

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

insights

Spring 2016

the magazine for alumni and friends

Finding Inspiration

Printmaking Artist in Residence + A Historic Neighbor + Top Jazz Performer



Pete Vidal

Richard Beall '71 (second from right), Alumni Association board members, and Montgomery College Trustee Ken Hoffman (center) at a legislative reception.

Fellow alumni and friends,

One thing you see from the top of an organization is the amount of help you need to get things done. As I conclude my term as Alumni Association president this summer, I'm grateful to the volunteers who have tirelessly led our work.

Several of those leaders are shown above with Trustee Ken Hoffman, when we came together to show local officials our support for Montgomery College. This spring, several of you helped advocate for MC with the county council, and I appreciate that your dedication continues today.

When the College doesn't get the public funding it needs, students are left to make up the balance through higher tuition. For those struggling to afford classes while working to support themselves, it's a difference between completing their studies and dropping out. That's why your Alumni Association works to support deserving students who don't have another way to finance their degree. If you've joined us for "Dogfishing for Scholarships," donated to the association's scholarship fund, or even bought a diploma frame for a new grad—I thank you for helping fund the dream of a college education for current students.

This spring, we celebrated others who have an enduring connection to MC. Our alumni awards honored Barbara Bozak '76, who came back to teach at MC and created a scholarship for women returning to college. We recognized Carolina Peña Galeano '07, who made such a name for herself in community television in her first years after MC that she was nominated for our "Rising Star" young alumni award—before she, too, came back as MCTV's multicultural content producer. We welcomed two athletes (Patty Pfeifer Hittinger '83 and Chris Konrad '87) and a football team into the Athletic Hall of Fame. The team's induction is long overdue: They are the undefeated 1954 Knights, who took Montgomery College to a bowl game championship.

In this magazine, we highlight Lisa Tocci '96, who has made her mark in a blend of massage and acupressure known as reflexology. We also feature Timothy Tran '96, whose trip to his native Vietnam more than six years ago inspired him to expand his salon business to include reflexology services.

If you prefer to reduce life's pressures by listening to jazz, you may already know of trombonist Reginald Cyntje, who teaches music at the Germantown Campus. Now we introduce him to a wider MC family.

For readers interested in the history of the College and its surroundings, we offer background on the Blair family, whose property flanked the west side of the original Takoma Park Campus and who actually gave Silver Spring its name. And we describe the return of a second-generation alum, Raj Bunnag '07, to Rockville as the spring artist in residence.

As I said, it takes a lot of people to do the things we need to do for our association and our College. Please give back a little of what MC gave to you—by volunteering as a mentor, giving to our scholarship fund, or just sharing news of your own successes as an inspiration to our MC family.

Richard E. Beall '71
Montgomery College
Alumni Association President

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The Montgomery College Alumni Association welcomes former students interested in helping to coordinate events and activities for alumni, organize fundraising efforts, give input on distribution of Alumni Association scholarship funds, and determine benefits of Alumni Association membership. Opportunities to organize activities and events for alumni chapters, by area of study, are also available. **Montgomery College Alumni Office** 40 West Gude Drive, Suite 110, Rockville, MD 20850 **E-mail** alumni@montgomerycollege.edu **Online** montgomerycollege.edu/alumni **Facebook** facebook.com/mcalumniassociation

Spring 2016

insights

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Montgomery College is an academic
institution committed to promoting equal
opportunity and fostering diversity among
its student body, faculty, and staff.

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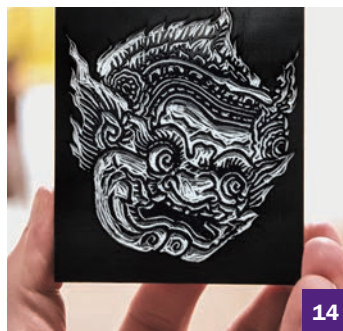
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**About the Cover**

Timothy Tran '96 showed *Insights* how he
pampers patrons at his three businesses
in the same plaza on Rockville Pike. Photo-
grapher Grace Gladhill '05 shot the cover
scene in Nails by Timothy just before it
opened. One client arrived early enough to
be a hand model (see outtakes online at
montgomerycollege.edu/insights).

WE'RE ALL EARS

Nothing is more important to a magazine than its readers. That's why after each issue, we've asked you, the *Insights* reader, to let us know what you thought about the issue, what you liked, and what you didn't like. So, what do you think of *Insights*?

☒ Read ☐ Skipped ☐ Skipped

☐ Read ☒ Skipped ☐ Skipped

Favorite: THE MAGAZINE IS WELL DONE & I APPRECIATE RECEIVING IT

Least favorite: I FEEL THAT IT SHOULD BE MORE INCLUSIVE OF YOUR ALUMNI FROM THE 60'S. I EAGERLY LOOK FOR NEWS FROM THAT TIME. THAT WAS AN INTERESTING TIME & MC STUDENTS WERE VERY INVOLVED

I receive 4 college or university mags + MC's *Insights* is the second best.

Favorite: I like this magazine cover to 2

Least favorite: Cover - very professional + a great snapshot of MC. I wish my alma mater had something similar.



MAGAZINE READERS SURVEY

insights the magazine for Montgomery College alumni and friends

TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK.

5. Does reading *Insights* help you feel connected to the College? ☐ Yes ☒ No



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It takes only five minutes. We promise.

DROP US A LINE

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"In honor of my late husband, Norris, I am happy to support the next generation of students through my estate." —Joan E. Hekimian, donor

Student Architects DESIGNING FOR THE REAL WORLD



Portable “Outdoor Office Modules,” designed by MC students, will be installed in downtown Silver Spring this May.

Students presented architectural designs for an “Outdoor Office Modules” project, to be built in downtown Silver Spring by Peterson Companies. Professor Shorieh Talaat ’76 tasked his Principles of Design (ARCH 201) students with developing a “kit of parts” that could be fabricated and assembled on site to create a portable, moveable outdoor work environment.

During an eight-week span, four teams of students researched precedents, components, and methods of assembly; they consulted with a structural engineer and fabrication companies; and continually refined their designs. Along with structural and design concerns, including accessibility, the teams had to solicit costs for all materials and furnishings, and develop a budget with a not-to-exceed number. Their final designs, rendered in 3D CAD software, included space to sit, socialize, work, and charge electronic devices.

“Given the complex requirements of the program, they delivered projects that were simple, elegant, and actually construct-

ible,” says Professor Talaat. “They did an outstanding job.”

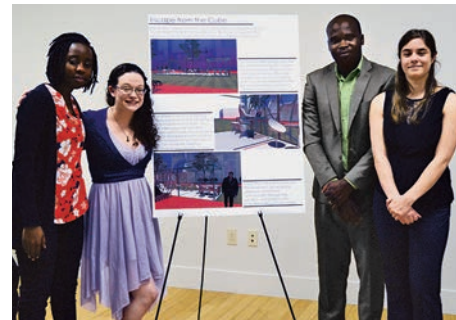
In January, the company chose a winning proposal. After some follow-up work—producing final drawings and details, meeting with consultants and subcontractors, and adding additional refinements to the design—the winning team’s project will be installed on Ellsworth Street.

Each year, students in the program’s 201 course engage in real-world projects and competitions. Projects typically comprise social and cultural components in the development of responsible design solutions. Past projects have included portable homeless shelters, a school house in Uganda, and post-war housing for Syria.

“When introduced early,” says Talaat, “it has the potential to enrich and activate learning in a way that goes beyond the stock curriculum. ... The level of energy in the studio and the willingness of the students to elevate their investigations, work products, and professionalism is amazing.” ■



Students from architectural classes work together on designs and cost estimates.



Photos courtesy Shorieh Talaat



Shorieh Talaat ’76, AIA, LEED AP, associate professor, architectural technology and construction management, is principal of Talaat Architects (Burtonsville, Md.), an award-winning firm.



Pete Vidal

A+ Professor

Nevart Tahmazian, professor of chemistry, earned 2015 Maryland Professor of the Year honors from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). Tahmazian also advises the STEM ED Community Club and the Learning Assistant Program. This is the ninth time in 12 years—and the seventh consecutive year—that an MC professor earned Maryland Professor of the Year distinction.

Kudos to MC performers and shows honored in the DC Metro Theater Arts' list of Best of 2015 Productions, Performances, and Ensembles in University Productions.

Productions: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Legally Blonde: The Musical*, *Godspell*, and *Marisol*.

Performances: Hasani Allen, Gregory Atkin, and Molly Janiga in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*; Jazmin Bacallao and Christopher Blackwell in *Marisol*; Victoria Meyers and Ellie Rabinovitz in *Legally Blonde: The Musical*; and Zachary Norris and Samantha Shoop in *Godspell*.

Casts and Ensembles: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Godspell*, and *Legally Blonde: The Musical*.



Top Honors

MC was named a Top School in Military Advanced Education & Transition's 2016 Guide to Colleges & Universities. The College was among private, public, for-profit, and not-for-profit, four-year, and two-year colleges. Institutions were evaluated on military culture, financial aid, flexibility, general support, on-campus support, and online support services.

"It's an honor to provide a supportive and welcoming environment in which veterans can learn and grow at MC."

—Joanna Starling
Manager of Veterans Programs at the College



International Partnerships

The College is coordinating its efforts to forge new partnerships with distinguished higher-education institutions based in Asia and Europe. Working with US-Asia Links, LLC, a Rockville-based company that is the official trade representative of the state of Maryland, the College will focus on partnerships that involve innovative technologies, health care, higher education, environmental sustainability, infrastructure development, and real estate development.

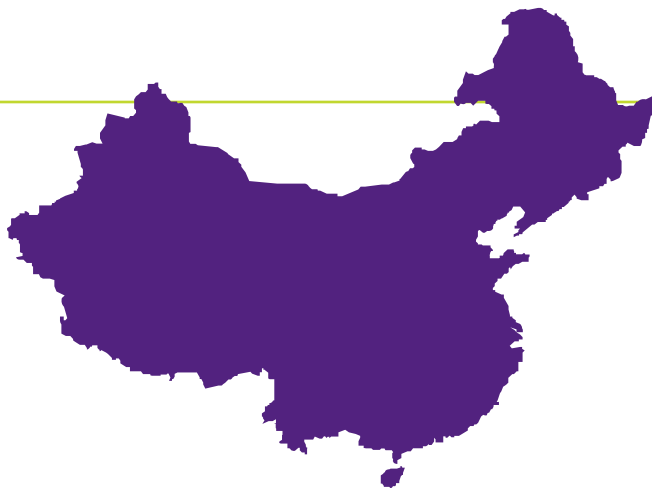
A new **Teacher Exchange Program** creates opportunities for middle school and high school teachers in Montgomery County and Daejeon, South Korea. The College will provide various teaching workshops, while MCPS will provide classroom teaching experiences. Partners include Montgomery County Public Schools, Daejeon Metropolitan Office of Education, and JG Business Link International.

Arab American Heritage Month

events included a student/alumni colloquium featuring essays, research papers, and other student-produced projects that focused on Arab and Arab-American issues. Theme: "Building a Culture of Respect: Enriching Minds, Engaging Hearts, Creating Global Community."

MC had the seventh largest number of international students enrolled of all the community colleges in the United States.

The College saw 1,877 international students take classes in 2014–2015. According to an Institute of International Education report, only two-year schools in Texas, California, and Washington had more international students enrolled during that time.



Global Humanities and Xian University

Sixteen faculty, staff, and administrators traveled to China this spring. The trip included cultural explorations of Beijing, Hong Kong, Macau, and a visit to Xian Province. The Global Humanities Institute has had an academic partnership with Xian University since 2013.

"Seminars Abroad" in China, India, and El Salvador are an important part of the Global Humanities Institute. They are funded through a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (2012 to 2018).

The visit to Xian University included tours of international student housing and art department studios, and musical performances by Xian University students. A colloquium on the role of the humanities in higher education and society was also held with administrators and faculty. Discussions featured an open exchange of information, ideas, and perspectives. Shared concerns included the need to instill social and global

responsibility through teaching, the need to prepare students to make ethical decisions, and the need to instill students with a curiosity for other peoples and cultures.

The success of these discussions paved the way for new possibilities in web conferencing and co-publishing. Enthusiasm was shown for "global classrooms," a Global Humanities Institute initiative that enables MC faculty to collaborate with colleagues abroad. In a "global classroom," students from two different classes in two different parts of the world are given the opportunity to engage in class discussions on a variety of topics.

Xian University and the Global Humanities Institute have also collaborated to provide more opportunities for MC faculty. The initiative, called "Sabbaticals Abroad," was realized with the support of CPOD this year. MC faculty can visit Xian University while on sabbatical, give lectures, participate in curriculum discussions, and visit classes.

What's NEW



Pete Vidal

“PIC-MC”

That's the new acronym for the Hercules Pinkney Life Sciences Park at Montgomery College, now called the Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology at MC. The name change reflects the development project's mission of fostering a more innovative workforce by partnering with the business community. Dr. Hercules Pinkney, for whom the complex is named, is president emeritus of Montgomery College. He played a central role in the early creation of the complex, which includes the development of the Bioscience Education Center, one of the cornerstones of PIC-MC.

Skype

Students can now interact with faculty or peer tutors using Skype, the free video chat application. Tutorials are available in economics, political science, psychology, history, and sociology. They are being offered by the Department of Humanities and the MC Learning Centers.

New Course In Demand

The **Clinical Trial Project Management** course continues to grow. Last September, 35 students (up from an average enrollment of 20) enrolled for the 13-week course. The class included many participants with advanced degrees, including two foreign-trained physicians. Even better news: Employers continue to pursue course graduates.

Rockville's Science West Building renovation (right) is on track to be ready for classes by the spring 2017 semester. Work also continues on the new North Parking Garage, which is expected to be ready for use this fall.

At **Takoma Park/Silver Spring**, the newly renovated **Pavilion Three Building** opened to faculty and students last January for the spring semester. The building, predominantly home to humanities disciplines, provided additional general purpose classrooms and offices for full-time humanities faculty. Pavilion Three is the companion building for the renovated Catherine F. Scott Commons building across New York Avenue. The College anticipates a minimum of LEED Silver certification for this building.



Courtesy Office of Facilities



Pete Vidal

ATD Invitation

“Nearly one-half of all students seeking higher education choose a community college. Fewer than half of those students actually finish what they start.” —*achievingthedream.org*

The College is now a participating member of the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network (ATD), a national organization comprising more than 200 higher education institutions, plus coaches, advisers, investors, and partners. Since 2004, the initiative has been helping more than four million community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, improve their chances to complete a degree.

“Our selection speaks volumes about the urgency and creativity with which we have been approaching the challenges of student achievement,” says President DeRionne Pollard. “We look forward to working closely with the coaches from ATD and improving our processes.”



MC in the News

"There is a notion of academic elitism where community colleges are considered inferior to other institutions but we reject that. At the end of the day, the outcomes of the colleges show there is little to prove they are inferior."

—Dr. DeRionne Pollard, Times of India, "Community Colleges Not Inferior: US Academic" (March 4, 2016)

"Regular software design probably pays a little better than game design," she says. "It might not be as fun or as cool, but it's more stable and steady."

—Professor Deborah Solomon, "Community Colleges Power Up Video Game Programs," US News and World Report (Jan. 25, 2016)

"Networking is an important part of a job search ... If you know someone who can provide an entrée, anyone who can tell you more about the company, if nothing else pick their brain—what is the best way to approach that company?"

—Rick Dottermusch, MC student in New York Times: "After Years Out of a Job, Older Workers Find a Way Back In" (Nov. 6, 2015)



Courtesy John Henderson

"Just being in the same room and being able to write music he prays to is unbelievably fulfilling."

—John Henderson, professor of music in a New York Times article. Henderson composed music for the Pope's visit to the United States last September.

"I've learned that it's important to give them a space where they can relax, learn to breathe in silence, be present. When they're more present, they're more open to learning."

—Professor Joanne Bagshaw, featured in the Washington Post Magazine in a story about a special way educators are helping students to focus and de-stress.



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Basketball Champs

Men's basketball captured their first MD JUCO title in 24 years under first-year Head Coach Keith Byrd. In the championship game, the Raptors faced the Harford Community College Fighting Owls and won 82-71. In the post-game awards ceremony, D'Angelo Vaughan, who averaged 21.3 points in the tournament, was named Tournament MVP. Patrick Smith, who averaged 14.3 points and 17.6 rebounds in the tournament, was named to the All-Tournament Team and First Team All-MD JUCO. Vaughan received Player of the Year and Byrd received MD JUCO Coach of the Year, as voted on by the MD JUCO coaches.



Michael Simone



Pete Vidal

Honoring Dr. Ackerman

The College Board of Trustees formally recognized the 43-year career of Dr. Judy E. Ackerman, vice president and provost of the Rockville Campus, renaming the campus's Math/Science Center in her honor last December. Ackerman began her career at the College in the Math Department in 1972. She was a leader across the College, in the community, and in her profession. She established the Judy E. and Michael Ackerman ACES Endowed Scholarship at the College, which supports students studying mathematics, computer science, or other STEM disciplines. Dr. Ackerman retired in December 2015.

Guyana Prize for Literature Award

Dr. Stanley Niamatali, professor of English, won the Guyana Prize for Literature in the category of Best First Book of Poetry. His book, *The Hinterlands*, centers around his memories of life on a sawmill along the Berbice River in eastern Guyana.



Ethiopia Findings

A group of 27 students and faculty traveled to Gondar, Ethiopia, in January as part of the Study Abroad Program. The 10-day study tour featured nine Montgomery College students conducting research on Ethiopia and presenting their findings before faculty and students at the University of Gondar. Other highlights of the tour included visiting the National Museum in Addis Ababa to view Lucy, the oldest human remains, and participating in the Timkat Festival, considered the country's most colorful, vibrant festival. (*Timkat*, in Amharic, means "baptism.")



LOOK BEFORE LEAPING

Risks, Liabilities, and Repair of Study Abroad in Higher Education

GREGORY F. MALVEAUX



Before You Travel

Dr. Gregory Malveaux's new book, *Look Before Leaping: Risks, Liabilities, and Repair of Study Abroad in Higher Education*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016) merges first-hand accounts, best practices, court trends and cases, and essential texts for a comprehensive study abroad in higher education.

"In light of recent events in Brussels," says Malveaux, "and with the odd political climate in which proposed restrictions are being placed

on interactions/walls being built between the US and people of the world, I believe that safety with overseas travel and studies, as well as liability concerns for institutions across the country, need to be at the forefront. I think this book comes at an important time."

Malveaux, English professor and collegewide Travel Abroad Program coordinator, has traveled to more than 60 countries and has led student, faculty, and community-based study abroad programs to Africa, Asia, Central America, South America, and Europe.

"This important guide is a must-read for students before they study abroad, for their parents who may not understand the risks, and for college program directors who get caught in damaging legal battles when their plans don't take dangers into account. Dr. Malveaux's research and case histories are sobering..."

—Ann Compton, former White House correspondent for ABC News

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Through the College's Lifelong Learning Institute, Montgomery County residents aged 50+ can take on new challenges and interests. Academic and personal interest courses challenge students of all ages—in art, politics, world cultures, financial planning, employment strategies... and so much more. Evening and weekend courses available at 18 locations across the county.

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Rachael Spiegel





Sole Searching

Reflexology
Promotes Good Health
from Head to Toe

BY
JILL FITZGERALD

P ictographs unearthed at the tomb of Ankhmahor, a physician around 2330 BC, show two seated men receiving massages on their hands and feet. Could the ancient Egyptians have been the first practitioners of the pain-relieving—and stress-reducing—remedy known as reflexology?

Reflexologists work from maps of pressure points on the feet and hands, which, in theory, will stimulate blood flow and nerve impulses that then trigger the release of endorphins, chemicals in the brain and nervous system that produce beneficial results, as well as retained toxins. Reflexology is designed to relax and balance the body, as well as stimulate the immune system so it functions at its optimum ability.

Reflexology is often confused with massage. While both treatments use touch, the approaches are very different. Massage therapy manipulates the soft tissues of the body, using specific techniques (for example, tapping, kneading, stroking, and friction) to relax the muscles. Massage therapists work from the outside in; in other words, they manipulate specific muscle groups to release tension.

Grace Gradi III

A wall painting in the tomb of Ankhmahor, also known as the “Tomb of the Physician,” that dates back to 2330 BC. Two men are depicted having work done on their feet and hands. Some are convinced that the nature of the therapy being depicted is reflexology and massage.



Lisa Tocci, a reflexologist at Timothy's Salon and Spa in Wintergreen Plaza in Rockville, says it takes a great deal of strength and endurance to work on people's bodies all day. She believes all her hard work will pay off if she can help customers relieve stress and pain—and show improvement in their condition.



Reflexology practitioners see themselves as working from the inside out, stimulating the nervous system to release tension.

Lisa Tocci '96, a reflexologist at Timothy's Salon and Spa in Wintergreen Plaza in Rockville, said, “Your body is like a human garbage disposal. Reflexology helps flush out and cleanse the system.” Tocci, who has practiced reflexology for more than six years, also holds a certificate in Thai massage therapy.

Tocci started Montgomery College in pursuit of a radiologic technology degree. She opted to finish with an AA in general studies. During the economic downturn in 2007, the granite counter top installer

she was working for went out of business. Tocci says it is ironic that job stress is what initially lured her to a career in reflexology.

Most Americans report feeling moderate to high stress levels, according to a survey conducted by the American Psychological Association in 2011. Money, work (concerns about job loss), and the economy are major sources. Studies now link chronic stress with cardiovascular problems like hypertension, coronary heart disease, and stroke.

Several studies funded by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health indicate that reflexology may have benefits in palliative care of people with



Grace Glathill

cancer. Studies also show that reflexology may reduce pain and psychological symptoms, such as anxiety and depression, and enhance relaxation and sleep.

"I love reflexology. I started going to Happy Feet [now part of Timothy's Salon and Spa] about six years ago when my sister passed away. I was so stressed out and I had not been sleeping. During my first session, I felt so relaxed I actually fell asleep," said Stacie Morton, a high school teacher in Prince George's County. She said she goes about twice a month, particularly in the wintertime, to reduce the stress of her job.

A recent article in the *Journal of Traditional and Complementary Medicine*, suggests reflexology is one of the ways to interrupt the pattern of repetitive stress that people usually have according to their lifestyle. They will operate more effectively with a number of reflexology sessions because the first application will diminish the stress operation and further sessions will improve the body condition. And, reflexology also allows the body to take time off from any stress in everyday life.

Tocci said she takes great pride in helping her customers relieve stress and pain—and even show improvement in pre-existing conditions. "I would like to think that I am helping people avoid more—and costlier—services." Many other practices combine reflexology with other similar alternative practices, like chiropractic treatment or acupuncture.

Reflexology treatments at Timothy's Salon and Spa start at \$30 for a 30-minute hands and feet only treatment. A 60-minute signature reflexology treatment, which includes a combination of hand, arm, and foot reflexology and back, shoulder, and neck Shiatsu massage, is \$45. Morton says the best thing about reflexology is she does not have to undress. Most people who seek reflexology treatments keep their clothes on, simply rolling up pant legs and shirtsleeves. "I have had massages before," she said, "but undressing makes me feel uncomfortable."

Because Morton is such a proponent of reflexology, she frequently purchases gift certificates for her friends and family. "I encouraged my son and his girlfriend and my daughter and son-in-law to try a session. After that, I planned a surprise trip to Timothy's Salon and Spa for my boyfriend's birthday. Now, it is our sanctuary." ■



Grace Gladhill

Chanh "Timothy" Tran's three businesses in Wintergreen Plaza in Rockville provide full-service hair, makeup, reflexology, massage, facial, and nail treatments.

Finding Inspiration

Downturns in the economy can mean the demise of a small business. But Chanh "Timothy" Tran '96 found a way to channel stress into success in 2010. During the sluggish economy, he traveled to his native Vietnam, where he treated himself to a session of reflexology. Not only did it prove to be therapeutic, it gave him a idea for a new business. Shortly after his return to the states, he opened Happy Feet reflexology in Wintergreen Plaza on Rockville Pike. "I could see people were struggling," Tran said, "I thought reflexology was an affordable way for people to manage their stress through soothing massage."

Reflexology provided a business expansion opportunity for Tran, having opened Nails by Timothy in Wintergreen Plaza in 2000 with two stations and pedicure chairs he refurbished himself. Nearly 16 years—

and 33 employees—later, his ventures also include Timothy's Salon and Spa, which offers full-service hair, makeup, massage, facial, and nail treatments.

In addition to running the three businesses, Tran serves as receptionist and nail technician at Nails by Timothy. "This is a very competitive atmosphere," said Tran. "I have to consider how skillfully and efficiently each technician works, how to help each technician make a good living, and most important, how to keep my customers, some of whom are walk-ins, happy." Judging by the robust business and the lack of employee turnover, Tran successfully manages all aspects of the business.

"I just love him," said Genyfer Archila, receptionist at Timothy's Salon and Spa. "He is very professional, but he is very devoted to his employees."

—Jill Fitzgerald



Artist in Residence

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.”

—Pablo Picasso

When Raj Bunnag '07 was young he doodled constantly—in notebooks, on his school papers, on anything in reach. Later, as an art student at Montgomery College, he honed printmaking skills—drawing, carving, inking, and using various methods to reproduce his doodles, which, by then, were conceptual and elaborate designs.

“Raj was one of those students I’d find waiting in the mornings for the print shop door to be opened,” says Art Professor John Carr, “and he was often the last to leave in the evenings. Sometimes he’d follow me to my truck, asking questions the entire way.”

Carr is proud of his former student’s accomplishments: Bunnag earned a BFA in printmaking from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), cum laude. He helps run a fine art, community-based print shop in North Carolina, participates in juried printmaking exhibitions, teaches printmaking, and mentors upcoming artists. This spring, he was the featured artist at RUNAWAY, a Durham shop/gallery. The fact that Bunnag is making a career in fine art printing is what impresses Carr most: “You don’t see jobs in the world of printmaking advertised in the *Washington Post*.”

The Art Department at Rockville invited Bunnag back to campus last February as the



Opening the residency, Bunnag’s Artist Talk drew a crowd interested in printmaking.



A linocut block with Bunnag’s demon sketch transferred and partially carved. The finished image is shown above (light-blue flag at far left).



Rai Bunnag

By Diane Bosser | Photography by Pete Vidal

Bunnag and art students collaborated on a final project akin to Tibetan prayer flags. The flags were displayed overhead in the Rockville gallery for the closing reception.

2016 Artist in Residence. “We selected him,” says Carr, “because of his unique skills and techniques, and his ability to engage students and get them excited about the proposed project.”

During the residency, Bunnag worked with students in printmaking classes: World Woodcut and Relief Traditions, Printmaking Lithography, Intaglio Printmaking, and Monotype Workshop. He collaborated with them on a project inspired by Tibetan prayer flags, connecting printmaking to multiculturalism and global awareness. The whole event would culminate in a gallery installation.

“Getting people interested in the arts is the best part about teaching,” he said. When John Carr called about the residency at Rockville, I was excited to come back to where it all started—where I really started to find out about this archaic art form—and where I found my artistic direction.”

During the first half of the three-week program, Bunnag demonstrated techniques for making linocuts, inking, and printing, and then worked with students to carve blocks for printing. During the second half, art professors Carr and Amanda Miller held open studios for all ARTT classes to print 10"x 12" flags using five pre-carved blocks: a 3"x 4" carrier image in the center

surrounded by four smaller (3"x 3") corner images, a variety of solid-color fabric, special printing jigs, and black oil-based inks.

At the outset, Bunnag gave an Artist's Talk in the gallery where his work was exhibited. At the closing reception, gallerygoers filled the space, which was by then festooned with the multicolored flags. Each one was unique, and overall they successfully integrated the visual influences of traditional prayer flags and contemporary icons and images. The flags were exhibited a second time on campus during the annual Art Walk, an outdoor art experience produced by the Art Department each April. ■



Chris Jacques

Bunnag demonstrates the moving picture machine, called a cranky, which he built to showcase his work as an interactive print sculpture. The cranky holds a roll of paper, in this case his *Out of the Jungle It Came* linocut, wound around posts inside. Turning the crank, Bunnag displays his art work in motion.



Raj Bunnag

The linocut (above) and print (opposite) shows the carving skill and intricate details in Bunnag's work. *Murder Cartel Deathride* 2015, linocut, 40"x 20"

“The series is a playful social commentary on a serious subject—the illegal drug industry.”

—Raj Bunnag

As an art student at Maryland Institute College of Art, Raj Bunnag lived and worked in one of the country's most disadvantaged cities: Baltimore. Outside of his campus and his student activities, he saw the city's abandoned houses and blight. Drugs and violence were obviously responsible. Raised a Buddhist in Montgomery County by Thai immigrant parents who provided medical and charitable assistance in their homeland, Bunnag likened Baltimore to a third-world country. After moving to North Carolina with his wife, he channeled his emotional responses into a print series he calls *March of the Druggernauts: Fantastical Manifestations of the War on Drugs*.

“The series,” says Bunnag, “is a playful social commentary on a serious subject—the illegal drug industry.” Conceptually, the scenes show compassion for humanity while hurling accusations against evil forces. Death—skeletons, grim reapers, and chains, smoke and flames—dance across his linocut prints in comic-book style—grinning and devious. They are frightening only in what they represent: real hell in real neighborhoods and lives.

In his colorful screen-print series of food gods, Bunnag showcases his comedic sensibility, his love of Hindu mythology, and his skill in printmaking. *Soup Salad Goddess*, a 15"x 20" screen print, required more than 10 layers to fully color. The fantasy continues in his *Dessert Pastry God*, *Grilled Warrior*, *Curry Demon*, *Sauce Wiz*, and *Master of the Deep Fryer*—each evokes equal measures of Eastern flavor and American farce.

“I usually do four or five sketches of a mockup,” says Bunnag. “I know in my head what I want.”



MARCH OF THE DRUGERNAUGHTS

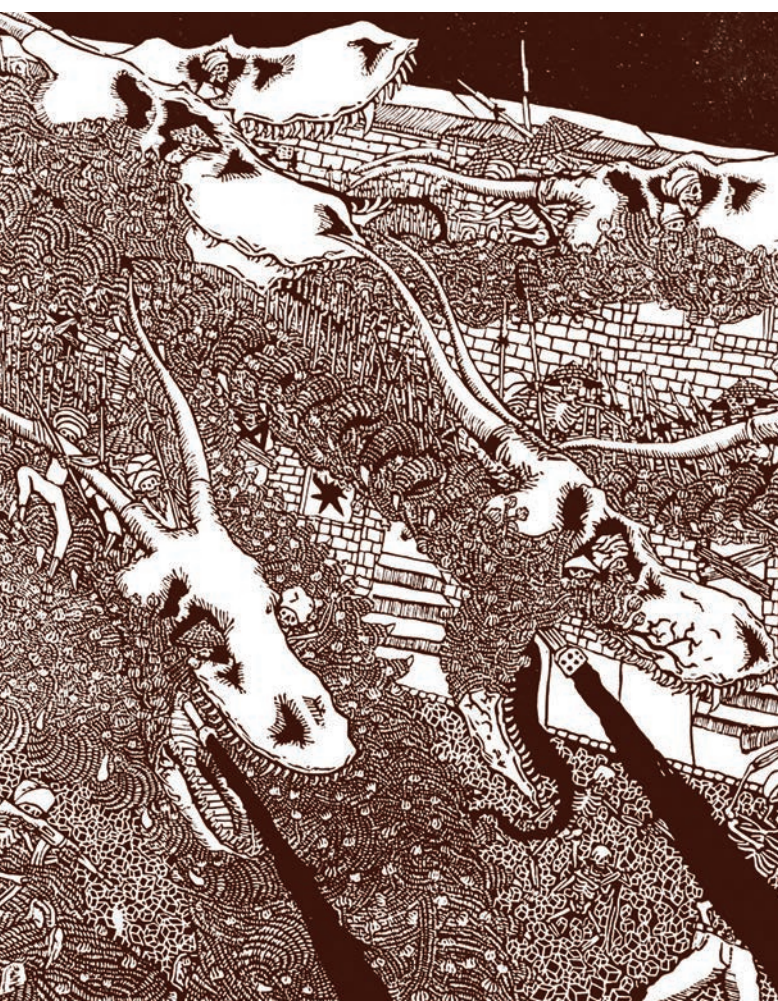
FANTASTICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

The Exhibition



“ I like conceptual art, but I want it to be accessible for everyone—from an art history major to the average Joe. ”

—Raj Bunnag



The devil in the details, from works: *Opium Abomination*, linocut, 20" x 40" (left), *Soup Salad Goddess* (above), screenprint, and *Grilled Warrior* (below).





Bunnag's Maryland Institute College of Art final project (above), *Out of the Jungle It Came*, 2' x 8' linocut, took six months to complete.

Once the drawing is on the block, however, he allows himself to sketch free form around his initial design, what he calls the centerpiece. He continues to build the images outward.

"This stage," he says, "ultimately leads to an insatiable need to carve."

The *March of the Druggernauts: Fantastical Manifestations of the War on Drugs* and the *Kitchen Gods* series showcase Bunnag's carving skills: the details are obsessive, minute, and intricate. Using a v-gouge, a hand-held carving tool that dates back to the late 15th century, he digs into the linoleum (his preferred medium), making tiny furrows and ruts. He controls the tool's depth and direction, deciding which areas to excavate—these are the areas that create negative space—and which areas to leave as the printing surface.

"It's a long process," he says. "You don't want to rush it."

Murder Cartel Death Ride, a linocut print featuring a ravenous Godzilla-like creature surrounding by greedy machines and evil creatures, took Bunnag a full year to complete. His MICA thesis, *Out of the Jungle It Came*, a 2' x 8' linocut, took six months from start to finish. Later works have taken him several years from start to finish.

After carving, Bunnag rolls ink onto the surface using a brayer (roller), adds pressure, and *voilà!* the image transfers. Peeling the cloth or paper away after each pressing, and viewing the reverse image for the first time is always exciting. Each print is a mirror-image of its original, but is also a handmade original—even though it is a

reproduction, there is always the potential for small deviations.

While lost in carving—Bunnag's universe becomes simultaneously riddled with ruin and whimsy, bones and gods, black ink and negative space. He forgets to eat, sleep, and check the time. As a working man, he can no longer afford too many all-nighters; he has to open a print shop and show others how it's done. For him, there is an endless supply of art out there just needing some ink and a good press. ■

About the Artist

Bunnag grew up in Montgomery County with strong ties to his family's native Thailand. He earned a BFA in printmaking from Maryland Institute College of Art (2012). Since moving to Durham, NC, with his wife, Raina, Bunnag has enjoyed working with his "print hero," Bill Fick, at Fick's community-based fine art print shop, Supergraphic. In addition to producing his own work, he works on commission pieces, does freelance printing work, and teaches workshops, including short-term courses for Duke University's DukeCreate program.



House of

By Diane Bosser

Photography by Diane Bosser



Blair



Elizabeth Blair Lee and James L. Blair, two of the four Blair children, were prominent in 19th century Washington politics and social circles. Portraits by Thomas Sully. Courtesy of Blair House, US Department of State.

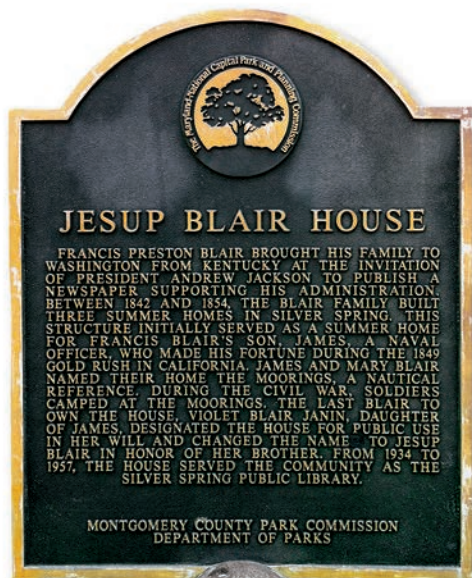
Students at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus amble past it, generally paying more attention to their cell phones than the architecture. Georgia Avenue traffic motors past it, coughing out carbon monoxide alongside it. Birds perch atop it, eyeing the old-growth trees and park visitors nearby. With time and vacancy, the old house at 900 Jesup Blair Drive receded into the landscape. But efforts by the Parks Department and Montgomery County may bring the Jesup Blair House back into use.



The Blair House, then called The Moorings (ca. 1850), as it appeared prior to the architectural changes made in 1935.



The view from Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus's pedestrian path shows the home's rambling architecture. In 1864, Confederate General Jubal A. Early used the Blair property for his headquarters during his operations against Washington.



The ca. 1850 “Moorings,” also called the Jesup Blair House, was one of three summer residences built by Francis Preston Blair Sr.’s family. This stately home was built specifically to house his son, James, and James’ wife, Mary Blair. Francis Preston Blair (1791–1876) was a journalist, founding member of the Republican Party, and founder and editor of *The Washington Globe*.

Originally from Kentucky, Blair Sr. and wife, Violette (Eliza) set up residence (Blair House) on Lafayette Square, across from the White House (1837) with their four children: Montgomery, James, Frank, and Elizabeth. Their home served as an informal meeting place for President

Jackson’s unofficial advisors, referred to as the Kitchen Cabinet. Later, President Lincoln crossed the street to consult with his neighbor, Blair. It remains in use today by the US president as a guest house for visiting heads of state.

Blair and sons held high offices/ranks in Washington politics and the military in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Montgomery Blair (1813–1883), a West Point graduate, practiced law and later became US postmaster general under President Lincoln. He represented freed slave Dred Scott during the 1856 Federal Supreme Court case. James Blair (b. 1819) became a US Naval officer, then West Coast lumber company owner. Frank Blair

“Blair Sr. was enamored by the abundance of natural resources in lower Montgomery County, such as a mica-flecked spring that inspired the name of his country estate, Silver Spring.”

(b. 1821), practiced law, entered politics, achieved rank of major general in the US Army, then became a state representative (Missouri). Their sister, Elizabeth (b. 1818), married Samuel Philips Lee, a US Navy commander in the Union Army during the Civil War (Lee was third cousin to Robert E. Lee). She maintained social prominence, while the Blair men engaged in political rivalries. Proof of their influence remains in the many public buildings and institutions bearing the Blair (and Montgomery) name.

From Country Escape to Community House

“Blair Sr. was enamored by the abundance of natural resources in lower Montgomery County, such as a mica-flecked spring that inspired the name of his country estate, Silver Spring,” says Jamie F. Kuhns, senior historian for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery County Department of Parks. He acquired a tract of land in northwest Washington in 1840, which spanned close to 1,000 acres and extended across both sides of Georgia Avenue, reaching into lower Montgomery County.

In the mid-1850s family members built three summer residences on their Maryland property: “Silver Spring” (ca. 1842), Blair Sr. and Eliza’s home; “Falkland” (1854), built for the Montgomery Blair family; and “The Moorings” (ca. 1850), built by Blair and his daughter-in-law, Mary Serena Jesup Blair. This third home, known today as the Jesup Blair House, is the only surviving Blair home.

The once-grand house had 13 rooms, several chimneys, and a bathroom. When Mary and her children—Violet, Jesup, and Lucy—lived there, the house was a Greek Revival structure with modest Victorian trim and a front porch. When Mary’s daughter, Violet Blair Janin (1850–1932, married to Judge Albert C. Janin), inherited The Moorings in 1914, she was ensconced in Washington social circles and charitable organizations. She bequeathed the

house and its 14-plus acres to the state of Maryland, stipulating that it remain in public use and be renamed the Jesup Blair House, in honor of her brother who predeceased her in 1902.

Its first use was as a public library. In 1934, the state commissioned architect Howard Cutler to convert it for that purpose. Cutler’s other public building designs included Montgomery Blair High School, Chevy Chase Elementary School, and Bethesda/Chevy Chase High School. He removed the home’s front porch and Victorian trim, following the Colonial Revival movement of the 1930s. His design work is what remains today—and what earned the house a nomination for placement on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

When the library closed in 1957, the house was repurposed for other community needs: as a draft board and community center, an apartment building for a park groundskeeper, the Chelsea School, and transitional housing for single parents. In 1985, it was designated and placed on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Inevitably, it was closed for repairs in 2008.

“The building is being stabilized, mold and lead paint abated, but the inside of the building still has to be restored and rehabilitated,... says Kuhns. Walls, floors, and ceilings need care and repair. An entirely new HVAC system along with electricity and plumbing need to be installed.”

The County Council has supported the project with ongoing funding of the structural work. Project managers estimate it will take two years to bring the building back to usable condition. The Parks Department’s goal is to return it to a leaseable condition and is working to form partnerships for use. Those may include Montgomery College, the Silver Spring Historical Society (housing for its archives), and a community room restored to an 1850 appearance. ■

BLAIR PARK

In September 1934, Montgomery County officially opened Blair Park. The 14-acre swath envelops the historic Jesup Blair House and includes sports fields and an amphitheater. Local citizens, history lovers, and green-space enthusiasts, including the Silver Spring Historical Society and civic groups, treasure the park’s 250 trees. Among its 42 tree species are 100 historic forest trees, some more than 200 years old. The Department of Parks has planted more than 100 new trees and installed designated paths for patrons and students—which prevent soil compaction above tree roots.

Local devotion and the College’s need for more space clashed briefly in 2000, when the College floated a request to build on a small northeast section of the property. Objectors organized and blocked the proposal, which included removal of 43 trees from the park. MC instead purchased the old Giant Foods Heidi Bakery production and distribution facility on King Street to build The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Arts Center Building and a 350-car parking garage.

For more information about the Jesup Blair House and the Blair family, visit the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus and neighboring Blair Park, or take a virtual tour of the family’s Washington, DC, home at blairhouse.org.





The Music Man

By David Frey

Photography by Rick Reinhard





In February 2015, listeners to NPR's *Jazz Night in America* got a taste of something Washington, DC, jazz lovers have enjoyed for years: the innovative sound of trombonist Reginald Cyntje.

Cyntje was taking a risk when he stood center stage in the Bohemian Caverns that January night and blew the first baritone notes on his horn. His band would be playing material from his not-yet-released album, *Spiritual Awakening*, his fourth and, some critics say, his best album. This was music the band had never rehearsed. The first time the musicians would play it would be here, in this cave-like club, before a national audience, but Cyntje wanted the freshest sounds they could produce.

What unfolded was magic: a blending of contemporary jazz with Caribbean influences, from funky reggae bass lines to calypso steel pans to the improvisational sound of quelbe, the homegrown music of the Virgin Islands where Cyntje was raised.

"I grew up in the Caribbean," says Cyntje, 40, an adjunct music professor at the College's Germantown Campus. Cyntje lives in Silver Spring with his wife and three children. He has close-cropped hair, a hint of a goatee, and a taste for bright-patterned shirts. "I grew up hearing reggae and calypso music. My elders always mixed jazz with their cultural heritage."

His music blends all the music he's come into contact with, he says. "One of my vocalists said it sounds like Bach meets Frank Zappa."

This unique sound has won Cyntje accolades. The DC jazz blog CapitalBop named *Spiritual Awakening* one of the top albums of 2015, and his previous album, *Elements of Life*, one of the top albums of 2014. The *Washington City Paper* named him the best jazz composer of 2015 and regularly lists him as the city's top jazz trombonist. WAMU public radio's music website Bandwidth named his song "Rejoice" one of its 50 favorite DC songs last year.

"He's one of those guys that makes DC a sort of hidden treasure for jazz," says Giovanni Russonello, founder and director of CapitalBop. "Reginald has forged for himself a really crucial role in the DC-Maryland scene."

It didn't happen overnight. Born on the Caribbean island of Dominica and raised on St. Thomas, in the US Virgin Islands, Cyntje took to the trombone in seventh grade. Most of the girls went for flutes and clarinets. The boys went for trumpets and saxophones. Cyntje was drawn to the trombone in part because it was a different, and in part because it was an instrument he had seen men around him play.

He practiced furiously. Cyntje started eighth grade in the last chair of the school band's trombone section. In three weeks, he took the first chair. The next year he was playing in a university band.

In school he learned classical music, but when a friend lent him a Miles Davis album, he fell for jazz. His father started taking him to clubs where he listened as longtime island musicians mixed Caribbean stylings with mainstream jazz.



"I fell in love with jazz, so that was my path."

—Reginald Cyntje

◀ **2015 was a big year for Music Professor Reginald Cyntje. His album *Spiritual Awakening* was named a 2015 Top Album (CapitalBop blog). The *Washington City Paper* named him the best jazz composer of 2015 and regularly lists him as the city's top jazz trombonist. WAMU public radio's Bandwidth named his song "Rejoice" one of its favorite 50 DC songs of last year.**





▲ A fixture in area jazz clubs, Cyntje recently played with the Tim Whalen Septet at Twins Jazz in DC. By day, Cyntje teaches Jazz History and History of Popular Music at Germantown, and runs the Jegna School of Music in Silver Spring.

"I fell in love with jazz," Cyntje says, "so that was my path."

That path brought him to the mainland. To Boston, where he studied at the Berklee College of Music between 1993 and 1995, and then dropped out to play professionally. To New York, where he cut his chops in the city's jazz clubs. To Washington, DC, where the city's diverse cultures seemed to mix more than he felt they did in New York.

Eventually, in 2011, Cyntje enrolled at Montgomery College, where he wrapped up his general education requirements before transferring to the University of the District of Columbia to get his bachelor's degree in jazz studies. Having previously served in the National Guard, Cyntje enlisted and spent three years in the Army at Maryland's Aberdeen Proving Ground, where he played in its well-regarded jazz band. He earned his master's in jazz from the University of Maryland in 2015, having already become a fixture in DC's jazz clubs.

In his Jazz History and History of Popular Music classes, Cyntje has an easy rapport with students, whether he's talking about Beethoven or bebop, the Grateful Dead or grunge. He likes to arrange the chairs in what he calls a "circle of love" to promote discussion. Being a musician helps him in the classroom, he says. A musician

has to connect with the audience, he says. A teacher has to connect with the students.

As one student hands in a test and walks out the door, Cyntje says goodbye and calls him "doctor," as he does to many of his students. It's his way of inspiring students to be their best, he says.

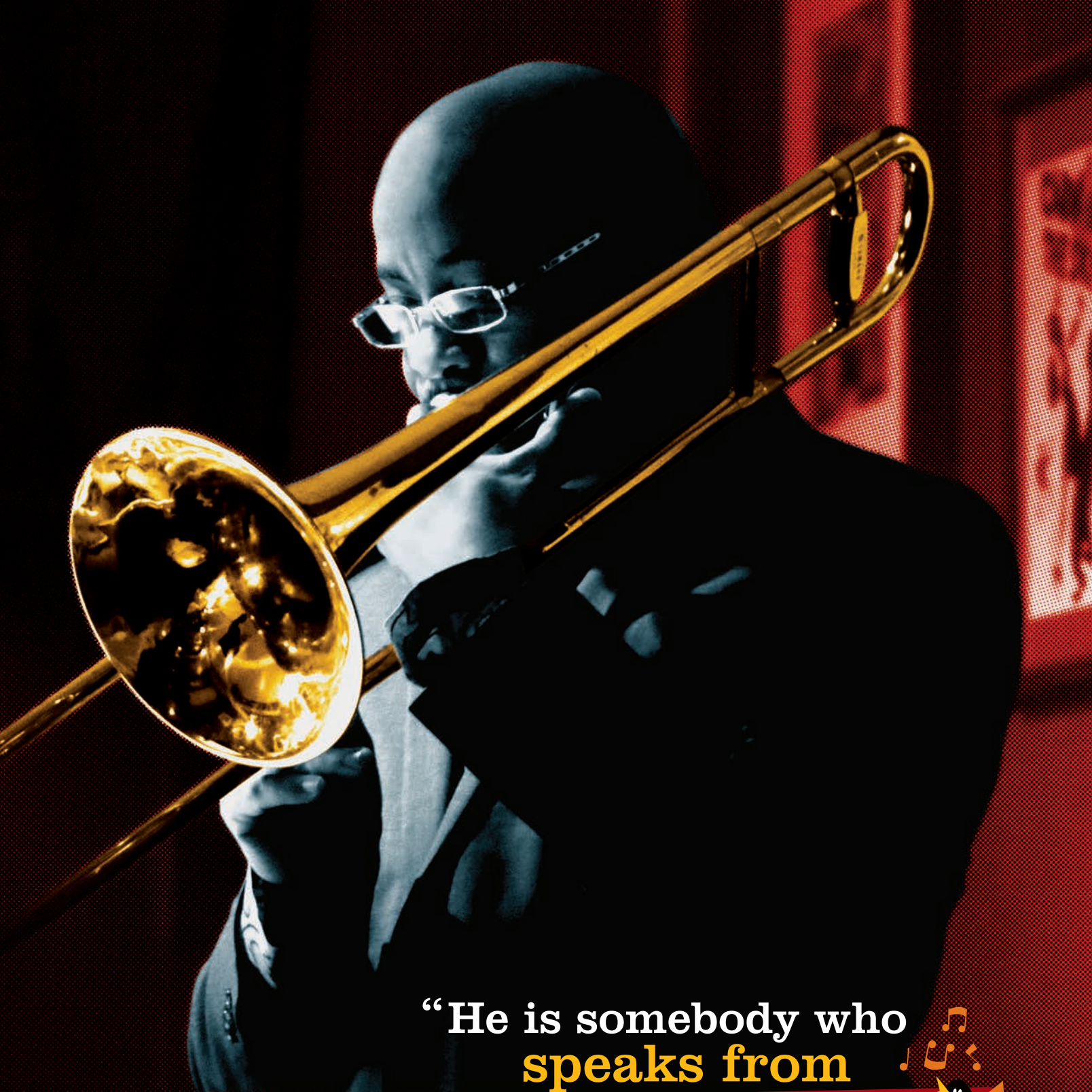
"Doctor," the student says, smiling. "I like that."

A sense of spirituality and activism infuses his jazz, and his teaching career, too. In Silver Spring, he runs the Jegna School of Music, where professional musicians meet one on one with students. It's part of the "each one teach one" philosophy he was raised on, Cyntje says. The name Jegna comes from an Amharic word translated as a bearer of culture—someone who passes cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.

That notion comes across in Cyntje's gentle islander patois, and in his music. As his trombone played across the room that January night at Bohemian Caverns, the cultural traditions of the Virgin Islands seemed to fill the room and reach out across the radio to NPR listeners.

"He is somebody who speaks from the heart," Russonello says—a quality that seems to move Cyntje's listeners as much as his students. ■





“He is somebody who
speaks from
the heart.”



—Giovanni Russonello
Founder and Director of CapitalBop

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Send your updates and photos via e-mail to alumni@montgomerycollege.edu or the online "Submit Your News" form at montgomerycollege.edu/insights.

1950s

Robert Hinkle '51 was in the transitional year when the Bliss Electrical School's program became Montgomery Junior College's technical electrical major. He writes to note that Milestone Moments from last fall's issue shows how far the College has come.

1970s



Courtesy Jerry Cohen

Jerome "Jerry" Cohen '70 is a Rockville-based business and commercial real estate broker. He previously was a DC-based

government contractor and alternative banking services entrepreneur.



Courtesy Michael Krawic

Michael Krawic '75 recently appeared in *Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension* and has completed filming *Lookin' Up*, starring Steve

Guttenberg. He also teaches English as a second language to adult learners in Los Angeles.

2000s

Mauricio Giron '03 will graduate with an MBA from the Yale School of Management this May. A licensed CPA in the state of Maryland, prior to graduate school, he worked for Pricewaterhouse-Coopers. Mauricio writes: "I owe so much of my career and academic success to MC. As an alum, I'd gladly make myself available to provide guidance to any MC students interested in accounting or finance."

Paola Moya '05 was named one of the "Top 40 Under 40" by the *Washington Business Journal*.



Courtesy marshallmoya.com



Brian V. Jones

Singer-songwriter **Bill Vaughan '73** (left) joined with saxophonist James F. Cotton to celebrate their CD release, *Songs from the Valley*, inspired by themes of the Shenandoah Valley. On the same day, Bill's wife, **Laurel Vaughan '71**, held a gallery talk on her exhibition, *Seeing the Forest and the Trees*, in the Rockville Campus's Media Arts Gallery. Bill and Laurel met while studying at Rockville. Their recent appearances were supported by the College's Arts Institute.

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For more information, contact Greg Enloe, director of alumni relations and annual giving, at 240-567-7977 or gregory.enloe@montgomerycollege.edu.



Jean Francois Onana
First-Year Student



Courtesy Oula Alrifai

Oula Alrifai '09, a Syrian refugee, recently became a US citizen. "I'm Syrian by birth and American by choice. After 10 years of being a political asylee because of death threats by the Assad regime, I finally feel safe. I pray that my people can find the refuge, safety, peace, and love that I have," she writes.

Alrifai is a Syria analyst working at Navanti Group on Syrian humanitarian and development projects. She is also cofounder and executive director of SANAD (Syrian-American Network for Aid and Development), an NGO dedicated to children, education, and Syrian refugees.

Yusef Najafi '09 is a motion GFX designer for Comedy Central in New York. He recently created 30 animated images to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Nintendo's Super Mario Bros. video game. His work was the focus of a BuzzFeed exposé, which got a nod from HULU as a "Must See" article.

2010s

Sarah Lasko '10 will star as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* national tour.

Jeff Salmore '16, Dan Mori '08, Helen Garcia-Alton '12, Beau Hamilton '11, and Cindy King '12 reunited in Salt Lake City. They joined MC's head theatre carpenter, Roger Bridges, and Professor Scott Hengen at the Institute for Theatre Technology's national conference.

Jeff is technical supervisor for a theatre improv group in DC and the intern coordinator for the Flying V theatre company in Bethesda. Dan is production specialist at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre in Rockville. Helen consults regionally as a theatre lighting designer and programmer, and is an education intern for Vectorworks, which produces computer-aided design programs used by schools and theatres. Beau is pursuing an MFA in costume design at the University of California-Irvine. Cindy recently finished stage-managing Adventure Theatre's tour of *Caps for Sale*, which went to an off-Broadway run in New York.



Courtesy David Phillips

Theo Eftimiades '11 is the founder of StudentCircle, a Seattle-based tutoring company. "I turned my life around at MC," he writes. "I received a top flight education and MC offers great resources. I love MC."

Luis Gonzales '11 earned his master's in electrical engineering from Georgia Tech and plans to pursue a PhD. He thanks MC's financial aid staff for their support and for staying in touch.

Marcel Ngako '14 was a co-winner of George Washington University Hospital's Surgical Tech of the Year award.

Kimberlee N. Green '14 earned her BA in political science at UMBC, where she was secretary and a founding member of the Moot Court Club. She credits MC professors Kurt Borkman and Jennifer Haydel for preparing her for her classes at UMBC.

In Memoriam

Gail W. Jenkins

March 23, 2016

She was a biology professor at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus until her retirement in 2014.

William J. Malstrom, Bliss '47

March 23, 2016

Nancy Lee '75

December 27, 2015

Theresa Grubbs

November 11, 2015

She was a cashier at the Rockville Campus until her retirement in 1988.

Lionel W. Nelson

August 7, 2014

He was a speech and drama professor at the Takoma Park Campus from 1955 until his retirement in 1972.

Paul R. Towle '92

January 9, 2014

Juliet Guroff '78

August 24, 2012

Richard L. Yauger '58

June 14, 2012

Marita Hoerauf '74

November 11, 2009



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**New Montgomery
College website to
launch on July 4.**

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