

# Pembroke Center Associates

## Newsletter



(L-R) Scott Meyer '91, Lauren Zalaznick '84, and Amy Finn Binder '77, P '02 respond to audience questions.

## 2007 Commencement Forum Explores the Mass Media

Sponsored by the Pembroke Center Associates, forum panelists Lauren Zalaznick '84, President of Bravo, Scott Meyer '91, President and CEO of About, Inc., and forum moderator Amy Finn Binder '77, P '02, P '02, CEO and Founder of RF | Binder Partners, engaged in a wide-ranging discussion about the rapidly changing mass media. The discussion focused on the many ways that digital technology and user-generated content (e.g., homemade videos posted on YouTube) have influenced how people experience the media and the ways the media as an industry is being transformed in response. With more choices than ever, from a wide variety of sources, consumers are no

longer just watching media content, but are often creating it, interacting with it, commenting on it, and, re-casting it.

Scott Meyer noted that About.com is part of the New York Times Company and one of the largest sites on the web, visited by one of every five Internet users in the United States. "But big sites are wondering if they will stay big because the speed of consolidation is faster than anyone thought. To stay on top, we are up against some very interesting actors," said Meyer. "There is tremendous growth in sites that are not run by for-profit corporations, like Wikipedia, and sites like YouTube which have no clear business model other than

being acquired by a larger player like Google. Some sites are starting to become commercial entities, but they are not based in New York and are not from old line media companies. They have a huge reach, but many of them generate almost no revenue, at least not yet."

Lauren Zalaznick explained that Bravo has eighty-five million subscribers, comes from a traditional cable company model, and is owned by NBC Universal. "Everything NBC Universal does is driven from a content perspective as opposed to coming from a collective of technological advances. We exist because of a series of content innovations put out through innovative platforms. It is a big distinction," said Zalaznick. "Bravo generates the content and we are a huge marketing engine with our subscribers. The technology is something we are all catching up with."

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## From The Director

When the Pembroke Center was established, it was one of a group of feminist research centers launched with seed money from the Ford Foundation. Supported through its formative years by Ford with matching funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Rockefeller Foundation, the Center quickly earned its distinctive reputation as the leading center for feminist theoretical work. This meant that from the beginning it asked questions that some considered uncompromising and others exasperating—questions like what do we mean by “women”? Are women the same in every culture and at every point in history? How are differences between female and male produced and expressed historically and across cultures? And how do different scholarly disciplines think about such questions? If these questions no longer seem audacious, it is because the Center has had a major influence on the way questions of gender and difference are addressed today. Each year, visitors ranging from young postdoctoral fellows to the most illustrious senior scholars, have come to the Center from across the United States and abroad to join Brown faculty and students in pathbreaking research. It is through their individual work—their publications and teaching—and through the collective work of the Center—its seminars, conferences, and publications—that the influence of the Pembroke Center has spread. This influence has been crucial not only to the way people *think* about questions of gender—and difference more broadly—but to the impact such thinking has on public policy, politics, and many other areas that touch people's lives.

This year, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Center's first academic year, has provided a chance to reflect not only on the Center's accomplishments but also on the exceptional support the Pembroke Center has had over the years. The Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Rockefeller Foundation made it possible for the Pembroke Center to grow in unpredictable and groundbreaking ways. But most important, when the term of the seed money was over, Brown alumnae and alumni worked hard to raise the beginnings of the endowment that would secure the Center's future. This was and continues to be remarkable support: remarkable in its generosity, but also in its vision. The Pembroke Center is still in the forefront of feminist theory; its work is academic and rigorous and bold. The implications of this work are not always immediately apparent outside the academy. But this has not deterred the Center's many supporters. On the contrary, they are aware that the problems the world faces today—so many of which have to do with *difference*—require the kind of audacious thinking that the Pembroke Center fosters. So, it is with great appreciation that I thank the many supporters who make it possible for the Pembroke Center to go on asking hard questions. Your support not only sustains our effort but also enables the research and writing of which the Brown community is justly proud.

Best Wishes,



Elizabeth Weed, PhD '73  
*Director*

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## Nancy Northup '81: Champion of Reproductive Rights Worldwide



Nancy Northup '81

As President of the Center for Reproductive Rights, which promotes and defends the reproductive rights of women domestically and worldwide, Nancy Northup '81, also a member of the Pembroke Center Associates Council, is leading her organization's legal advocacy work at a particularly crucial time in the United States. In fall 2006, the Center for Reproductive Rights went before the U.S. Supreme Court to challenge the Federal Abortion Ban, known officially as the "Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003." With the Court's April 18th decision to retreat from its longstanding protection of women's health, Northup remains determined to take on new challenges domestically, at a time when countries worldwide are recognizing that reproductive health, including abortion, is a matter of fundamental human rights.

"We've got to be as aggressive as possible in responding to this decision," Northup told National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*. In upholding the ban,

in *Gonzales v. Carhart*, the U.S. Supreme Court effectively overturned thirty years of precedent. The ruling, which Justice Ginsberg's dissent calls "alarming," outlaws a procedure that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has found to be medically necessary in certain cases. "This court believes that members of Congress—not doctors—are in the best position to make medical decisions for their patients," said Northup in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Less than a week after the U.S. Supreme Court decision, Mexico City lawmakers voted to legalize abortion, recognizing the right as central to women's health. A similar measure was adopted this year in Portugal. And last summer, the Constitutional Court of Colombia declared unconstitutional the country's blanket criminalization of abortion.

These are just some recent examples in a global trend toward abortion liberalization that has spanned decades. In bringing cases before international bodies like the United Nations Human Rights Committee, Northup's organization has fueled this recent progress. It is disheartening to see the United States align itself with the handful of countries such as Nicaragua and Poland that have actually increased barriers to safe abortion services in recent years.

According to the World Health Organization, about twenty million women around the world have unsafe abortions every year and nearly 70,000 die as a result. More than a decade ago, the Beijing Platform for Action called on governments to protect and advance women's health. Recent changes in abortion laws around the world reflect many nations' commitment to that goal. The United States, despite being one of the 189 signatories to the Platform, is not,

sadly, such a state. Instead, twelve years after Beijing, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to validate laws that limit doctors' options when performing abortions.

Doctors in the United States who have used the now-banned procedure say that when it has been necessary, they have chosen it because it was the safest option for their patients. Today, by making that same choice, those doctors face criminal charges for honoring their medical and ethical obligation to preserve and protect their patients' health.

The decision by the court to uphold a law that sacrifices women's health for the sake of ideology will cause many in the international community to ask that we look first in the mirror before judging others. The United States, once in the vanguard, is now out of step with an increasing global commitment to improving women's health and lives. Northup will be leading the charge of litigation and advocacy strategies and furthering the dialogue on why reproductive rights must be protected—and viewed—as fundamental human rights. She is interviewed regularly by journalists with key news organizations around the world and will be meeting with key opinion leaders in D.C. and elsewhere to discuss the Center's policy agenda.

*For more information about the Center for Reproductive Rights, please visit its website at: [www.reproductiverights.org](http://www.reproductiverights.org).*

In response to a question about the impact of user-generated content on her business, Zalaznick responded, "People in general want more transparency and to be able to interact with our content. It is kind of defiant. We provide access to selected video clips, audio clips, and graphics from our programs. Users then download them and re-use them to make 'mash-ups' – videos and other pieces that might retell the program's story, parody the program, praise it, or critique it.... But, user-generated content does not stand as a business on its own. It is the last place you can get advertisers to spend their money on the web."

"User content is very important but it is not clear that it will wash everything else away so that nobody will watch high-quality content on Bravo or read the *New York Times* just because some kids have camera phones," said Meyer. "But if you go back to 2000 and 2001 people

would say, 'This Google thing is never going to work. They have no business model.' That was a nice way of saying, 'I don't understand this and it scares me.' If there is enough ubiquity with the users and it is a quality experience that consumers gravitate to, some smart person will figure it out."

"There is a real gap between the notion that the Web was created to be an open source textbook and its actual use, literally as a capitalist tool that drives commerce and has opened up billions and billions of dollars of new commerce," said Zalaznick.

Amy Finn Binder closed the program by asking "What in your Brown experience has prepared you for what you are doing today?"

"I studied musicals with Michael Silverman, looking for the deviance in *Singing in the Rain*. I learned how to

see what was not being presented in the text, different ways of reading the world," said Zalaznick. "Challenging history and rules and ways of thinking is what I'm good at now."

"I learned to appreciate difference and respect people for who they are," said Meyer. "For the people who are part of our business, I don't care when they come into work as long as they deliver on their commitments and help the team. If I tried to make them conform, it wouldn't work. I show them the respect they deserve and appreciate the shades of gray."

*The Pembroke Associates would like to thank our moderator, panelists, and Ava Seave'77 for her extraordinary work in developing this program.*

## Do You Receive Pembroke Center Associates E-mail?

The Pembroke Center Associates send out periodic e-mail messages to our members with updates of important Pembroke Center news and events. Our member e-mail program is a great way to stay informed between issues of our printed newsletter.

We maintain this list for the exclusive use of the Pembroke Center. Because we respect your privacy, we never share your contact informa-

tion with other organizations. And, of course, you may unsubscribe at any time.

If you would like to begin receiving Pembroke Center Associates e-mail, please send an e-mail to [Pembroke\\_Associates@brown.edu](mailto:Pembroke_Associates@brown.edu) with your name and e-mail address and we will add you to our list. Thank you!



# The Pembroke Center Associates and Brown Hillel Sponsor Pembroke Poetry Prize for Students

The Pembroke Center Associates teamed up with Brown Hillel to sponsor the Pembroke Poetry Prize, a contest for current Brown and Rhode Island School of Design students.

Dr. Henny Wenkart '49 served as judge. Wenkart is a member of the Pembroke Associates Council and a member of the Board of Trustees of Brown Hillel. Editor of the *Jewish Women's Literary Annual* and the anthologies *Sara's Daughters Sing* and *Which Lillith?*, Wenkart's most recent book of poetry, *Love Poems of a Philanderer's Wife* was a finalist for the 2006 Patterson Poetry Prize.

*Nearly one hundred students submitted poems.  
The following prizes were awarded:*

**Grand Prize:** Rowan Luisiu Xayab Sharp '10

**Poem with a Jewish Theme Prize:** Gail Rosen '09

**Poem with a Women's Theme Prize:** Leora Fridman '07

**Honorable Mention:** Benjamin Bregman '02, MD '07;  
Nina Cruz '08; Eduardo Lopez '08; Alison Schouten '08;  
Hannah Sheldon-Dean '10; Andrew Brent Tobolowsky '07;  
Julie Waters, PhD Candidate, Engineering.

*The following poem won the grand prize, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.*

## Northeast Winter No. 1

We are tall and easily toppled.  
I went last night to, oh—you know—the usual  
college party. We dance,  
the four walls grow, the ceiling shrinks  
till our distortion is unarguable.  
My skin felt bright. This is what I know.

Blond winter light takes hold; they say the cold  
is coming. That's what they tell me.  
My steps become unsteady in advance—  
first frost any day now. We are tall.

Potential to kinetic energy—that's what I read,  
that's what I learned in school.  
What happens to our bodies when we dance,  
and after dancing, fall. We fall  
so easily. And we are tall.

Easily toppled. My footing's not so firm  
these days. They say the cold has just begun,  
that's what they say  
in New York, Boston, Providence.  
The air slows with cool and glycerin depth, pools  
round my fingers while I swing my arms for warmth.  
While I walk the pre-ice pavement. We are tall.

In letters to old lovers, my scientific  
theories are fantastic:  
*It's a matter of warmth.*  
*You know what I'm talking about.*  
Bodies look for other bodies, maybe  
that's all. Heat seeks heat.  
I want to play word games with those heavy terms  
from high school chem class.  
*Entropy, enthalpy.* But I'm no chemist,  
God knows what I mean  
when I clutch a teacup like a liferaft, saying:  
*Potential to kinetic energy.*  
*You know what I'm talking about.*  
Bodies look for bodies.  
No frost yet but my sheets feel cold  
already. I told you I'm no chemist.  
When I say "body,"  
I mean the kind with flesh. Skin  
that cracks and bleeds in a dry north wind  
and white winter breath that makes smokers of us all.  
*It's a matter of warmth,* that's all I need  
to say. We fall so easily. We are so tall.  
*It's a matter of warmth.*  
*You know what I'm talking about.*

**Rowan Luisiu Xayab Sharp '10**

# Changing the World One Student at a Time: The Lippitt Hill Tutorial

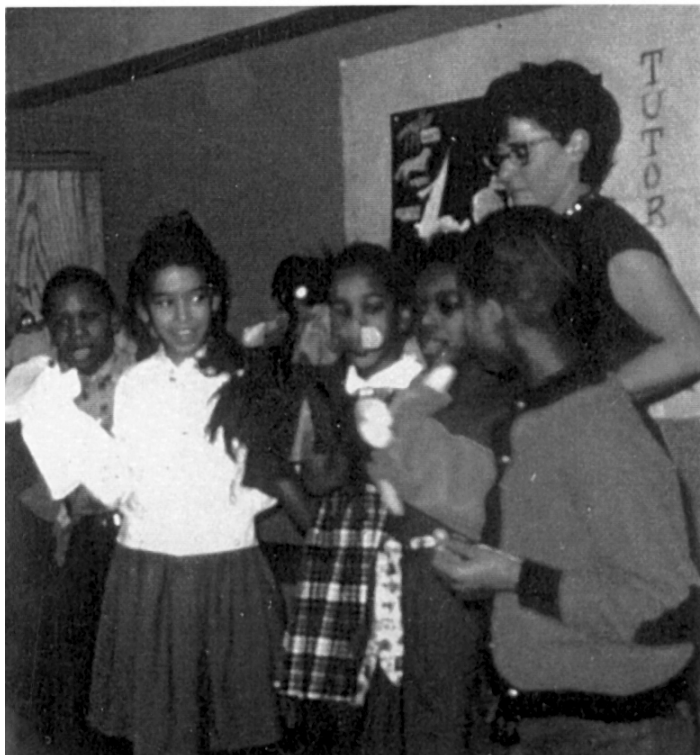
Jane Lancaster, PhD '98, Archives consultant for the Pembroke Center, conducted interviews with a group of Pembroke and Brown alumnae who were involved in the early days of Lippitt Hill Tutorial in Providence. Talking with the group, which included Doris Stearn Donovan '59, Joyce Wetherald Fairchild '47, Peggy Kohlhepp Gardner '53, Irma Gross RUE '85, Rita Caslowitz Michaelson '50 and Linda Miller AM '60, the story emerged.

Lippitt Hill, as the program became known, was partly a response to the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which desegregated America's schools. Begun in 1963 and named after a school (later renamed the Martin Luther King School), the tutoring effort served a diverse population on Providence's East Side.

Donovan remembers the Lippitt Hill area as "a warren of triple deckers between Hope Street, North Main, and Doyle Avenue that were redeveloped into the large University Heights housing development," where "they aimed to create moderate income housing but upset and displaced a stable pre-Civil War African American community."

She also recalled: "There was a plan for a school to integrate kids from Camp Street and Lippitt Hill with kids from the Brown community. The [Camp Street] kids were ninety-five percent black with test scores way below the city average and lousy facilities, so a group of women set

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A photo from the archives of Volunteers in Providence Schools of students participating in the Lippitt Hill Tutorial.

## Do You Know a Female Mechanic? Political Operative? CFO?

The Sarah Doyle Women's Center seeks trailblazing alumnae who have forged careers in traditionally male-dominated fields. Can you help?

The Sarah Doyle Women's Center coordinates programs on women and gender for the Brown community and is particularly interested in the ways gender intersects with other markers of identity. They are now developing extensive programming for Women's History Month 2008.

The Center is putting together alumnae panels focusing on science, business, technology, and politics. The panels will be held on the Friday afternoons of February 29, March 14, and

March 21 of 2008. Also for Women's History Month, the Sarah Doyle Women's Center seeks speakers and presenters for lectures and workshops throughout March 2008 on topics as diverse as politics, business, technology, mechanical and technical arts, engineering, science, finance, the military, fishing, agriculture, and security studies.

If you would be interested in participating in one of the alumnae panels or have a suggestion about a workshop or lecture, please contact the Sarah Doyle Women's Center at [sdwc@brown.edu](mailto:sdwc@brown.edu) or call (401) 863-2189.

The Sarah Doyle Women's Center provides supportive space for students of any gender. The Center has meeting space, an art gallery, a darkroom, an extensive library and periodical collection, and a student lounge. Open Monday through Friday from at least 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Center is located at 26 Benevolent Street, right around the corner from Maddock Alumni Center. Alumnae/i are welcome to stop in for a visit.

## The Lippitt Hill Tutorial continued from p. 6

up a library. Students' scores went up [within] two years with this tutoring and the library sessions." Miller said there was a lot of resistance from the school department, but Michaelson noted, "My husband was in the state legislature at the time and Linda Miller asked him to go with her to persuade principal Tom McDonald that we did not want to take over the school and to work with us, which he did."

The program had extensive community involvement, black and white, including some Brown students as tutors, and the group remembered that it was a great learning experience for everyone. Beyond the classroom and academic sphere, several of the women took children out, often with their mothers, to expose them to the larger community. They also had dinners together with community food. Gardner recalled that in working each week with immigrant children who had limited English, she would "bring a big basket with things like a cup, saucer, an apple" to help teach them. Fairchild said she used the Sears Roebuck catalogue to help children with their English.

They all agreed that it was significant that their own children attended Providence public schools. Gross' daughter did her part in taking classmates from Fox Point to the Jewish Community Center. Husbands and family members pitched in. Together, they were all intimately and intensively involved in trying to remediate the negative effects of the community's poverty, lack of housing, inadequate educational resources, and displacement.

Donovan, Fairchild, Gardner, Gross, Michaelson, and Miller shared an identity through this work and their commitment. They saw themselves as mavericks and committed community activists. Michaelson recalled, "I remember that in those days the Pembroke alums' annual event was a fashion show and bridge. Someone found out that we weren't into that; we were doing this tutoring. We were interviewed for the Pembroke magazine – but it was never published."

They stayed friends. Said Donovan, "We shared the same world view. Everyone went to the ramparts. It was a built-in certification, a secret society, we had the same fundamental values." Miller was less convinced about the long-term

results: she said they had high hopes, but the program may have been "just a band-aid."

Nevertheless, the Volunteers in Providence Schools (VIPS) emerged from the Lippitt Hill Tutorial and the Mt. Pleasant Tutorial. VIPS is currently working with 10,000 students in Providence Public Schools every year to provide them with the educational support and personalized help these students need to grow academically and socially. Miller, who, with a black parent, in 1963 started a farm and, together with the children, grew vegetables recalls: "We worked as a team." She says, "I'm seventy-seven now, but I don't see any limits to what I can do, any more than when I was thirty-five." Donovan agrees, "We had enormous hope then. We are dealing with huge problems now, but we came together as a community then."

*For information about participating in an oral history or to donate items to the Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives, please contact Jane Lancaster at [Jane\\_Lancaster@brown.edu](mailto:Jane_Lancaster@brown.edu) or call (401) 863-3433.*

## In Memory of Judith Quinn '54



The Pembroke Center Associates mourn the loss of Judith Quinn '54, who passed away on February 22, 2007. Judith was a longtime member of the Associates and very active in class activities. A resident of Rhode Island, Judith was an avid traveler and worked for many years as a writer and editor.

"Judy was known for her kindness, her way with words, and her very keen wit," remembers classmate Harriet Nutt Hays '54. "She loved traveling and discovering the original masterpieces of her beloved art history. Her concern that current events were plunging the world into deeper violence and injustice inspired her to seek out the most worthy political candidates and causes."

The Pembroke Associates have received numerous gifts in her memory and appreciate the thoughtfulness of her family and friends in honoring Judith's legacy in this way. The memorial gifts will be used to support the Pembroke Center's teaching and research programs.

For more information about memorial gifts to the Pembroke Center, please contact Christy Law Blanchard by e-mail at [Christy\\_Law\\_Blanchard@brown.edu](mailto:Christy_Law_Blanchard@brown.edu) or via phone at (401) 863-3650.

# Yes! I'd like to make a gift to the Pembroke Center Associates!

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