In This Issue

TRAINING TOMORROW’S TEACHERS
WHAT I’VE BEEN UP TO: BUILDING BY THE BAY
Excerpt: THE FISH THAT ATE THE WHALE
...AND MUCH MORE
After a summer break that seems over before it's begun, the school year begins, rushing onward with the relentless momentum of a wave—a green one, of course—until we find ourselves once again at the Superdome, congratulating our graduates as they cross the stage. This year's momentum was disrupted by a week-long pause thanks to Hurricane Isaac, but once we returned, students, faculty, and staff alike found themselves scrambling to make up for the lost time. After about a month, the campus finally began to relax into its usual rhythm, the frantic post-Isaac pace replaced by a more manageable hustle and bustle.

This year's Collegian highlights the Newcomb-Tulane College Teacher Preparation and Certification Program, which has come a long way in the relatively short time since its inception. We introduce you to the new Altman Scholars program, which provides a rigorous interdisciplinary curriculum for a select group of students with a passion for business and international studies. Recent architecture graduate Kevin Muni writes this year’s “What I’ve Been Up To” column from San Francisco, a city that turns out to have more in common with New Orleans than he initially thought. We feature a student grant program funded by alumnus Tim Sykes, who made his first million as a daytrader before graduating from Tulane in 2003. And we take a look back at some memorable events from the past year.

The Review includes an excerpt from 1990 graduate Rich Cohen’s fascinating new book, The Fish that Ate the Whale: The Life and Times of America’s Banana King. From humble origins as a Russian Jewish immigrant, Sam “The Banana Man” Zemurray became one of the most influential businessmen and philanthropists in the history of New Orleans; the best-known of his many contributions to Tulane University is No. 2 Audubon Place, which has served as the Tulane president’s residence since 1967. We also present a selection of photographs from Frank Relle, class of 2000, best known for his New Orleans nightscapes.

We hope you will enjoy this year's Newcomb-Tulane Collegian & Review. As always, we invite you to submit your news, ideas, and original work for possible publication in next year's issue.

Best,
Trina J. Beck
The 2005 hurricane and levee failures could not have come at a worse time for Tulane’s fledgling Teacher Preparation and Certification Program. In mid-August of that year, the program celebrated its approval by the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Two weeks later, its future was as uncertain as that of Tulane, and of New Orleans itself—and as a new program, even more so.

But as difficult decisions were made to keep Tulane alive in Katrina’s aftermath, the university’s role in the rebuilding of the city quickly expanded beyond the simple economic impact of reopening in Spring 2006. A public service requirement was instituted for all undergraduates, and Tulane President Scott Cowen became increasingly involved in the public debate surrounding the retooling of the New Orleans public school system. Cowen served as the chair of the city-wide Bring New Orleans Back Education Committee, established an institute for public education initiatives, and was eventually appointed to President Obama’s White House Council for Community Solutions. And in Tulane’s own neighborhood, the administration helped the public Lusher Charter School expand from K-8 to K-12—a small but significant step towards ensuring more quality public education in the city.

With the new focus on expanding educational opportunities for all New Orleanians, the resurrection of the Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (TPCP) became a priority. What better way to contribute than to train new teachers? Following the university’s restructuring, TPCP was folded into the purview of the Newcomb-Tulane College, underscoring the importance of a teacher training program to students of all disciplines. Not surprisingly, the program’s enrollment jumped dramatically in the first years following the storm, as service-minded students flocked to Tulane hoping to make a difference. But initially, post-Katrina budget constraints left the program understaffed and underfunded, sharing office spaces in Cudd Hall and Newcomb Hall. Despite these challenges, program director Linda McKee and a team of faculty, staff, and students succeeded in obtaining accreditation through the national Teacher Education Accreditation Council in April 2011. And in the summer of that year, thanks to McKee’s efforts, TPCP moved to a new permanent home on Freret Street.

Today, there are close to 300 students—both undergraduates and post-graduates—enrolled in the TPCP program. They can choose from three different tracks: early childhood, secondary education, or dance. Undergraduates in the first two tracks can choose a major from several different content fields; McKee reports that some students come to TPCP “saying that they had always wanted to be a teacher and are happy to learn that it [is] possible by completing the content degree, without completing an education degree.” These students recognize the value of the in-depth knowledge gained through a traditional major, and by completing the additional required coursework in education—usually around 30 hours, a year’s worth of course credits—they will have the kind of specialized training that makes a difference in the classroom.

For every student in the TPCP program who “always wanted to be a teacher,” there are several more who have only recently decided to pursue a teaching career. Most of these students point to a positive experience...
Training Tomorrow’s Teachers (continued)

working with children as their inspiration: as a camp counselor, a coach, or a classroom volunteer. Many of the latter experiences are facilitated by Tulane’s service learning program, which dovetails nicely with TPCP’s strong focus on hands-on learning. As McKee notes, “teaching is an experiential learning process; you have to teach to learn how to teach.” Each TPCP student will spend over

have several opportunities to teach complete classes from lesson plans they have created.

Throughout their field experiences, students enjoy the strong support of the TPCP faculty. These dedicated professors not only help prospective teachers hone their skills, but also work hard to cultivate positive relationships with our many partner schools. For her role in building a close partnership with Banneker Elementary and in incorporating social innovation into the TPCP curriculum, Dr. Carol Whelan was honored as the inaugural Paul Tudor Jones II Professor in Social Entrepreneurship. “[Banneker] teachers and the administration are really excited about what Tulane students are doing,” Dr. Whelan said in a September 2011 New Wave interview about her professorship. “Infusing social innovation into the curriculum in our education classes has really kind of changed the way our students think about learning… it’s all about ‘how can the students become involved in the process of education.’

Professor James Kilbane, who joined the faculty last year from New York’s Pace University, draws on a background in forestry to bring an especially unique perspective to education: he views the classroom as an ecosystem, a “complex whole with a myriad of dependent interrelationships.” Like many of his students, he was initially drawn to Tulane because of its location in New Orleans, a city that he’d visited and enjoyed many times. “While that made me consider Tulane when it had an opening,” he says, “I was sold on the opportunity to teach at Tulane

TPCP students build close relationships with the students they work with.

Director Linda McKee has worked tirelessly to build the TPCP program from its modest origins.

200 hours working alongside veteran teachers in a variety of different K-12 classroom environments. “More students are coming to Tulane with the service learning component guiding their decision,” McKee explains, and many of these students see education “as a response to social injustice and inequity.” Students who want to explore their interest in teaching as a profession can enroll in Education in a Diverse Society, the first required course in the TPCP program, which has become increasingly popular due to its service learning component and social innovation focus. If students choose to continue in the TPCP program, the hands-on classroom experience will become progressively more in-depth with each course they take. From small group tutoring, students move on to short lesson presentations, reading diagnostics and assessments, and eventually
during my first conversation with the director, Linda McKee. It became clear to me that the program here at Tulane was a good fit with my views on teacher education, educational reform, and a collaborative working environment…. as I have been involved in improving schools and learning for many years, the opportunity to be part of the work occurring in New Orleans made it an even stronger fit.” He is tasked with increasing the number of teacher certification candidates in science and math education, a goal he hopes to accomplish by “developing closer relationships with local schools and the science and math departments here at Tulane.”

TPCP celebrated another significant accomplishment this year when the program hosted its third professional conference. “Training Global Teachers for Global Classrooms,” held in April 2012 and sponsored by a grant from the Longview Foundation, was designed to help Louisiana education professionals incorporate international perspectives into their curricula. “Training Global Teachers” demonstrated TPCP’s commitment to sharing resources and knowledge with educators across the state, and was attended by teachers, teacher educators, administrators, teachers in training, and Louisiana Department of Education staff. A series of follow-up surveys and research will be conducted over the coming year to measure the incorporation of skills and knowledge from the conference into participants’ classrooms and school systems.

As the impact of TPCP’s professional outreach begins to be felt statewide, the impact of the program on Tulane students continues to grow here on campus. Senior Carrie Vaughan is the Early Childhood Education Chairperson for T3 (Teachers Trained at Tulane), the newly formed student organization for aspiring teachers. She and a small group of fellow TPCP students laid the groundwork for T3 last year, and as of this fall it is an officially recognized student organization. They plan to complement the TPCP curriculum by giving students the chance to connect with their peers in the program, and by networking with recent graduates who can share job search advice and teaching strategies. They also hope to hold panel discussions and other events that will examine the educational issues faced by New Orleans and the country as a whole. After graduating in December 2012 and completing her student teaching, Vaughan plans to stay and teach in New Orleans “for at least a few years.” However long she may stay, the impact on her students just might last a lifetime, thanks to the training she’s received from TPCP.
Newcomb-Tulane College Events: The Year in Review

The Newcomb-Tulane College Office of Cocurricular Programs provides educational experiences outside of the classroom for Tulane’s undergraduates. Last year was certainly no exception, with a variety of offerings including live jazz concerts, and lectures by guests ranging from an award-winning architect to an astronaut alumnus.

DR. MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM (pictured left), associate professor of the Department of Psychology and the Program for African & African Diaspora Studies, gave a talk titled “One Cell at a Time! What I Can Change” that kicked off a series of events for the Reading Project, which gives first-year students the shared experience of reading the same book. The 2011 Reading Project book was *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot, and its themes surrounding the collision between ethics, race, and medicine were further honed by Dr. Ruth Faden (pictured below), a Johns Hopkins University bioethicist, who gave a rousing Reading Project Keynote Lecture. Last year also saw the debut of the Reading Project Film Series, presenting screenings of documentaries central to the book’s topics.
THE DEAN’S COLLOQUIUM SERIES, which invites distinguished alumni back to campus to discuss their careers, welcomed astronaut and fighter pilot Doug Hurley ’88 back to campus. Hurley, who was the pilot of the final NASA shuttle mission in July 2011, treated students to a slideshow of pictures taken aboard the space shuttle Atlantis.

GROUNDBREAKING ARCHITECT AND designer Neri Oxman was the guest speaker at the 2012 Newcomb-Tulane College Lecture, an annual program that invites the “great minds of our time” to speak on a timely subject. Oxman’s work integrates art, science, design, ecology, and nature to create sustainable concepts for business and daily life. Named to Icon’s list of the “top 20 most influential architects to shape our future,” Oxman spoke about “finding form at the crossroads of art, science, technology, and environmentalism” to students who enjoyed chatting with her about her work at the reception following her talk.
NEWCOMB-TULANE COLLEGE’S Lagniappe program adds “something extra” to the Tulane experience by introducing students to the unique music and culture of New Orleans. The program presented several popular events including legendary jazz patriarch Ellis Marsalis’ (pictured above, left) annual concert in Dixon Hall. And the Jazz at the Rat series entertained students with both locally-revered and nationally-renowned artists performing alongside students from the Jazz Studies program. Performers included New Orleans-based musicians like saxophonists Rex Gregory, Roderick Paulin and Ed Petersen, vocalist Stephanie Jordan, and banjo virtuoso Don Vappie, as well as visiting guest artists like drummers Steve McKie and Reggie Quinerly, and bassist Vicente Archer (pictured above, right).

FOR “TULANE TO HOLLYWOOD,” alumni who are executives in the film industry returned to Tulane to participate in a discussion about their paths from undergraduate life to working in entertainment. Panelists included Jimmy Horowitz ’83, president of Universal Pictures; David Lonner ’84 (pictured), CEO of Oasis Media Group; Steven Pearl ’85, co-owner of Scarlet Fire Entertainment; Chris Petrikin ’88, executive vice president of Fox Filmed Entertainment; Harold Sylvester ’72, actor and president of Blue Bayou Productions; and moderator Beretta Smith-Shomade (pictured), chair of the Tulane Department of Communication. 

NEWCOMB-TULANE COLLEGE Events: The Year in Review (continued)
Altman Scholars, Global Citizens
By Trina J. Beck

Incoming first-year student Kaila Lopez (pictured at right) fell in love with New Orleans and Tulane on her first visit from Cleveland, but being selected as an Altman Scholar was what really sealed the deal. The opportunity to be among the first cohort of students to complete a rigorous dual degree program in international studies and business, combining coursework in culturally rich New Orleans with study abroad experiences in foreign countries, was simply too good to pass up.

The first class of 15 Altman Scholars were hand-picked from a pool of approximately 90 applicants, all of whom had already been accepted to Tulane. They will ultimately earn both a B.A. from the School of Liberal Arts and a B.S.M. from the A.B. Freeman School of Business. They will also complete at least two study abroad experiences, including a summer program after their freshman year, and a junior year abroad. Kaila, who was especially enticed by the inclusion of study abroad in the Altman core curriculum, is excited to attend the summer program at Tulane’s CIAPA campus in Costa Rica next year with her peers. But like her peers, Kaila isn’t just in it for the travel. She is passionate about international issues, and this is reflected in her impressive resume: Service trip to India. Model UN president. Student facilitator for the Global Issues Network Conference at the American Community School of Abu Dhabi, where she spent her senior year of high school.

By pairing practical business training with in-depth cultural study and linguistic immersion, Altman Scholars will be uniquely poised to take on leadership roles in a variety of careers. Founded thanks to an $8.3 million gift from Jeffrey Altman ’88, the program was developed after two years of careful planning by faculty from a variety of disciplines, from business to history, economics, and political science. “We didn’t want to cut corners with this,” explains program co-director Myke Yest, a professor of practice in Finance in the Freeman School. “We wanted to make sure we did this right.” Co-director Casey Love, a professor of practice in the Political Science department in the School of Liberal Arts, agrees. She believes the cohort experience will add an invaluable dimension to the program. “Any Tulane student could piece together a similar program, but these 15 students will take a class together every semester, they’ll spend a month in Costa Rica together after their freshman year, they’ll travel all over the world on their Junior Year Abroad and then come back and share their experiences. They’ll learn from each other.” Yest adds that the classes designed specifically for the Altman program will help students make connections between the different disciplines they’re studying. “Students don’t always have the link when they do it on their own,” he says.

And of course, the program’s language component is key. Traditional business programs place less of an emphasis on in-depth language training, which can lead to challenges when pursuing a career in the global economy. Altman Scholars will take at least one language class each semester, and must complete their study abroad in an immersion program. Kaila, already fluent in Spanish, is eager to plunge into Portuguese at Tulane.

The one down side of being an Altman Scholar? Studying abroad means they’ll know what it means to miss New Orleans. Kaila already does. “Orientation has been amazing,” she raved when she stopped by Cudd Hall in June. “I don’t want to leave!” 🏢
The 2012 fall semester got off to a dramatic start! On the 7th anniversary of Katrina we faced Isaac, a smaller storm that nonetheless left its mark on the New Orleans area. The freshmen had just moved in, only to find themselves experiencing the first — and hopefully last — “hurrication” of their collegiate careers. Unlike in 2005, most students stayed in place, and for many the experience helped cement newly forming friendships. After another strong year in admissions, Tulane is experiencing the largest undergraduate class in its history. We have been fortunate to be able to continue to enroll so many academically talented students and maintain such strong interest in our programs.

This fall, the Tulane Reading Project introduced the first year class to Tulane and New Orleans by asking them to read Dan Baum’s *Nine Lives*. This non-fiction work traces the personal stories of nine varied and colorful New Orleanians from the time of Hurricane Betsy until after Katrina. Each interwoven story differs and provides poignant insights into the culture and character of the city and its residents. I encourage you to read this wonderful book, if you haven’t done so already.

This past year we expanded our global education initiatives by offering new summer study abroad programs. Initial programs in Paris, Cadiz, and Cape Town proved to be popular options for students who found it hard to leave Tulane during the academic year. In response to student interest in international public service, we also provided opportunities for community engagement in South Africa. This summer we intend to introduce programs in Dublin and Moscow/St. Petersburg.

Through the generous support of alumni, parents, and friends of the college, we have been able to provide more funding for student projects this year than ever before. For example, senior Michael Celone, a public health major, was awarded a Judith and Morris Henkin Memorial Travel Scholarship to volunteer with Unite For Sight in Ghana. This non-profit provides volunteers for rural eye clinics to help eliminate preventable blindness. Michael spent six weeks in Ghana assisting with the distribution of medicines and glasses, as well as conducting visual acuity tests and observing eye operations.

Four years at Tulane pass very quickly, and one of my goals is to ensure that students get the most out of their education. The support and advice students receive is critical, and we are continually looking at ways to improve. This year we introduced three new programs to enhance student success and satisfaction. The first addresses the often difficult transition to college: we have hired three success coaches to work closely with students who are having a hard time adjusting to college life. The results have been quite dramatic. Working with select first- and second-year students, the success coaches were able to not only boost academic performance but also increase self-confidence and satisfaction with Tulane. Our second new program builds on the common knowledge that students rely on their peers for advice, for better or worse. Our peer mentor program has trained 30 upperclass students who are available to assist their peers. These efforts are aimed at supplementing our traditional advising, tutoring, and mentoring services. Finally, our third new initiative honors the legacy of Dr. Jean Danielson, who for many years served as the director of the honors program. Many alumni remember the pivotal role “Dean Jean” played in their education, from conversations to help them realize their academic goals, to mentoring for national fellowships, to connecting them with the right faculty member for a research experience. Ten faculty members have been named as Dean Jean Fellows, with the goal of providing support, mentoring, and guidance for our current students, in the same way Dean Jean so memorably did.

I am delighted to be able to report on how well Tulane is faring. For those reading this from afar, I hope that you will find time to visit campus if your travels bring you back to New Orleans, and you are always welcome to stop by my office in Cudd Hall to say hello.

With best wishes,

James M. MacLaren
Newcomb-Tulane College Dean
In June 2002, as a junior at Tulane, Timothy Sykes (pictured below) established an endowed fund to support student interests. As a self-made millionaire, Sykes’s hope was to encourage students to pursue their non-traditional areas of interest that one would not necessarily associate with academia. From canoe builders, to composers, to urban farmers, the award recipients span the spectrum.

John Tiebout III was one of two winners of the 2012 Timothy Sykes Daytrading Award for the Talented. Using the cash prize he was awarded, Tiebout was able to spend two weeks in Detroit learning about commercial and nonprofit urban farming.

After exploring the urban agriculture, he discovered the potential for urban farms to rejuvenate communities and a possible future for himself.

“I love the people that it’s helped,” Sykes says. “It’s been a decade now, and it’s helped a dozen students and encouraged them to continue developing their talents.”

The Timothy Sykes Daytrading Award for the Talented is among many endowed funds that Newcomb-Tulane College administers. Awards are granted on a rolling basis. For more information, please contact the Office of Cocurricular Programs.
What I’ve Been Up To: Building By the Bay
BY KEVIN MUNI ’11

It’s 9:00 a.m. on a Saturday in early September and my roommates and I are filling out all of the necessary paperwork to move into our new apartment. During the twenty or so minutes it should have taken to complete this rather mundane task, a man wearing a leather tutu, spikey dog collar, and little else rode down Market Street on the back of a flatbed truck, announcing the details of the week’s festivities and informing anyone within earshot that the “Leather Formal Dinner” would take place that coming Thursday. He was followed by several hundred similarly clad men and women, all of whom were intent on celebrating the famous (or should I say infamous?) Folsom Street Fair. As we watched from our living room window, my landlord took this opportunity to welcome us all into one of the most colorful cities that I have ever encountered - “Welcome to San Francisco.”

In some ways moving to San Francisco from New Orleans is like being transported to another planet; people don’t melt when they go outside, bars close at 2:00 am, and EVERYONE composes. However, once I became accustomed to spending almost as much time disposing of my lunch as eating it, putting avocados on everything, and the foreign concept of a 2:00 am “last call,” I came to realize that these two cities also have a great deal in common: beautiful architecture, quirky characters, and a pervasive spirit that captivates anyone who sets foot in the city streets.

By the time I graduated from Tulane last May, I had dabbled in a wide range of disciplines and projects that were related to architecture in one way or another. Having entertained the idea of pursuing a career in any number of them, I wasn’t quite sure in which direction I wanted to move. Through internships, independent research seminars, and outreach programs, I had worked on projects ranging in scale from a relatively small fiberglass bench to a master-plan for a city in China to house 400,000 people. A significant part of my studies at Tulane dealt with the creation of space on a larger, more urban scale than would traditionally be considered “architecture” in the conservative sense of the word. While studying abroad in Rome, much of my coursework addressed the development and qualitative mapping of urban environments. The following year, I was awarded a travel fellowship to expand upon that research by drawing comparisons between the manner in which Rome, Italy and Nanjing, China have evolved into contemporary cities according to their own historical contexts and cultural perceptions of public space. This was the beginning of my work in China with the Tulane Regional Urban Design Center (TRUDC) and the American Planning Association, which would continue over the next year as we developed a conceptual master plan for the city of Long Pao. Following what proved to be a fascinating and truly eye-opening experience, I was neither prepared to eschew my ambitions of being an architect to become an urban designer, nor willing to simply walk away from what had become such a large part of my thesis research.

Fortunately, my savior appeared in the form of the opportunity to work on a large corporate campus in the Mission Bay redevelopment district that lies just south of downtown San Francisco. Spanning eight city blocks and encompassing more than two million square
feet of mixed-use office space and a large public plaza, this project resembled a small city unto itself, yet still allowed me to delve into the nitty-gritty details of creating individual buildings. Working with an international team of architects, engineers, and more consultants than I care to count, we were tasked with articulating the cultural identity of the client in the form of a physical building (or in this case, a series of stylistically controversial ones). This project also exposed me to the brutal realities of the profession: after months of conference calls, city submittals, and working weekends, the project evaporated overnight as the budget for the campus was reallocated and the development was cancelled. As initially discouraging as this was, the project introduced me to the design of high-end, bespoke work environments that cater to the many technology and research companies that constitute the economic lifeblood of the Bay Area. A fascinating aspect of practicing architecture in San Francisco is having the chance to work on a corporate campus of two million square feet one day, and a 2,000 square feet residential project the next.

Although residential projects have become less a part of my daily routine, they provide a pleasant change of scale from the sometimes daunting scope of larger commercial or institutional projects. Smaller projects make the importance of the intricate details that shouldn’t — but sometimes do — get lost in larger projects all the more apparent. The impact of a relatively simple connection detail was truly hammered home to me when two former classmates (Rebecca Miller and Scott Berger) and I were invited to design and construct a site specific installation for the annual DesCours art and architecture festival in New Orleans this past December. After submitting a proposal months before, a last-minute site change required us to redesign the project just three weeks prior to installation. This redesign left us with only three days to assemble over 800 PVC panels with 2400 zip-ties. DesCours became a wild ride that challenged us to create a dynamic and interactive space with some less than traditional construction methods. It was exciting, at times miserable, and I would jump at the chance to do it all over again.

While I do sometimes still miss the late night New Orleans adventures that miraculously turn into early morning brunches, and the possibility of affordable rent that doesn’t entail responding to craigslist posts along the lines of “$1 Rent for Swimmer/Surfer/H2O Polo Player/Gymnast/Lifeguard......U Need A Room?,” the last year has led me to discover a city just as vibrant, eclectic, and sometimes downright strange as New Orleans... albeit with much better public transportation.

PHOTO BY KEVIN MUNI
Sam Zemurray spoke with no accent, except when he swore, which was all the time. He was a big man, six foot three, rangy, nothing but muscle and bone, with the wingspan of a condor, hooded eyes, and a crisp, no-nonsense manner. If you saw him in the French Quarter, walking fast, you got out of the way. He lived uptown. If he was down here, it meant he was working.

It was a brisk night in the winter of 1910. Zemurray stood under the clock in front of the D. H. Holmes department store taking in the cheap twinkle of Canal Street. He wore a dark overcoat. At thirty-three years old, he was already a colorful figure. People passed around Sam Zemurray stories as if they were snapshot pictures: in this one, you saw the town he left in Russia; in that one, the ship that brought him to America; in this one, the train that carried him to Alabama; in that one, the first bananas he purchased on the wharf in Mobile; in this one, the Central American isthmus where he cleared the jungle and made his fortune. After ten years in the South, he was known by a variety of nicknames: Z, the Russian, Sam the Banana Man, El Amigo, the Gringo.

He’d arrived on the docks at the start of the last century with nothing. In the early years, he’d had to make his way in the lowest precincts of the fruit business, peddling ripes, bananas other traders dumped into the sea. He worked like a dog and defied the most powerful people in the country. By 1905, he owned steamships, side-wheelers that crossed the Gulf of Mexico, heading south empty, returning with bananas. It was said he had traveled the breadth of Honduras, from Puerto Cortés to Tegucigalpa, on a mule. Because he wanted to know the terrain, get his hands in the black soil.

A few minutes before midnight, three men came around the corner. The obvious leader—you could tell by the happy flash in his eyes—was Lee Christmas of Livingston Parish, a onetime railroad engineer who had gone wild on the isthmus. It was Christmas, the most famous mercenary in the Americas, who turned “revolution” into a verb. As in, Let’s go revolutin’! The New York Times called him a real-life Dumas hero. Wherever he went, he was followed: by hit men, by police, by foreign agents trying to fathom his next move. Why, look here! Two such men lurk in the shadows across Bourbon Street—members of the United States Secret Service, with shiny shoes and flat faces, with lumps where their pistols dig into the fabric of their government coats. When Zemurray needed an army, he went to Christmas and Christmas did the rest, gathering a crew of exiles and adventure seekers in the dives of the French Quarter.

Christmas was in the company of two friends, key players in what was a conspiracy: Guy “Machine Gun” Molony, a veteran of the Boer War and a former New Orleans cop who could assemble a Vickers repeating rifle in under
three minutes, hence the nickname, and General Manuel Bonilla, a tiny man, as brown as a bean, with a hawk nose and black eyes.

Zemurray was in the process of overthrowing a foreign government— he had been warned by Philander Knox, the U.S. secretary of state, who ordered federal agents to tail him and his cohorts in New Orleans, but didn’t care. If Sam failed, he faced ruin. But if he succeeded, he would become a king in banana land. General Bonilla had been president of Honduras. With the right kind of help, he would be president again.

Zemurray studied the Secret Service agents across the street. Pulling a bankroll from his pocket, snapping off tens and twenties, he told Christmas, “You’ve got to lose them.”

Then, just like that, Zemurray crossed Canal Street and disappeared uptown.

Christmas and his men went the other way, into the rabbit warren of the French Quarter, with its wrought-iron balconies, saloons, and hotels, all the gut-bucket joints where mercenaries waited for a job. They crossed Rampart to Basin Street, the entrance of the Tenderloin. In earlier times, the houses of ill repute had been scattered throughout New Orleans. A dozen years before, at the urging of the reformer Alfred Story, they had been relocated in a defined district, a neighborhood of once grand houses gone to seed. These blocks, running a mile in each direction— from Basin Street to Custom House, from Custom House Street to Robertson, from Robertson Street to St. Louis, from St. Louis Street back to Basin— had become the most notorious red-light district in America. Much to the fury of the reformer, it was known as Storyville. The best houses, mansions with front porches and plush couches and piano players in the parlors, were at the front of the district on Basin Street. Farther back, the houses took on a seedier aspect. Bordellos gave way to single rooms, each with a window where a girl beckoned. On the edge of the district, the women performed in hallways, even in thresholds. Each year, a company printed a blue book that mapped the houses and rated every whore in various categories, from deportment to personality to stamina.

The previous five nights, Christmas, Molony, and Bonilla had gone to the same house, the grandest of them all, a Victorian mansion on Basin Street run by Madam May Evans. The federal agents followed as far as the opposite corner, posting themselves in a circle of lamplight. The first nights, the agents stayed till dawn, when the mercenaries staggered to rooms they rented near the river. But the last few nights, when the music stopped and the house went dark, the agents returned to headquarters to write their report, which was sent to the Department of State. Secretary Knox believed Zemurray was up to no good in Honduras.

Lee Christmas knocked on the front door, then vanished into Madam May’s. From somewhere in the district came the sound of a spasm band, street urchins playing homemade instruments for nickels and dimes. The men took their positions in the house: Bonilla in a dark room upstairs, where he sat and looked out the window, eyes never leaving the agents; Christmas and Molony in the parlor, in deep chairs, drinking with the girls as a man in a dinner jacket played piano.

They told stories about mercenary heroes: Narciso López, who left New Orleans with a hundred men, landed in Cuba, and nearly reached Havana before he was caught and strung up in a public square; William Walker, who captured Nicaragua with eighty-four soldiers, “the Immortals,” but was later stood against a wall in Trujillo, Honduras, and shot full of holes. After each story, Christmas would raise his glass and say, “That son of a bitch was a man!”

The agents quit at three a.m. “It’s nothing but a drunken brawl in the district,” they told their superior.

When Bonilla saw them leave, he hurried downstairs and told the others the police had gone.

Christmas looked out the window, and then, in his rough cowboy way, said, “Let’s go.”

A car was waiting on a side street. As the men climbed in, Christmas said to Bonilla, “Well, compadre, this is the first time I’ve ever heard of anybody going from a whorehouse to a White House!”
The car headed west on Canal Street. Past the old cemetery and through the swamp—swamp the way all of this had been swamp before the Frenchmen came with compass and chain. The road deteriorated beyond town, became rutted and bumpy, more Indian trail than highway. The countryside was spooky, huge magnolias, bait shops, houses on stilts, water lapping at the supports. They drove along Bayou St. John, past inlets, tributaries, green peninsulas. The smell of the bayou—crawfish, tidal marsh, vine—was overwhelming. The car stopped near the old Spanish Fort, where the bayou spills into Lake Pontchartrain. A ship was waiting—a forty-two-foot yacht. The men went aboard, ducked into a cabin. Within minutes the ropes had been pulled and the ship was speeding across the lake.

The bayous have always been the back door into New Orleans, a smuggler’s paradise where the brackish waters are dotted by islands that vanish in flood tide. Take out a map and you can trace the route followed by Lee Christmas and his men that morning. They sailed to the Middle Ground, the shipping channel in the center of the lake, then continued along the shore opposite the city, slipping in and out of bays, the captain on the lookout for navy and coast guard. They went through the Rigolets, a corkscrew of marsh that dumps into Lake Borgne, the entrance to the Mississippi Sound. They passed Grassy Island, Cat Island, Bay St. Louis, and Pass Christian in the dark. On December 24, 1910, they dropped anchor off Ship Island, a sandbar near the center of the sound. The church towers of Gulfport, Mississippi, were visible in the distance.

“What now?” asked Molony.

“We wait for El Amigo,” said Christmas.

It was one of Zemurray’s conditions: he wanted his involvement in the operation kept a secret. With this in mind, he was to be identified, if he had to be identified at all, only as El Amigo.

A boat appeared on the horizon, a speedy little craft that zipped across the sound, reaching the yacht in a spray of white water. A man reached out a hand, pulling Christmas aboard, then Molony, then Bonilla. It was Zemurray, in his long black coat.

He led the way to a cabin filled with weapons—grenades, rifles, a machine gun, enough ammunition to fight a war—then stood in the galley, cooking breakfast. Steak and eggs, a bottle of whiskey. He drank a shot himself—to ward off the cold—then went to the pilot house. The engines started and the boat glided into Pass Christian, a fishing village on Bay St. Louis.

Zemurray walked into town, leaving his soldiers to play poker on an overturned rifle case. Bonilla won the big hands. “Sometimes, boys, you have to lose with a winning hand so that later you can win with a losing hand,” he told them.

“Shut up and deal,” said Christmas.

Zemurray returned with more weapons. When everything was stowed, he signaled the captain, who raised anchor and motored across the sound, where another ship, the Hornet, a fearsome armor-clad cruiser that had seen action in the Spanish-American War, was waiting. Zemurray had bought the ship secretly, through a third party, for his mercenaries.

The men spent an hour carrying weapons onto the warship. When everything was loaded, Zemurray noticed Bonilla shivering.

“Jesus Christ, Manny, what’s wrong with you?”

“Just a little chill, amigo.”

Zemurray took off his overcoat and draped it across the shoulders of the tiny general, saying, “I’ve shot the roll on you, and I might as well shoot the coat, too.”

Zemurray said goodbye to the men, then stood on the deck of his ship watching the Hornet pass the barrier islands and sail into the open sea.
I was standing in the grocery checkout when Steve Gleason told me he had been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig’s disease (ALS). I assume he saw the color leave my face because in true Steve form, he put things in perspective, reminding me “we all have limited time” and encouraging me to “get busy living.” I didn’t know what to say. How do you respond when your friend tells you he has a terminal illness? What do you do?

Following Steve’s lead with his creation of Team Gleason, whose mission is to inspire, act, and learn, I decided to photograph an Inside Out project in honor of Steve, his wife Michel, their son Rivers, and their countless supporters.

I photographed participants throughout New Orleans and asked them to put on their best face for Steve. The photographs are posted on walls around New Orleans to stimulate curiosity, joy, and inspired action in those who pass by. With these positive ingredients, we can overcome adversity.
photography  BY FRANK RELLE  (continued)

For more information, visit:
www.teamgleason.org
www.insideoutproject.net
NEWCOMB-TULANE COLLEGE is the academic home for all of Tulane’s full-time undergraduate students, who are taught by faculty in the School of Architecture, the A. B. Freeman School of Business, the School of Liberal Arts, the School of Public Health, and the School of Science and Engineering. Newcomb-Tulane College comprises several student service offices: the Academic Advising Center, the Center for International Studies, Cocurricular and First Year Programs, the Honors Program, ROTC, Teacher Preparation and Certification, and the Office of the Dean.

Newcomb-Tulane College’s main offices are located in Robert C. Cudd Hall on the historic St. Charles campus. Built in 1901, the distinctive Dutch Gothic (or Italian Renaissance Revival, according to some sources) building originally served as the university refectory, or dining commons. Since then, the building has served in a variety of capacities, providing classroom and office space and acting as the home for several different departments. Over the years, a number of piecemeal additions and adaptations obscured most of the building’s architectural interest. In the 1990s a group of donors provided the funds to restore the building and remodel the interior as the home for Tulane College, formerly the men’s undergraduate liberal arts college. The building was reopened and placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1999. In 2006, following the university’s post-Katrina restructuring, Robert C. Cudd Hall became the administrative home of the newly created Newcomb-Tulane College, housing the Office of the Dean and the Office of Cocurricular Programs.

In the more than 150 years since its founding, Tulane University has subscribed to a few basic principles: a belief in the enduring value of liberal arts and professional education, a conviction about the importance of extracurricular activities and accomplishments, and a justifiable pride in the achievements of its talented students, dedicated faculty, and distinguished alumni.