis**.

In March, we were thrilled to make our first-ever trip to Chicago, for a salon hosted graciously by **Lee** (C'68, ASC'70) and **Linda Eisenberg**. We spent the evening meeting many longtime Chicago-area residents, several of whom we had previously known only by e-mail. Writers House staff member and Penn alumnus **John Carroll** (C'05) and CPCW staff member **Mingo Reynolds** made the trip along with Al Filreis, who led a discussion of the poem that is our keynote, Emily Dickinson's "I dwell in possibility." They were joined by Chicago-area residents **Nancy Rothstein** (CW'75) and **Paul Elsberg** (C'00), as well as Nancy's daughter **Caroline** (C'06), who returned home from New York for the event.

Finally, we returned to New York in May for another event at the home of Kelly Writers House Advisory Board members **Gary and Nina Wexler**. Our intimate session featured Rolling Stone Contributing Editor and Penn faculty member **Anthony DeCurtis**, novelist **Ellen Umansky** (C'91), musician **Freddy Wexler** (C'10), and Penn matriculant **Kelly Diamond** (C'13), who discovered the Writers House while on her college search. As usual, Al Filreis concluded the evening with a gnarly yet satisfyingly meaningful discussion of a poem by **Lorine Niedecker**.



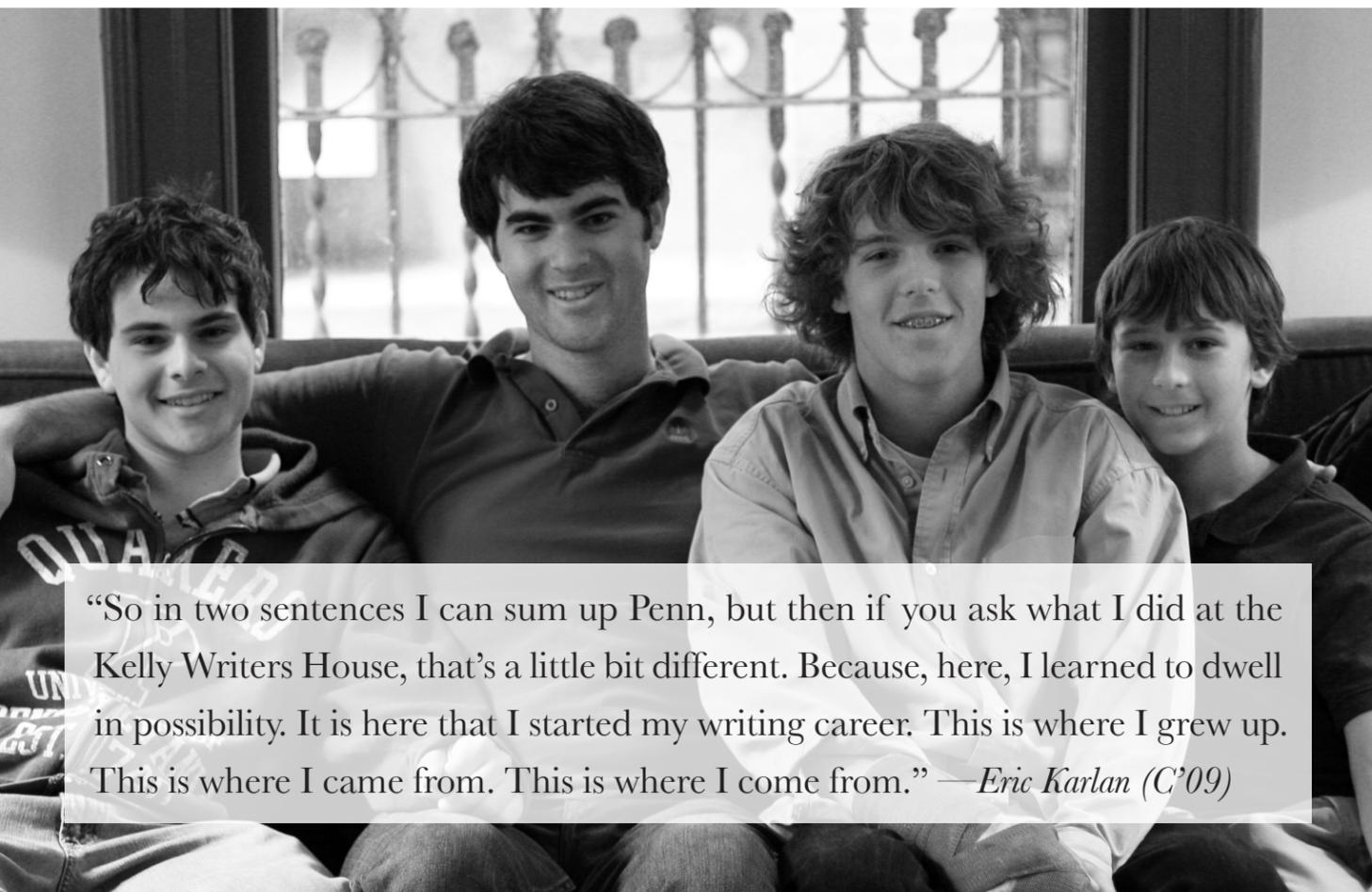
Randi Hutter Epstein



Greg Djanikian



Lynne Sharon Schwartz



“So in two sentences I can sum up Penn, but then if you ask what I did at the Kelly Writers House, that’s a little bit different. Because, here, I learned to dwell in possibility. It is here that I started my writing career. This is where I grew up. This is where I came from. This is where I come from.” —*Eric Karlan (C’09)*

Eric Karlan, his brother Ross and cousins Galen Karlan-Mason and Isaac Karlan-Mason, relax on the beloved and iconic green couch. The couch was Eric’s second home during his Penn years. His grandmother, Marilyn Karlan, has endowed the space to mark his graduation and honor this multi-generational Penn family: The Karlan Family Writers Alcove.

Endowment Gifts

Gifts made to the Kelly Writers House Endowment help us create projects, programs, and positions that last. If the first ten years of the Kelly Writers House were about establishing Penn’s freest-form student-centered space and making its mark on campus, the second decade is about sustaining the innovation and making it viable for the long run. Endowment gifts – such as support of an annual event or series – allow us, one gift at a time, to progress toward our goal of being a permanent feature on the Penn, Philadelphia, and the national cultural landscape.

There are numerous opportunities for endowment: support of specific projects such as publications and new student initiatives; naming the rooms that host our programs, workshops and seminars; and naming and supporting the directorship. Many donors choose to recognize family members, memorialize favorite Penn professors, or express gratitude to old Penn friends by naming endowment gifts in their honor. These are lasting tributes to loved ones or mentors, and at the same time, they ensure that the Writers House will continue to grow and thrive. If you want to find out more, contact our Assistant Director for Development, **Arielle Brousse (C’07)** at brousse@writing.upenn.edu, or call (215) 746-POEM.

We have been honored to receive generous endowment gifts from many of our far-thinking friends and supporters. We are grateful for their enthusiasm, encouragement, and support, and pleased to describe their gifts here.

Blutt Singer-Songwriter Symposium Endowment Fund

Founded by **Mitchell Blutt (C’78, M’82, L’84)** to support an annual songwriting symposium, the Blutt Fund makes it possible for us to welcome legendary performers into our intimate space. This year singer/songwriter/author/actor **Steve Earle** performed several songs and talked candidly about his work as a writer.

Roxanne and Scott Bok Endowed Visiting Writers Series Fund

Roxanne and Scott Bok (C’81, W’81, L’84), members of the Kelly Writers House Advisory Board, created one of our first endowment funds, enabling us to pay honoraria to an exciting roster of writers year after year. This year’s Bok visitors included not just novelists, poets, and journalists, but also filmmakers, graphic novelists, critics and more.

The Cheryl J. Family Endowment Fund

Cheryl Family (C’91), a member of the Kelly Writers House Advisory Board, established the Family Fund to support an annual program for a young or emerging fiction writer. Our second annual program featured award-winning writer of short fiction, **Ben Fountain**.

Endowed Fund for a Literary Journal

Through this generous gift, **Harry Groome (C’63)** – also a member of the Kelly Writers House Advisory Board – has supported the publication of a nationally distributed literary journal, *XConnect*, which ran from 1995-2008. Watch for announcements soon about a new magazine!

Sylvia W. Kauders Series Endowment Fund

The Kauders series, established by **Sylvia Kauders (CW’42)**, allows us to meet informally with memoirists, journalists, and other notable writers of nonfiction who visit the Writers House for memorable conversations over lunch in the dining room and Arts Café.

Annual Symposium in Memory of Charles Bernheimer

Established in the memory of Comparative Literature teacher and scholar **Charles Bernheimer** by Writers House Advisory Board member **Kate Levin (GAS’96)**, the Bernheimer Symposium is organized each year by the Writers House Program Coordinator, who takes the opportunity to think expansively about programming possibilities. This year, the fund supported an entire day’s worth of events related to food and food writing.

The LIVE at the Writers House Endowment

Established anonymously by **BigRoc**, this fund supports the ongoing collaboration between the Writers House and WXPEN 88.5, the monthly radio show **LIVE at the Writers House**.

Caroline Rothstein Fund for Oral Poetry

Nancy (CW’75) and **Steven Rothstein** established this fund to support an annual oral poetry program in honor of their daughter, **Caroline Rothstein (C’06)**, an active member of the Writers House community who was a leading voice in spoken-word projects at Penn. This year **Tracie Morris** and band (**Marvin Sewell and Val Jeanty**) joined us for an evening of experimental sound poetry.

Bob Lucid Memorial Fund

Susan Small Savitsky (CW’75) and **Ed Kane (C’71)** established this fund to support an annual fiction program in memory of beloved Penn professor **Robert “Bob” Lucid**. Bob taught at Penn for 32 years until his retirement in 1996, and his visionary spirit and pedagogical idealism filled the Writers House from its beginning. We inaugurated this annual program with a reading by eminent short story author **Stuart Dybek**.

Alice Cooper Shoulberg Scholarship Fund for the Support of Creative Publishing

A stellar student who graduated from Penn’s College for Women in 1955, **Alice Cooper Shoulberg** went on to a brilliant career as a Philadelphia public school teacher. Established in her memory, the Shoulberg Fund supports the technological needs of our Publications Room, where students depend on computers and software to edit and publish their magazines.

Wexler Endowment Fund

Gary and Nina Wexler, Penn parents and members of the Kelly Writers House Advisory Board, created this unrestricted endowment fund to support all kinds of programs and new student initiatives. The Wexler Fund allows students to think creatively about what can happen in our space.

Zarin/Rosenfeld Endowment for Literary Journalism Magazine

Penn parents **Judith Zarin and Gerald Rosenfeld** created this fund to support a magazine of literary journalism at the Kelly Writers House. *The Green Couch*, a magazine of literary journalism founded by **Eric Karlan (C’09)**, is printed each semester through the Zarin/Rosenfeld Fund.

Other Special Gifts

While the Kelly Writers House actively seeks permanent funding for its existing programs, we do not shy away from introducing dramatic and challenging new programs and projects to our packed calendar. Term gifts allow us to do just that: they support new initiatives and short term needs.

Seth Ginns Term Fund for International Writers

Through this gift, **Seth Ginns** (C'00) supports **Writers Without Borders: The Provost's International Writers Series**, which brings writers from around the world to our intimate cottage on Locust Walk. This past year's visitors included Iranian graphic novelist **Marjane Satrapi**, author of the popular and award-winning *Persepolis*; Chinese poet **Zhimin Li**; and South African novelist, poet, and activist **Breyten Breytenbach**.

David Roberts Online Book Group Term Fund

Conceived by Writers House Faculty Director **Al Filreis** to create a learning community for alumni, our Online Book Groups Program has successfully hosted 38 cyber-discussions since 2000. Penn parent and alumnus **David Roberts** (W'84) created a term fund to enhance these already popular groups. Thanks to David's generosity we were able to run seven book groups this year: three month-long discussions (of William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, Alfred Hitchcock films, and Mary Gordon's novel *The Shadow Man*), as well as four two-week-long discussions of shorter works, such as short stories by James Alan McPherson and John Cheever.

Faculty Director's Discretionary Fund

Leonard (W'70) and **Jayne Abess, Reina Marin Bassini** (CW'72, GED'72), and **Jon** (C'71) and **Barbara Avnet**, have chosen to support our Faculty Director Discretionary Fund, which enables Writers House Faculty Director **Al Filreis** to seek out, encourage, and invest in student talents and innovations. Al's Discretionary Fund helps maintain the Writers House as a creative incubator, where students can develop ambitious writing and art projects.



Aichlee Bushnell



Kaegan Sparks

Supporting Our Letterpress

Susan and Louis Meisel support us each year by graciously hosting a benefit in the Louis K. Meisel Gallery in SoHo. This year, the Meisels also donated two gorgeous antique printer cabinets, as well as assorted antique type. These beautiful cases will provide much needed storage for our letterpress project, The Common Press, which allows Penn students to learn the art of printing. We're thrilled that the Meisels – who have helped furnish our House in the past – have also decided to support another unique Penn project.

Stocking Our Shelves

Lucy and Irwyn (C'75) **Applebaum** have yet again stocked our kitchen cabinets with tea, and this year they've also equipped us with baking sheets, mixing bowls, measuring cups, pot holders, and everything you'd need to make a killer batch of chocolate chip cookies – plus some non-stick frying pans for home-cooked meals. The Applebaums are making sure that food stays central to the KWH project. We'd also like to thank four good friends – **Ron Silliman, Rachel Levitsky, Randall Couch**, and **Jena Osman** – for donating wonderful poetry books from their personal libraries to the Writers House this past year. Baking supplies and poetry books: a match made in heaven.

Friends of the Kelly Writers House give gifts that support our ongoing projects and programming, semester by semester. Friends' gifts have helped fund our Writers House Junior Fellows program, bought books and magazines for the library, and paid for the coffee that is always percolating in the kitchen. Thank you, Friends, for helping us protect, sustain, and enhance this remarkable creative enterprise, the Kelly Writers House.

Emily Dickinson Circle

Art and Jamie Cooperman, Cliff and Bonnie Eisler, Feliks Frenkel, Alan Gilbert, Michael and Danielle Goldstein, Hank and Carol Herman, Paul and Nancy Kelly, Kate Levin and Robin Shapiro, Andrea Mitchell, John and Lori Reinsberg, David and Deborah Roberts, Ric Lewis and Ilina Singh, Kenneth Stein, Henry Kell Yang, Henry and Judy Zachs, Eric and Jessica Zachs.

William Carlos Williams Circle

Amy Ludvigson Alfano; Carol Shlifer Clapp; Logan Clarke, Jr.; Bob and Marcia D'Augustine (in honor of Allie Morgan D'Augustine); Greg and Lysa Djanikian; Harvey Feldman; Robert Friedman; Todd and Vickie Green; Bruce and Karyn Greenwald; Adam Groothuis; Janet Heettner and Peter Silverman (in honor of Yona Silverman); Helen Sewell Johnson; Joanne Goldner Kahan; Donald Keim; R. May Lee; Harvey and Linda Levine (in honor of Selena Levine and dedicated to Mr. & Mrs. Leo Feld and Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin Levine); Ted and Sara Liebowitz; Marjorie Perloff; Alan and Elisa Pines; Lee and Caryn Karmatz Rudy; Ricardo and Leslie Salmon (in honor of Reina and Emilio Bassini); B.Z. and Michael Schwartz; Liz Seoley; Gerald Stern, Esq. (in honor of Dr. Eric Stern); David Sussman; and Andy Wolk.

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Many organizations match the philanthropic interests of their employees, allowing their charitable gifts to have double the impact. The Writers House would like to thank the following companies for supporting us through their matching gifts programs:

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Kim Eisler and Ned Eisenberg attend a KWH Art Gallery opening



Jamie-Lee Josselyn, Seth Larecy, Richard Lawrence and Jill Budd perform Budd’s prize-winning radio play



Marshall Bright and Sarah Arkebauer model Slaughterhouse Five Marathon Reading t-shirts

BECOME A FRIEND

Free readings and workshops by contemporary writers. Coffee percolating in the kitchen. Conversations in the garden. Books for sale by visiting writers at a discounted price at many readings. Online archives of live performances by eminent American authors. All of these things and more are funded through the annual donations of our many Friends.

The Kelly Writers House seeks the support of our friends and potential friends to help us raise what people in the fundraising business call “term support” — small-and middle-sized gifts that will offset the costs of our programs in the immediate and near future.

Will you help us protect and sustain the Writers House project? Please choose a level of support, send a check, and we will immediately list you as among our “Friends.” Your gift will be acknowledged in our electronic *Annual*, which is available at all times on our web site: writing.upenn.edu/wh/support/friends.html. We will also thank you in the Spring with a special Writers House gift. If you wish to be anonymous, that’s fine; you can also request that we publish your gift in dedication to, or in memory of, others.

To become a friend, please fill out this form and send it with your check to:

The Kelly Writers House
3805 Locust Walk
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6150
Attention: Jessica Lowenthal, Director

Please make checks payable to “Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania” and be sure to jot “Kelly Writers House” on the memo line.

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- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- William Carlos Williams Circle \$1000
- Emily Dickinson Circle \$2500
- Please send me more information about additional giving opportunities

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For more information about the specific programs and projects at the Writers House, please visit our web site at:
<http://writing.upenn.edu/wh/support>.

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CPoCW
the center for programs in contemporary writing

Please don’t hesitate to write, call, or visit us.
We would love to hear from you!

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