A Letter from Dean James M. MacLaren

It is a great pleasure to write this article as the first dean of Newcomb-Tulane College. Tulane University’s plan for renewal was a bold academic reorganization necessitated by the catastrophic losses the university suffered as a consequence of Hurricane Katrina. This plan created, in July 2006, a single college for all undergraduates. I am happy to report as we near the end of our first year of operation that, not only have we survived, but we also have a number of successes under our belt. These successes are the result of hard work by staff in the college.

One of the biggest changes we faced was the creation of a centralized academic advising center. Advisers, who pre-Katrina were located in the different schools, were brought together into a single unit. A permanent home for the advising center is still a few years off; they are currently located in a temporary building on the former site of the Doris residence hall at the corner of Willow and Newcomb Place. (The advisers, who had the challenge of handling all the course transfers during the Katrina semester, affectionately named their new home the Doris double-wide.) Their hard work throughout the spring and Lagniappe semesters ensured that the majority of our seniors were able to graduate last year. Without missing a beat they turned their attentions to our new first-year students. This year the advisers have been using new technology—an appointment management system—that allows students to schedule meetings with their advisers via the Web.

The 2006 school year began—normally!—with freshman orientation, and we were pleased to welcome a class of bright, energetic new Tulanians to campus and to New Orleans. All college-bound students agonize about their choice of school. Our new students had a particularly difficult decision, and I believe that they came with a deep commitment to community service as well as academics. In fact, all of our students must complete public service projects as part of the graduation requirement. The presence of our students in the city has already had a positive effect

continued on page seven
A Letter from the Editor

It is my pleasure to address an expanded audience for the new Newcomb–Tulane Collegian & Review. The Tulane Collegian & Review was the publication of the former Tulane College, issued biannually from 1999 through 2006. I was able to take the publication with me to my new position in the Newcomb–Tulane College Office of Cocurricular Programs, where we serve all Tulane undergraduates and alumni.

The magazine focuses on the accomplishments of our students, alumni, and faculty. Our mission is to keep the Tulane community apprised of the life of the college and of each other’s lives: we traditionally have a “Class Notes” section that features alumni updates. Please take some time to fill out and return the card on page 15 and let us know how you’re doing. You should also feel free to submit ideas for articles and to submit your own work for publication in the Review section, which highlights the academic and creative work of our faculty and alumni.

New issues and archive copies of the Collegian & Review are available online at http://college.tulane.edu/Publications.htm, but you can receive a print copy of any current issue (and most back issues) by contacting us in the Office of Cocurricular Programs. We hope you enjoy this issue.

Best,
Sarah R. Doerries
HONORABLE MENTOR

A Mark Twain quotation cited on the Director’s Blog of the Tulane Honors Program Web site (tulanehonors.blogspot.com) reads, “It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not to deserve them.” Professor Deborah McGrady, who has served as director of the Tulane Honors Program since August 2006, deserves every honor she has received. We hope this article serves as another honor, a tribute to Professor McGrady, who will be leaving Tulane at the end of this academic year to join the faculty at the University of Virginia. We look forward to working with Tom Luongo, associate professor in the Department of History, who will be taking over as director of the Honors Program.

Professor Deborah McGrady is excited about instilling her love of learning in students while inspiring them to excel. As a current associate professor of French and a distinguished Tulane faculty member since 1999, she has excelled in her own projects.

“I knew I wanted to learn French ever since I was a little girl and heard my first ballet teacher,” she said in a recent interview. “Whenever she would get angry, she would start speaking in French. And when I was in kindergarten, I told my grandmother that I wanted to be a teacher.”

Those stern ballet lessons led to McGrady’s receiving her B.A. in modern languages and linguistics from the University of Maryland, where she completed a senior honors thesis on French writer Marcel Proust in 1989. (“I still fondly remember that experience,” she said with a smile. “It was the first time I ever used a computer.”) She continued studying French literature, receiving her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

“I originally wanted to be a secondary-school teacher,” McGrady recalled, “but I loved research so much.” Further research projects in French, medieval culture, and literature led to an academic career. McGrady became the first recipient of the Medieval Institute...
Postdoctoral Fellowship at Western Michigan University (1997–99), and she was the recipient of several fellowships, including a Mellon Fellowship in 2002–03.

“I came to Tulane in 1999,” continued the Maryland native. “I was brought in to work in French and had a double role as a medievalist and to oversee pedagogical training of graduate students.” (The graduate program in French was ranked sixth among American research universities according to the Academic Analytics 2005 Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index.) Since joining the Tulane faculty, she has served as head of the Undergraduate French Language Program, director of Tulane Summer in Paris, and codirector of the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Program. She received Tulane’s Mortar Board Award for Outstanding Teaching in 2001 and 2004. In 2005 she won Newcomb College’s Teacher of the Year Award, which she considers her greatest honor.

At the same time that McGady was racking up her own teaching honors and research accomplishments, Jean Danielson, a Tulane faculty member since 1965, was dean of the Tulane Honors Program. Affectionately known as “Dean Jean,” the legendary Danielson’s teaching and guidance inspired hundreds, if not thousands, of Tulanians. After directing the Tulane Honors Program for fourteen years (and being with Tulane for thirty-nine), Danielson retired in 2004, leaving a huge legacy. “Dean Jean’s legacy—it’s formidable shoes to step in,” McGady said. “She’s such a guiding force, and I feel fortunate because she’s really still present and has really helped a lot. She makes me confident and proud.”

One of the things McGady enjoys most as director of the Honors Program is working with students and faculty in various disciplines. “It has really been interesting and inspiring meeting a diverse cross-section of students. And I’m fascinated by the interesting work of the various departments.

“In the spring I’m teaching a new honors class about Joan of Arc [‘Joan of Arc: Medieval Martyr, Modern Myth’], where we’ll look at various artistic representations and how she’s represented in fiction, dance, visual arts, even modern plays,” she said. “It will be an honors colloquium that is intended to attract students from various domains.”

Selfless dedication to Tulane students remains at the center of her devotion to her work. “We’re really excited about Honors Week,” she continued. “It will be an opportunity to celebrate everything the students are doing and to let the campus know.”

As McGady continues to not only deserve but also receive honors (her first book, Controlling Readers: Guillaume de Machaut and His Late Medieval Audience, was just published, and she is currently writing The Gift Of Literature: Book Exchange During The Hundred Years War), she takes pride in inspiring her Honors Program students to do the same. “I want my students to know that learning can entirely change the way you see the world,” she says. “And that learning is not just about books. It’s a way of life.”
When Cameron Mann, TC ’00, was at Tulane, he might have been voted “Least Likely To Pursue a Career as an Aristocrunk Rapper.” Then again, Aristocrunk hadn’t been invented yet.

While living in London after graduation with fellow Tulanians Carrie Solomon and Elise Kirchner, Mann kept in touch via e-mail with a childhood buddy named Robert Anthony. The two began entertaining each other by drawing on their prep school backgrounds to write the whitest of white-boy rap lyrics, each one trying to outdo the other’s efforts. Eventually, alter egos emerged: eighteenth-century aristocrats named Lord Treadwell (Mann) and Maurice Eloise XIII (Anthony).

Back home in Memphis a couple of years later, Mann and Anthony thought it might be fun to record some rough demos of their rap. The demos ultimately led them to a high-school friend named Elliot Ives, a talented musician and producer who decided to help the fledgling rappers take their creation to the next level. Ives, a member of the Memphis band Free Sol (http://www.freesol.net/), joined Lord T and Eloise as the mustachio’d, conductor’s-baton-wielding Myster E. In June Ives created a Myspace page for Lord T and Eloise (http://www.myspace.com/lordtande-loise), with MP3s of some of the songs. The response was so favorable that the trio decided it was time to further develop their characters and record a full-length album: Aristocrunk.

As Lord T and Eloise became more of a reality, Mann and Anthony saw it as an opportunity to comment on the absurdity of wealth-obsessed American pop culture, especially rap culture. Mann points out that, like blues music, rap is an original African American art form with its roots in hardship. As such, there’s always been a stigma attached to white rappers, even now that rap music has spread internationally. But now that rap culture places more importance on bling and babes than on exposing social injustice, it makes perfect sense that a white wanna-be like K-Fed would rap about how rich he is. Mann and Anthony’s aristocratic alter egos enable them to make a direct comment on our era of conspicuous consumption, rather than just being K-Fed knockoffs. “Rap is all about embellishment. Just as 50 Cent embellished his street background, we embellished our privileged upbringing,” says Mann. In the effort to be as over-the-top as possible, Lord T sports an enormous powdered wig, frilly blouses, and knickers; Eloise’s skin is gold, the result of a genetic mutation caused by generations of aristocratic inbreeding. They rap about Chateau Latour, trust funds, and cashmere the way other rappers reference Cristal, cash money, and Tommy Hilfiger. Lord T & Eloise make it clear that regardless of race, rapping about bling is just plain silly.

Rather than making their satiric point solely by singing about their life of privilege, Lord T and Eloise slyly insert political commentary into their music. The song “Red Phone” posits that Lord T and Eloise are so wealthy and powerful that they have a special phone that connects them directly to President Bush. But instead of using the phone to thank Bush for his tax cuts, they use it to chastise him for his actions: “Wars started over drugs, oil barrels and thugs / now I’m picking up the red phone to reprimand G. Dub.” They even comment on Bush’s handling of the Katrina disaster: “So G. Dub, what you think of the flood / time to clean off your hands and wash off the blood.”

Lord T & Eloise’s music also happens to be relentlessly catchy, and it’s gained a diverse following, from those who mainly appreciate its humor to those who are primarily attracted to the music itself. They are surely the first rap act to rely heavily on samples of cellos, harpsichords, and tympani, which somehow work quite well against the laid-back,
down-and-dirty crunk beats. Though my own hip-hop taste is limited and tends toward the Fugees and De La Soul, the chorus of “Million Dollar Boots” keeps getting stuck in my head lately: “To all you high-class gentlemen wearing suits / STAND UP! / to all you ladies in your million dollar boots / STAND UP!”

While Ives is the group’s musical mastermind, Anthony—a fiction writer and real estate agent—writes most of the lyrics. Since his return from London, Mann has been working at Young Avenue Sound, a Memphis studio and record label; his job there taught him how to manage the group’s business affairs, and Young Avenue ultimately produced Lord T & Eloise’s first album.

The rapid rise of Lord T and Eloise is largely attributable to the power of Myspace, where they quickly collected several thousand friends. Their first live performance sold out and made the cover of the Memphis newspaper—“a coup d’état for a new band,” says Mann. Other Memphis rappers, from veteran black rapper Al Kapone (www.myspace.com/alkaponomemphis) to self-described “white female evil gangsta rapper” Chopper Girl (www.myspace.com/dachoppergirl) began to take notice, inviting Lord T and Eloise to play shows with them and contributing guest Aristocrunk. Their second and third gigs, each in increasingly larger venues, also sold out.

Deciding it was time to make a video, they teamed up with a new film production company called Old School Pictures to shoot a video for “Million Dollar Boots.” To stay within their budget, they utilized Mann’s aunt’s and Anthony’s parents’ impressive homes, as well as Mann’s father’s collection of vintage cars. Mann also happened to be a high-school friend of the son of FedEx founder Fred Smith, and this connection enabled them to film some shots on a private jet.

Mann, with no prior performance background other than playing bass guitar “pretty poorly” in high school, has now found himself at the forefront of a musical act that he describes as “almost like performance art.” Friends from Tulane, upon learning of his new career, are “tripped out.” To them, he says, “Cam Mann rapping is unimaginable, and imagining him transforming into Lord Treadwell is even more so.” But transform he does, and Mann feels that the group’s visuals are nearly as important as its music.

As such, they are already planning their second video with Old School Productions. Mann also believes in building upon their initial internet success, focusing more on digital distribution than on traditional record sales. To this end, he has hooked up with another Tulanian, Pierce Stacy, TC ’97, who works as corporate counsel for IODA (Independent Online Distribution Alliance). IODA is one of the two largest aggregators worldwide—a service that uploads music to pay-per-download sites. With Stacy’s help, Lord T and Eloise will have worldwide digital distribution.

World domination, it must be admitted, may take some time. However, the group’s success has already spread beyond Memphis, where the Memphis Flyer and the Commercial Appeal both ranked theirs among the Top Ten Local Recordsof 2006. They rated a mention on VH1’s popular Best Week Ever, showed up in a San Francisco Bay Guardian on-line article, and were recently interviewed by New York–based Radar Online Magazine. No New Orleans gigs are on the schedule yet, but Mann hopes to visit the city again soon, whether as himself or as Lord Treadwell: “I fell in love with New Orleans. It’s still very much a part of me, as is Tulane.”

ARISTOCRUNK CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE
beyond the Tulane campus as they have assisted with the rebirth of one of America’s greatest cities.

Each summer all of our entering students receive a book to read before coming to campus. During orientation and the fall semester, we offer programming related to the book, including a faculty keynote lecture and small faculty-led discussion groups, and, if possible, a campus visit by the author. This year students received a copy of *Song for My Fathers: A New Orleans Story in Black and White*, by Tom Sancton. This coming-of-age memoir describes Tom’s childhood growing up in New Orleans as the son of a journalist-father and Mississippi debutante–mother. The young Tom Sancton was introduced to jazz and its patriarchs, who called themselves “the mens.” The book honors “the mens,” whose musical legacy Tom continues by playing the clarinet. Tom will be the visiting Mellon Professor next academic year, when he will teach honors colloquia studying the memoir.

The college has found a home in Robert C. Cudd Hall, the former home of Tulane College. We have been working to make the building a place students enjoy using. The final stage of the Cudd Hall renovations are being completed with the rebuilding of the patio and landscaping with native Louisiana plants. In response to students’ requests, we have two new porch swings on Cudd’s Emerald Veranda, a popular place to take a break between classes. Inside, in the Aron Common Room, we have new computers and printers so that our students can stop by to print a paper, check their e-mail, or work on a class project.

In the fall we were fortunate to have Sean Berkowitz, A&S ’87, lead prosecutor on the Enron trial, as our Dean’s Colloquium guest. In a lively and entertaining presentation, he spoke to students about his experiences in the Enron trial and the challenges of painting a complex financial picture as a premeditated act of fraud. He felt that the liberal arts education he gained at Tulane provided the skills needed to present the case to the jury. We look forward to hosting Dr. Robert Grossman, A&S ’69, a renowned neuroradiologist, in the spring.

In my short time as dean I have very much enjoyed traveling around the country to meet alumni and to update them on how their alma mater is faring. I do hope that if any of you are in the New Orleans area you will drop in on me in Cudd Hall to say hello.

Yours,

James M. MacLaren
Dean of Newcomb-Tulane College
Sarah Griffin Thibodeaux, N’93, is one of those rare women who is able to juggle career and passion, and still find time to contribute to the community. A native New Orleanian, Thibodeaux grew up with stories about Newcomb College from her mother and her grandmother, both proud alumnae. After attending Newcomb and graduating as the first official women’s studies major, Thibodeaux left the Crescent City to do graduate work at LSU. She then trekked farther north to New York for a stint in book and on-line publishing, after which she returned to New Orleans to work for nola.com. In 2002 the companion Web site for the Times-Picayune was not the bustling hub of information and go-to source for “Everything New Orleans” it is today, and its rise to prominence is due to the diligence of Thibodeaux and her colleagues.

Until August 2005 nola.com served mostly to publish the daily news from the Times-Picayune, cover events in New Orleans, and furnish information for visitors, but during the days following Hurricane Katrina, the Web site became a lifeline to all New Orleanians, those who had evacuated and those who were stranded in the city. On Saturday, August 27, after seeing the projected path of the storm, Thibodeaux left the city and went to Alexandria, LA, and set up a remote newsroom to facilitate continuous coverage of the storm in the event that the city did sustain a direct hit. From the safety of Alexandria, she watched the storm ravage the city, and on Monday night she received news that the levees had been breached and the city was inundated.

The Times-Picayune staff was evacuated on Tuesday morning, and Thibodeaux, in her capacity as the production manager for nola.com, kept the public informed via the on-line operation while the newspaper was unable to publish for three days. Thibodeaux and her small staff managed to maintain twenty-four-hour
coverage of the crisis following Katrina, taking shifts in order to keep the site filled with updated information. She described the days following the levee breach as “a week of craziness,” during which average views of the Web site per day soared from 800,000 to a peak of 32 million.

One of the most important aspects of the Web site during those harrowing days was the “Your Story” feature, through which people could send e-mails to share their evacuation experience, ask for assistance if they were stranded, or simply send their thoughts and prayers to those affected by the storm. Some of the standout e-mails that poured in included one regarding three hundred people stranded at Queen Mary of Vietnam Catholic Church and one about doctors at Charity Hospital who were threatened by gun fire. Thibodeaux and her staff handled the increased volume of user mail and posted these desperate messages for rescue workers, aiding efforts to save those cut off from the rest of the world.

Thibodeaux describes managing the outcries as “one of the most profound and intense experiences I’ve ever had.”

Even after the flood of e-mails subsided and people were moved to safety, nola.com continued to serve as a vital link between displaced residents and up-to-date news about their city. For her work during Hurricane Katrina, Thibodeaux received numerous journalism awards, including the Press Club of New Orleans First Place Prize for Internet Innovation, 2005, for “Katrina Operation Rescue & Recovery,” the on-line use of weblogs to post help messages from those stranded by the storm, the Online New Association (journalist.org) Breaking News and Knight Foundation Award for Public Service, 2006, and Pulitzer Prizes for Public Service and Breaking News in conjunction with the Times-Picayune, 2006.

In addition to her successful career as a journalist, Thibodeaux is a talented photographer and painter who was honored by being chosen to paint the Newcomb Dean’s Portrait of Cynthia Lowenthal. Thibodeaux has been interested in art since she started figure drawing at the New Orleans Academy of Fine Arts during her high-school years. From that point forward, she has been hooked on figure drawing, painting, portraiture, and photography, but she chose not to study art in college because she says she “didn’t want to miss out” on a more broad-based education. While she may be more widely known for her work in journalism, Thibodeaux has also been recognized for her art by receiving the New Orleans Academy of Fine Arts Portraiture Award and the New Orleans Academy of Fine Arts M. Dell Weller Faculty Award, both in 2004.

Thibodeaux is a vibrant, successful alumna who continues to proudly represent her alma mater by participating in Newcomb events and encouraging students to intern at her company. During and after the crisis following Hurricane Katrina, she has been a wonderful example of a diligent professional excelling in her field and helping the community.
PAULA MORRIS is a New Zealand–born novelist and short-story writer of English and Maori descent. She has spent most of her adult life away from New Zealand—working for over a decade at record companies in London and New York—but is seen as one of the vanguards of the new wave of Maori/Pacific literature.

*Queen of Beauty*, her first novel, won Victoria University’s Adam Foundation Prize in Creative Writing and the Best First Book at the 2003 Montana New Zealand Book Awards. Her second novel, *Hibiscus Coast*, from which this excerpt is taken, is a literary thriller about the art world set in contemporary Auckland and Shanghai. Published by Penguin in 2005 and immediately optioned for film, it was longlisted for the Dublin IMPAC Literary Prize. Her third novel, *Trendy But Casual*, a comedy of manners set in New York City, was published by Penguin New Zealand in April 2007.

She has given readings, appeared at festivals and talked to university classes in New Zealand, the United States, and China, and her stories have appeared in journals and anthologies on both sides of the Pacific.

The story so far:

Emma Taupere has returned to Auckland, New Zealand, after spending several years in Shanghai, her late mother’s birthplace. Her training there as a painter has made Emma a skilled copyist, and Siaki Samuels, her ex-boyfriend, has recruited her as a forger. Her part in the elaborate scheme is to make expert copies of two valuable paintings of Maori chiefs by Charles Frederick Goldie, held by the Auckland Museum. When she’s finished, the originals will be smuggled out of the country and delivered to a rich ethnographical collector in the United States.

Emma is the key player in this plot, but her identity is known only to Siaki, who has installed her in a borrowed luxury apartment on Princes Wharf filled with art work by important New Zealand artists. In a locked back room, home to the owner’s secret Gauguin, she works on her copies.

Emma is a caged bird who can leave the apartment only under cover of darkness. Tonight, for the first time, she is spending an illicit night away from Princes Wharf. Her young cousin, Ani, an art student, is jealous of her, determined to find out how Emma is able to live in such luxury. Ani steals Siaki’s car and seeks out another art student, Tai, to go with her.

In the entry area Tai was waiting patiently, motionless as a lizard fixed to the trunk of a tree.

“All clear,” Ani said, short of breath because she’d run back down the stairs, and because she was excited: she knew something about Emma that her cousin didn’t want her to know. “We should be careful about lights, though, because all the curtains are really thin and if she’s somewhere around the Viaduct, she’ll see the place is all lit up.”

“Nobody can see back here,” Tai told her, and he reached for the light switch next to the front door. “Take a look at this.”

They stood together, staring at the vast panel of a moss-green and black landscape on the far wall.

“Is it a McCahon?” she asked Tai.

“Says so in the corner, doesn’t it?” He stood scowling at the painting, as though it were a bad memory.

“But is it real?” Ani had seen paintings by McCahon in galleries before, but the thought of someone owning one, especially something this large, seemed incredible.

“Guess so.” Tai shrugged. “What’s through there?”

“The living room.” Ani stood staring at the McCahon while Tai wandered away down the hallway. It was such an unexpected sight, like a picture window looking out onto the bush—incongruous in an entryway, even in a ritzy apartment building like this one. This was a strange place to hang such a valuable a painting, she thought: you’d only glimpse it as you arrived and left every day. She couldn’t imagine owning a painting...
like this and only glancing at it for a few minutes a day.

“Hey,” Tai called. “Switch on the hall light and come check this lot out.”

Ani pulled herself away from the McCahon, walking back down the passage and finding the hall light on the white wall outside the kitchen.

“Can you believe this?” Tai paced towards the sofa, dumping his bag on the coffee table. “You didn’t tell me your cousin’s a collect-a.”

There wasn’t enough light to make out anything more at first than the shapes of paintings hanging on the wall. Only when Ani edged up behind Tai could she recognize the pictures looming behind the sofa: the larger of the two was a creepy Bill Hammond painting, one of his surreal bird-people looking even more sinister than usual in the half-darkness of the room. The other was a Don Binney, an oil painting of a giant, bloated bird against a coal-black hill.

“This isn’t really her place,” Ani told him, squinting at the bird’s beady eye. The spot of brightness looked like the dot of light from the little flashlight. “She’s just staying here. She’s looking after it for somebody.”

“Somebody rich,” Tai said, and he turned Ani around to face a large painting consuming the opposite wall; she must have passed it on her way to the stairs without noticing. The scrawl of words across the centre of the canvas seemed as familiar as her own handwriting.

“Is that a Hotere?”

“No shit it’s a Hotere. And look just past the stairs.” He placed one hand against the small of her back, guiding her towards another stretch of wall and yet another painting: a graphic ladder of black-and-white koru. “Gordon Walters.”

“Cool,” she said, but as soon as she spoke Ani knew that was the wrong thing to say. Tai’s hand dropped from her back.

“What’s cool about buying the same old crap just because other people know who the artist is? Whoever owns all this isn’t into art. This is just money in the bank to him.”

“Like an investment,” she said quickly, wanting to be on Tai’s side again. “That sucks.”

“So why are you saying it’s cool?” Tai was still standing behind her; she could feel his breath on her neck, a fleck of his spittle.

“It’s just that I used to kind of like Gordon Walters,” she said. Her chest was tight; it made her words squeak.

“And, you know, it’s not like looking at it in a gallery. We’re close enough to touch all these.”

“Touch it, then,” said Tai, and he moved closer, his knee pressed against the back of her leg, his breath warm against the tip of her ear. He lowered his voice to a whisper. “Go on, touch it.”

Slowly Ani raised a trembling hand. Her fingertips stroked one of the tight top corners of the painting, following the ridge of the canvas fold.

“What are you so scared of?” said Tai, and there was his hand again, gripping her waist as though he meant to push her headfirst into the taut canvas. “You think an alarm’s going to go off if you get too close? You think some smarmy gallery freak is going to start screaming at you?”

“I just want to look at it,” she said, wincing at the pinch of his fingers against the soft flesh of her belly. “It’s a flat surface. There’s nothing to touch.”

“Little Miss Prim,” he whispered. The closeness was unbearable; Ani’s left arm prickled with a rash of goose-bumps. She wanted him to spin her around and smother her face with his. She wanted to feel his hand ply her bare skin, for him to push her to the ground. “Too scared to touch the art.”

“I’m not too scared,” she said, but the words came out too breathy and rushed to sound convincing. Tai shook a little; he was laughing at her.

“Can’t touch the big expensive painting by the big painter man. Doesn’t want to get drummed out of the artist club.”

“Look,” she said. She flattened one palm against the painting and braced herself, as though she was expecting a shock or a burn. But all she could feel was the delicate grain of the painting’s surface, a

She couldn’t imagine the misery Emma would feel when she returned home and saw what Tai had done, what Ani had let him do.
barely perceptible tackiness. Her hand—its long crooked fingers, its bottle-cap knuckles, its gnawed, shell-colored fingernails—was an ugly piece of debris washed up against the sea wall of koru.

Tai didn’t reply: he’d pulled away from her and she could hear him rummaging in his bag on the other side of the room. She kept her hand in place against the picture because she didn’t know what to do next: she’d done what Tai wanted, but his response was to withdraw from her. It was a game to him, she thought, and he was bored with it, bored with her. He was probably getting ready to leave.

“Turn the light on,” he said, and Ani dropped her hand, turning to face him. She was wrong: he looked pleased, excited. “Over there, above the table.”

She moved across the room and groped for the light. An illuminated living room would alert Emma, if she was anywhere nearby, to their intrusion, but there was no point in protesting. The trip here had been Ani’s idea, but Tai had taken over now. He’d taken over before they even got through the front door, when Ani stood in the hallway uncertain of which apartment door to try; the moment he drew the keys from her hand, this adventure was his. Flicking the light switch was like opening a fridge door in a darkened kitchen, a sudden burst of brightness. She turned back to Tai and saw his self-satisfied smile, the can of aerosol paint in his right hand.

“No,” she said. “No, you can’t.”

“Thought you believed in making things new,” he said, tipping the can upside down, shaking it until it rattled.

“Let’s go outside,” she said, desperate to get him out of the apartment, for Emma to come home, for Siaki to burst in demanding his keys back. “You can tag all along the wall out there, by all the shops. Everyone’ll see. Nobody will know if you do it up here.”

“Maybe some works of art are private-view only.” He popped the cap off the can. “Isn’t that why people spend so much money on it?”

“Tai, you shouldn’t vandalize these …”

“Vandalize? Listen to yourself. You think you’re an artist, but really you’re just a little girl from the suburbs playing with your bloody Legos. What do you think art is? Those stupid leaf funnels you’re making?”

“I know it’s not playing with spray paint like a school kid.” Ani’s face was burning. She couldn’t look Tai in the eye anymore, so she stared at the spray can, willing it to disappear.

“You don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said, and she didn’t need to see the expression on his face to know how much he despised her. “Art isn’t some bullshit job like waitressing in a faggy café on K Road. You don’t need to put on a uniform and clock out at the end of the day. It’s all the time, everywhere. We have to trample on what’s gone before to make it better. Destruction, not decoration—remember?”

“I don’t see how you’ll make any one of these paintings better by tagging it,” she said, rubbing her eyes with the back of her hand: they felt dry and itchy. Tai snickered. He probably thought she was crying.

“Let’s see,” he said. He swiveled on his heels and raised the can to the Bill Hammond. A hiss of paint steamed onto the white wall and then onto the jewel green of the canvas: a straight line, then a downwards zigzag, the beginning of Tai’s tagging signature. Ani had seen these exact lines form before, many times; Tai used to incorporate tagging in a lot of his work until the teachers started liking it. The eyes of the elongated bird-person were blindfolded by a thick black line of paint as the signature took its boxy, convoluted shape.

He was quicker with the Binney, grasping the back of the sofa with one hand to steady himself, and then moved over to the Hotere.

“He writes on his own paintings,” said Tai, rattling the can again. “I’m just following the master’s example.”

“I’m going,” said Ani, but she didn’t have the car keys and couldn’t see them on the coffee table. Tai began spraying the Hotere, a giant-sized signature this time, flicking his wrist at the end of each line. He was taking his time tonight, she thought; he wasn’t afraid of being caught. He certainly wasn’t afraid of her. “Tai, give me the keys. I’m going.”

“I’m nearly finished,” he said calmly, standing back to survey the defaced Hotere, then shuffling over to the Gordon Walters. “Shame I’ve only got black paint on me. Red would really stand out on this.”

“Let’s go, OK?” she pleaded. “You’ve made your point.”

He stepped back from the Walters, frowning. The painting was a mess of black, a pool of melting tar. The spot where her hand had rested a few minutes ago was a web of wayward lines.

“Anything up there?” he asked. She shook her head, but he was already bounding up the stairs, turning on lights, thudding into the back room.

“There’s nothing. I told you,” she called up the stairs. “Please, can we go?”
She listened for his muffled footsteps overhead but couldn’t hear anything until he let out a yelp—of pain or confusion or excitement she couldn’t tell.

“Jesus Christ!” he shouted. “You call this nothing?”

Ani climbed the stairs slowly, her hand sticky against the smooth wood of the railing. Tai was in the apartment’s small, empty back room, its white walls turned a sickly yellow by the electric light. She paused outside the doorway gazing at Emma’s easel, the row of brushes lying flat on the tarpaulin, the untidy stack of papers in the corner. All she’d wanted to do tonight was see this place, steal a glimpse into Emma’s life. She couldn’t imagine the misery Emma would feel when she returned home and saw what Tai had done, what Ani had let him do.

“My God,” Tai said, and Ani looked over at him. He was staring at a painting on the wall, one she hadn’t noticed earlier when the room was dark and, she’d thought, empty. “It’s a Gauguin.”

The colors of the painting he was staring at looked as wet and vivid as the flesh of ripe fruit. Everything about the picture was raw—its split-open colors, the childish, cartoonish way the figure was outlined in black, the bruised expression on the model’s face. It was a teenaged girl: she looked annoyed, as though she didn’t want anyone gazing at her.

“Are you sure?” Ani asked him. “Is it real?”

“Jesus,” he said, exasperated. “You don’t know a Gauguin when you see one?”

Ani stayed in the doorway, starting to move into the room and then pulling back, like a buoy bobbing in the harbor. She was afraid to leave the room, but she didn’t want to approach Tai. She wanted to distract him from spraying his foul blackness all over another painting, this painting, but what could she do—jab at him with the end of a brush? Hurl herself at his legs?

The can dropped from his hand and rolled a few centimeters away from his feet, coming to rest on a wedge of tarpaulin. Tai stepped towards the painting, reached up and lifted it—with some difficulty, because the painting was hung high and the ornate frame looked heavy—off the wall. He laid the half-naked girl flat on her face and knelt over the painting, using the keys in his pocket to prize the picture’s backing away from the frame.

“What are you doing?” Ani asked him, her eyes darting to the discarded can: if she moved quickly, she could grab it and race away down the stairs.

“What does it look like?” He eased the canvas out of its frame.

“You’re not … you’re not taking it?”

Tai glanced up at her, the same look he’d given her in the bar, like she was a stranger he wasn’t interested in getting to know.

“Of course, I’m taking it,” he said, impatient with her stupidity. He tried to kick the frame away, but it just spun in a circle. “It’s my ticket out of this place.”

“What are you talking about?” she asked. Nothing about tonight was making sense anymore. “What do you mean? Your ticket out of … where?”

“Out of this hole. Auckland. New Zealand. What did you think I meant?” Tai clambered to his feet, gripping the wooden supports as though the painting was a kite he was off to launch on Pt. Chev beach. “Pass me some of that newspaper. I don’t want to rip this getting it off the stretcher here.”

She didn’t move. Tai pushed past her, grabbing a few sheets from the pile in the corner, and wrapped them around the painting.

“Pick up the keys,” he ordered. “Come on, I want to get back.”

At the sound of his footsteps thudding down the stairs, Ani shook herself back to life. She scooped up the keys and the aerosol can, and followed Tai downstairs. He was already holding the front door open with his free hand, grimacing at her for taking so long. Once she’d stepped into the corridor he followed, closing the door quietly behind them, and raising a finger to his lips to warn her to keep quiet.
A FAREWELL

On June 30, 2007, Professor Dale H. Edmonds will retire after fifty years as a teacher, forty-two of them at Tulane. Professor Edmonds joined the Tulane Department of English in 1965, and has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in modern British, American, and Continental literature; creative writing; and advanced writing. One of his particular interests is literature set in New Orleans and environs.

Reflecting on his time here at Tulane, Professor Edmonds says that the only thing he regrets is that “I can’t do it all over again.” He adds, “I still love teaching, my students, literature—so why am I retiring? Well, it’s time for me to move on and try some new and different approaches to life.”

Professor Edmonds was born in Fort Worth, Texas. He received a B.A. magna cum laude in 1957 from TCU, with a double major in English and journalism. After spending two years as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army (Adjutant General’s Corps), Edmonds entered UT. He received a Ph.D. with majors in English and American literature and minors in history and philosophy. His dissertation, entitled Malcolm Lowry: A Study of His Life and Work, was the first ever written on the acclaimed author of Under the Volcano. “I was drawn immediately to this work because it spoke to me on so many different levels. I decided I wanted to devote a considerable period of time to trying to figure out this extremely complex but deeply satisfying novel.”

Edmonds has taught as Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature at the University of Bucharest, Romania; and in summer programs in Czechoslovakia, Cambridge (England), Paris, and Rome. He has served as professor in charge of the Junior Year Abroad Program in Great Britain and Ireland and as director of the Tulane Honors Program. Edmonds has published numerous short stories, poems, and essays, and he recently completed a novel, The Girl in the Lands’ End Catalogue. He says, “One might describe it as a dark comedy, with elements of thwarted and twisted romance and mystery in its fabric. As literary precursors one might cite Lolita, A Confederacy of Dunces, Ulysses, and —surprise!—Under the Volcano.”

We join with Dale’s students, colleagues, and friends in wishing him all the best in his travels and new adventures.

AFTER PAPER-GRADING

BY DALE EDMONDS

Lines written on the occasion of my retirement as a college English teacher, with thanks to Robert Frost’s “After Apple-Picking.”

My sleek fine-pointed pen’s waiting in redness
For service still,
And there’s an essay that I didn’t grade
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Exams I didn’t mark stuck in a drawer.
But I am done with paper-grading now.
Essence of summer sloth is on the day,
The scent of bluebook: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a beer bottle
I drained this noontime from the day’s six-pack
And held against the world of sunny grass.
It quivered, and I let if fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to nap before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified essays appear and disappear,
Thesis to conclusion,
And every fleck of red ink showing clear.
My forefinger not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a red-penshaft.
I feel my finger flinch as the pile mounts.
And I keep hearing from the laundry room
The numbing sound
Of load on load of essays coming in.
For I have had too much
Of paper-grading: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself assigned.
There were ten thousand thousand words to read,
Clobber at will, put down, and not let stand.
For all
That hit my desk,
No matter if not flawed or rife with error,
Went surely to the hopeless muddle heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This nap of mine, whatever nap it is.
Were he not busy,
The Chairman could say whether it’s like his
Short nap, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some retired nap.
NEWCOMB-TULANE COLLEGE is the academic home for all of Tulane’s undergraduate students. Students matriculate in the college and, upon declaring a major, also become associated with one or more of Tulane’s five schools: 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. The college comprises several student-service offices: the Academic Advising Center, the Center for International Studies, First-year Programs, the Honors Program, the Office of Cocurricular Programs, and the Office of the Dean.

The Office of the Dean of Newcomb-Tulane College is 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 commons. Through the years the building has served as the home for a number of science and social-science departments and has been used for classroom space. 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. The building was reopened and placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1999.

Newcomb-Tulane College enrolls some 6,500 students; its alumni body includes more than 100,000. Among them are some of the nation’s and the world’s most accomplished and distinguished professionals in a remarkable variety of fields.

In the more than 150 years since its founding, Tulane 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 and distinguished alumni.

DROP US A LINE!
We want to hear from you! Please fill out this form so we can keep your classmates up to date on developments in your lives; we welcome photographs of alumni and their families.

NAME
first middle or initial last school/class year

HOME
street city state zip

BUSINESS
title company email

street city state zip

NEWS
e.g., career, activities, family, achievements

Please send me information about supporting The Newcomb-Tulane Collegian & Review and other Newcomb-Tulane College programs.

Mail to: The Newcomb-Tulane Collegian & Review, Newcomb-Tulane College, Office of Cocurricular Programs
Robert C. Cudd Hall, New Orleans, LA 70118-5698
I want my students to know that learning can entirely change the way you see the world. And that learning is not just about books. It’s a way of life.”

DR. DEBORAH McGRAWD, DIRECTOR OF THE TULANE HONORS PROGRAM