

# Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center

*Programs 2006-2007*

ARTHUR LEVITT PUBLIC AFFAIRS CENTER



# Hamilton

This year, Levitt Center programs continued to engage hundreds of Hamilton students, offering them opportunities to research and experience first hand many issues of public affairs. Levitt Center-sponsored projects spanned a wide variety of topics and were both local and international in scope. Some students tutored refugees in English and assisted with their resettlement in Utica, while others helped low income tax payers claim the earned income tax credit, while yet another group of students learned about sustainable development through a trip to Guatemala as part of a Levitt Center sponsored independent study. These are just a few examples of the learning opportunities made possible by the Levitt Center this year.



*Levitt Fellow Josh Agins '07 describes his summer research to Arthur Levitt Jr. during a poster session in October*

Some important initiatives this year were several projects focused on the issue of sustainability. In conjunction with the Blue Moon Fund, the Levitt Center funded a national youth poll that investigated the extent to which high school students were informed about global warming. Several Levitt Fellow projects were devoted to sustainability and environmental policy issues, while faculty research projects were also completed with the assistance of the Levitt Center. Work on sustainability initiatives will continue in the coming year with a national household survey conducted in the Fall of 2007.

*The mission of the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center is to strengthen and support the study of public affairs at Hamilton College. The goals of the Center are:*

*To encourage students to address public affairs in their classes and research.*

*To create opportunities for students to become involved in public affairs.*

*To encourage faculty, particularly in the social sciences, to address public affairs in their own research and in collaborative research with Hamilton students.*

Finally, the Levitt Center was pleased to host a visit by Arthur Levitt, Jr. in October. Mr. Levitt was an honored guest at a Levitt Fellow poster session and spoke to an overflowing Events Barn about "The Paradox of an Ethical Society."

Levitt Center programs give students opportunities to extend ideas beyond the classroom, and the students often report that these experiences play a critical role in their education. The following pages provide more detail on many of these activities.

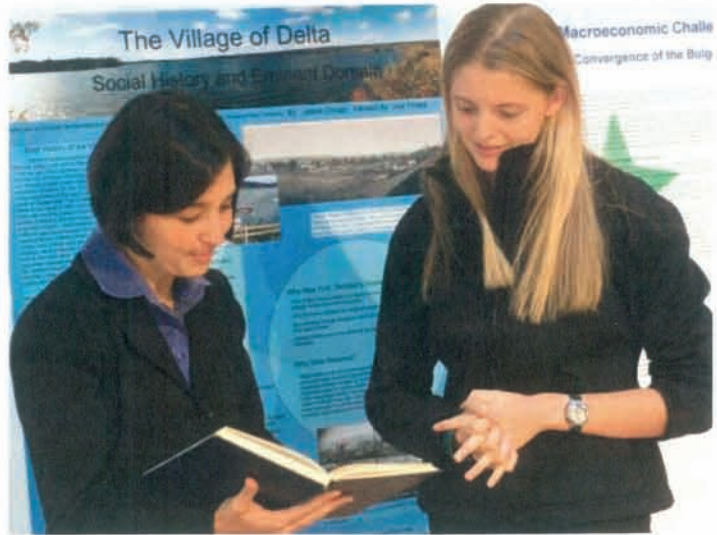
Ann Owen  
Director, Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center



# Levitt Fellows Summer 2006

The Levitt Research Fellows Program supports student-faculty collaborative research on issues related to public affairs. Students selected for the program receive a \$3,500 summer stipend and a research budget of up to \$500. At the end of the summer, students write papers, create large-format posters outlining their research, and participate in a poster session during the fall semester. Several students continue their work during the academic year, incorporating it into their senior thesis. Others pursue their research further, developing formal papers for publication in scholarly journals.

In October 2006, 14 Levitt Fellows had the opportunity to present their research to Arthur Levitt Jr., who established the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center in honor of his father, the late Arthur Levitt Sr.



*Jessie Clough '07 (right) and her faculty advisor Professor Lisa Trivedi (left) compare notes during October's Levitt Fellows poster session*

## *Current Levitt Council*

- Ann Owen**, Director of the Levitt Center and Associate Professor of Economics
- Douglas Ambrose**, Sidney Wertimer, Jr. Associate Professor of History
- Erol Balkan**, James L. Ferguson Professor of Economics
- Steve Ellingson**, Assistant Professor of Sociology
- George (Tom) Jones**, Professor of Archaeology
- Tara McKee**, Assistant Professor of Psychology
- Sharon Rivera**, Assistant Professor of Government
- Rick Werner**, John Stewart Kennedy Professor of Philosophy
- Rob Martin**, Assistant Professor of Economics
- Paul Gary Wyckoff**, Associate Professor of Government and Director of the Public Policy Program
  
- ex officio*
- Judith Owens-Manley**, Associate Director for Community Research
- Sharon Topi**, Levitt Center Administrator

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# Levitt Summer Research Fellows 2006

**Joshua Agins '06** spent his summer researching the legal status of environmental citizen suits. His interest in the topic stemmed from his experience as a participant in Hamilton's program in Washington, D.C., where he worked with the Environmental and Natural Resources Division in the Department of Justice. Agins, who worked with Visiting Assistant Professor of Government Peter Cannavo, began his research with an examination of the 1972 case of "Sierra Club vs. Morton" to determine how the Supreme Court has applied individual standing to sue in environmental citizen suits. He then focused on the opinions of newly-appointed Supreme Court justices to determine how, if at all, their views differed from the justices they replaced. "It's a great chance to go in depth about something that I am interested in," Josh explained.

**Tamim Akiki '08** worked with Erol Balkan, James L. Ferguson Professor of Economics, examining "The Role of the Central Bank in a Small Economy", using his home country of Lebanon as a case study. His goal was to "explore the various monetary policy options for a small open economy and then apply economic theory to evaluate the current objectives of the country's central bank." Because of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, Akiki's plan to interview professors in Beirut was interrupted. However, Tamim was able to witness first-hand how Lebanon's central bank dealt with the economic effects of the war.



**Riada Asimovic '07** spent her summer in the Balkans studying talks organized by the international community between Serbia and Albania, in the hope of determining whether the two groups would ever come to consensus regarding Kosovo. The title of her research project was "The Future Status of Kosovo: Will the International Community be able to find Consensus between Albanian Aspirations for Independence and Serbian Determination to Guard Kosovo and its Sovereignty?" Riada, who is a native of Kosovo, also traveled to Belgrade, Serbia; and Pristina, Kosovo to conduct interviews. Alan Cafruny, Henry Platt Bristol Professor of International Affairs served as her faculty advisor.



**YiYang Cao '09** used his Levitt Fellowship to research water pollution in China. His interest in the topic was prompted by an industrial accident in 2006, which dumped toxic chemicals into a major Chinese river. YiYang's goal was to raise awareness of a dire problem China faces, which he calls "a huge threat to [China's] growth potential." Cao worked with William R. Kenan Professor of Government Cheng Li on his project.



**Jessie Clough '07** brought her Levitt research close to home this summer with a history project exploring the village of Delta, NY (near Rome). Her interest in the history of Delta began with the discovery of diaries in her home attic. The diaries belonged to Daniel Bork, one of the last occupants of the village before it was flooded to create an extension of the Barge Canal. In 1908, the Barge Canal Commission called for the evacuation of Delta to make way for a reservoir (now Delta Lake), which was filled in 1916. Jessie set out to discover what happened to the residents of Delta after they were displaced, and to examine the social repercussions of the Commission's decision. Under the supervision of Assistant Professor of History Lisa Trivedi, and with enthusiastic support of Rome, NY, Clough delved into local history.



# Levitt Summer Research Fellows



**Timothy Eddy '07** concentrated his research on relations between the U.S. and Uzbekistan, and its implications on U.S. foreign policy and security overseas. According to Eddy, U.S.-Uzbek relations are of significant importance because Uzbekistan allows the U.S. to use military bases near the border of Afghanistan. Working with Assistant Professor of Government Sharon Rivera, Tim examined what he calls the “complicated and contradictory” nature of U.S.-Uzbek relations in light of Uzbekistan’s “highly undemocratic regime” and the U.S.’s history of supporting democracy internationally.

**Elena Filekova '08** focused on her home country of Bulgaria, specifically the economic challenges it faces integrating into the European Union in 2007; and in general, the macroeconomic effects that occur when a state joins the EU. Elena spent the first half of her summer in the U.S., then conducted interviews in Bulgaria in August. Erol Balkan, the James L. Ferguson Professor of Economics, served as her faculty advisor.



**Joseph Jansen '07** spent his summer researching the interpretation over time of the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses in the Bill of Rights. Joe’s interest in the topic began with a paper discussing the effect of the Supreme Court on Federalism, specifically regarding religion, which he wrote for Professor of Government Ted Eismeier. The focus of Joe’s research, which was conducted under the advisement of Eismeier, was understanding the history of the two Free Exercise clauses from colonial times to 1947, when the Supreme Court specifically applied the Establishment Clause to individual states.

**Dane Johnson '07** used his background in macroeconomics to study the effects of technological progress on fluctuations in the business cycle. To do this, Johnson created an agent-based computer simulation, a computer program involving firms (“agents”) which models business behavior. Dane explained that “the microeconomics of very large firms have an effect on the macroeconomics.” Professor of Economics Chris Georges served as Dane’s faculty advisor.

**Danna Klein '07** spent her summer in New York City investigating the inefficiencies of food-related services, such as soup kitchens, food pantries, and food stamps. Danna, who worked with John Stewart Professor of Philosophy Rick Werner, focused specifically on the East Harlem area of the City. Her research evaluated the lack of coordination between the public and private sectors and provided recommendations to address problems.

**Niels Lesniewski '07** focused his research on popular and governmental responses to Hurricanes Katrina (2005), Andrew (1992), Hugo (1989), and Camille (1969) and posed the question, “Are critics [of Congress] justified or is government reaction improving?” Niels noted that he is not asking “what went right and what went wrong,” but rather “what this says about the way in which Congress deals with a situation where the humanitarian response is lacking.” In particular, his goal is to determine whether the lifespan of an event [like a natural disaster] is too short to effect governmental changes, or whether federal hurricane response is “a process which gets slowly and surely better over time.” Frank Anechiarico, the Maynard-Knox Professor of Government and Law, served as Lesniewski’s advisor.





# Levitt Summer Research Fellows

**Michael Mortimer '07** drew from his background as a dual major in government and geosciences to research human-induced saltwater intrusions in the Upper Floridian aquifer. Mortimer worked with Visiting Assistant Professor of Government Peter Cannavo to analyze the impact of population growth in Savannah, Ga. and Hilton Head, SC., the two cities currently supplied by the aquifer. "Water is going to be a huge issue in the 21st century as water sources get scarce and wells get poisoned," he explained. "The conflict between environment and governmental policies is deeply interesting to me."



**David Sands '07** spent his summer examining the economic differences between China and the U.S. by investigating the importation of Chinese cars to America. Specifically, he looked at Chinese business strategies regarding entry into the U.S. market and addressed the relationship between government policy and multi-national corporations in order to illuminate the dynamics of U.S.-China relations. William R. Kenan Professor of Government Cheng Li served as David's faculty advisor.



**Xin Wang '09** also worked with Professor Cheng Li on her research project, which investigated "the effect of different socioeconomic backgrounds on single children, their families and [Chinese] society," with an emphasis on consumption patterns. A native of Shandong province, China, Xin grew up with many other "singletons." Part of her goal was to determine whether the more stringent enforcement of the One Child Policy in Chinese cities would result in differences in behavior and consumptive activity between city children and their rural counterparts.

## Levitt Community Service Fellowships 2006

**Eileen Starrett '07** and **Tamar Nobel '08** received Community-Based Fellowships for Summer 2006. Eileen worked with Oneida County Communities That Care and member agencies to lay groundwork for the beginning of a community-based research project with the Waterville and Utica area communities. Eileen attended meetings with community development groups and created a database for organizations to use for communicating to large groups of members. In addition, she used her data skills and GIS mapping skills learned in the Spring 2006 Seminar in Program Evaluation to provide data about the Cornhill neighborhood for planning purposes.

Tamar worked with the Utica Municipal Housing Authority on the HOPE VI Project in Utica and produced two reports to aid in the evaluation of progress made. The first was a property value assessment of every building or house that has been built or renovated as a part of the HOPE VI Project. Tamar collected information from the Utica Board of Realtors and the City of Utica Assessor, comparing property values and average sale prices of homes over time. Her second report provided the results of a telephone survey of new residents who moved into housing constructed through the HOPE VI Project, both rentals and owner-occupied housing. The full reports can be accessed at [https://my.hamilton.edu/Levitt/comm\\_based\\_research.html](https://my.hamilton.edu/Levitt/comm_based_research.html).

*Lisbeth Redfield, Communications and Media Relations intern at Hamilton during the summer of 2006, contributed material for the Levitt Fellows articles in this publication. Her complete stories appeared on the Hamilton College website: <http://www.hamilton.edu/news/>.*



# Levitt Fellowships –Summer 2007

*The following students were selected to receive Levitt Fellowships for Summer 2007. They will be working with their faculty advisors throughout the summer on these research projects:*

- **Steve Beale '09 with Professor David Rivera**  
*A Tale of Two Wars: The Impact of the Chechen Wars on the Russian Armed Services*
- **Francisco Blanco '08 with Professor Rick Werner**  
*The Relationship between Positive Psychology and Political Philosophy*
- **Giorgi Chavleishvili '08 with Professor Esther Kanipe**  
*The Impact of a Proper Education on the Development of Democracy in the Republic of Georgia*
- **Allison Gaston-Enholm '09 with Professor Steve Orvis**  
*African Contingency Plans for the Avian Flu*
- **Andrew Gumbiner '08 with Professor Sharon Rivera**  
*Developing a Culture of Democracy with Education in the Middle East*
- **Matt House '08 with Professor Nick Tampio**  
*The Ideal of the Citizen-Soldier*
- **Xiaobo Ma '09 with Professor Derek Jones**  
*The Impact of Chinese Privatization on Firms and Workers*
- **Abhishek Maity '08 with Professor Erol Balkan**  
*Optimal Foreign Exchange Reserves of Developing Countries*
- **Hilary Masuka '09 with Professor Steve Orvis**  
*The Experience of Zimbabwean Immigrants in South Africa*
- **Tamar Nobel '08 with Professor Selcuk Eren**  
*The Causal Relationship of Access to Insurance Coverage and Utilization of Emergency Departments for Asthma Patients*
- **Harry Jerome Noel '09 with Professor Doug Ambrose**  
*Abraham Lincoln: How Speeches and Policies Changed the Presidency*
- **Emily Pallin '08 with Professor Dan Chambliss**  
*Katrina: Disaster Brings Opportunity to a Failing School System*
- **Emily Smith '09 with Professor Rob Martin**  
*The Link between African Philanthropic Endeavors and Celebrity Patrons*
- **Julia Stahl '08 with Professor Lisa Trivedi**  
*Changing Perceptions of Race in the U.S. Army*
- **Chris Sullivan '09 with Professor Peter Cannavo**  
*Local Culture and Agriculture: Community Supported Agriculture in the Northern United States*
- **Alex Tudor Seserman '09 with Professor Rick Werner**  
*Understanding Madness*
- **Ethan Woods '09 with Professor Erol Balkan**  
*Economic Sustainability: Comparing the Economics of Fossil Fuels and Alternative Energies in Central N.Y.*

## Levitt Civic Engagement Fellowships –Summer 2007

**Jenney Stringer '08** and **Evan Torres '08** received Civic Engagement Fellowships (Community Service Fellowships) for Summer 2007. Evan was awarded the Community-Based Research Fellowship. This position is that of program evaluation assistant with the Associate Director for Community Research in the Levitt Center, Judy Owens-Manley, for the HOPE VI Project in Utica. Jenney was awarded the Community Service Fellowship. She will be working with Judy Owens-Manley on a project which focuses on creating community gardens.



# Levitt Speaker Series 2006-2007

## “Inequality and Equity”

The Levitt Center Speaker series is committed to enhancing the academic experience of our students by introducing them to a wide array of intellectually challenging speakers from varying political points of view. This year’s speakers focused on the theme of “Inequality and Equity” with topics ranging from an examination of youth activism to discussions of racial and gender inequality in America. The series featured many speakers with substantial policy experience, an invaluable asset in helping students make the connection between the classroom and policies enacted in the real world. Students and other audience members had the opportunity to engage speakers in thoughtful discussion following each lecture.

**Anders Aslund**, a senior fellow at the Institute for International Economics and adjunct professor at Georgetown University, opened this year’s Levitt Speaker Series on September 27th with a lecture which discussed the role of wealthy oligarchs in the transition of post-Communist economics. In his talk “In Defense of Oligarchy,” Aslund described the oligarchs of Russia and the Ukraine as young, self-made billionaires who own the nations’ corporate conglomerates and have close ties to their political power structures. He emphasized that oligarchs should not be confused with the organized criminals of these countries’ past, and instead compared them with the Robber Barons of 19th century America. Furthermore, he stressed that the proliferation of oligarchs in these nations is not only a natural outcome of the economic environment in a transitioning post-Communist state, but is in fact an important step in their progress toward capitalism. Aslund concluded his lecture with the argument that transitioning post-Communist states must guarantee the property rights of oligarchs if they are to defend the economic rights of all citizens. In time, if these nations adopt an ideology of private property, oligarchs will grow into normal market economies and democracies.



*Kim (Hampus) Eriksson '09 (right) speaks with Anders Aslund following his lecture on September 27th*



*Elizabeth Economy*

**Elizabeth Economy**, the C.V. Starr Senior Fellow and Director for Asian Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, addressed “The Environmental Challenges to China’s Future” on October 16th. Economy, who is an expert in Chinese foreign and domestic policy, U.S.-China relations and global environmental issues, discussed the regional and global impacts of China’s environmental problems in light of that country’s extraordinary economic growth in the past decades. She stressed that in recent years Chinese leaders, in addition to numerous environmental NGOs, have begun to seriously address the impact of environmental degradation on China’s economic development, public health, and social stability. While tension exists between the government and the civil society, China’s newly energized environmental protection agency and the public’s growing awareness of the issues are cause for optimism.

Former Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) **Arthur Levitt Jr.** presented “The Paradox of an Ethical Society: Are Enrons Inevitable?” to a packed Events Barn audience on October 20th. Levitt, who established Hamilton’s Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center in honor of his father, Arthur Levitt, Sr., said that he was absolutely delighted to be at Hamilton, and was struck by the “passion, intellect, and sensitivity” of the students he encountered during his visit. Mr. Levitt’s return to the Hill coincided with the Levitt Summer Research Fellows poster session, in which the recipients of the 2006 Levitt research grants presented the results of their summer work. In his lecture, Levitt, who is a long-time proponent of corporate accountability and shareholder rights, discussed

*(continued on page 8)*



# Levitt Speaker Series

the central tension in business ethics: on one hand, corporations are private sector entities with a responsibility to maximize performance. On the other hand, corporations are important public players, affecting people's lives, impacting the economy at large, and "creating both positive and negative externalities." Levitt offered a few guidelines for how corporations could be better citizens, stressing the importance of proactive governance and support for good causes that affect the communities they operate in. While profit motive is still the fuel that runs our economy, good corporate citizenship is actually the best path to long-term profitability, Levitt argued. "Public-spiritedness must cease to be the exception and become the rule," he said. "In the long run, economic morality pays and civic commitment will pay off as well."



*Levitt Fellow Xin Wang discusses the results of her summer research project with Arthur Levitt Jr.*



*Doug McAdam*

**Doug McAdam**, professor of sociology at Stanford University and author of *Freedom Summer*, discussed "The Long-Term Civic Impact of Youth Activism: The Curious Contrast between Freedom Summer and Teach for America" on November 2nd. The focus of McAdam's lecture was his recently completed study on the civic effects of the Teach for America (TFA) program on young people, and the contrast between the results of that study and those of his famous 1986 study on the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964. His recent findings—that there were no enduring effects from TFA as there were for Freedom Summer—are surprising, in light of the widely-held belief that civic activism and service among youth will contribute to "making citizens" in the future: instilling civic virtue and behavior in participants. McAdam does not believe that the "Freedom Summer phenomenon" is generalizable to all civic involvement and service-learning programs, but rather that the unique historical and cultural factors surrounding different service experiences lead to very different

outcomes. Today's college students do not have the "starry eyed view of reality" that students in the early 1960's had, so the transformative effects of the experience on their worldview are not as great. Furthermore, TFA's organizers do not have the radical political mission and philosophy that Freedom Summer's organizers had, so the program doesn't result in radical re-socialization.

Harvard University economics professor **Roland Fryer** spoke to a crowded Chapel audience on January 31st with a lecture titled "Toward a Unified Theory of Black America." Fryer spoke about the importance of understanding racial inequality through quantitative research, arguing that this important discussion should not be left in the hands of "pundits and talking heads," but that instead we need to put our most brilliant minds and sophisticated mathematical analysis techniques to work addressing the issues.



*Roland Fryer greets Hamilton student Fred Bernabe '07*

*(continued on page 9)*



# Levitt Speaker Series

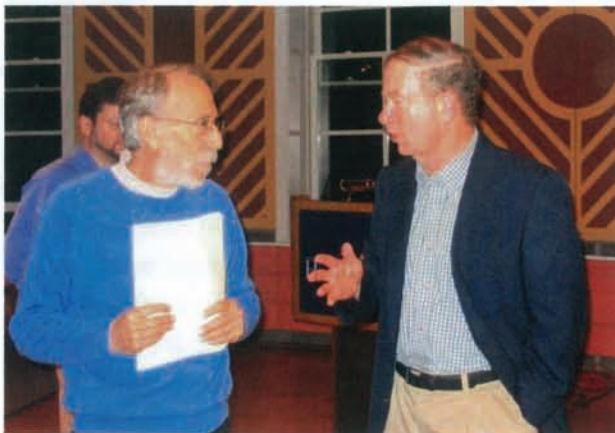
He argued that “facts are our friends. We need more facts and less politics when we’re talking about racial and gender inequality.” However, Fryer cautioned against confusing a correlation of two factors with a causal relationship, stressing the importance of sound quantitative analysis, critical thinking and teamwork to implement scientific findings in a way that will solve the problems of racial inequality. Fryer concluded his absorbing lecture by fielding numerous questions from the audience.



**Randy Albelda**, professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, discussed “Gender Inequality in the Labor Market” on March 29th. Albelda began her discussion by describing the current wage gap between men and women, and argued that although the gender gap in real earnings is shrinking, it is not because women’s wages are increasing (relative to inflation) but rather that men’s wages are decreasing. Albelda discussed the ongoing debate about whether income inequality results more from women’s failure to invest in themselves, or occupational segregation beyond their control; in other words, whether the gender wage gap is supply-side or demand-side economics, individual or occupational choice. She argued that inequality is built into job structure in the U.S., and that employers have few incentives to change. In conclusion, Albelda outlined several policies which

would help low-income women, such as subsidized childcare, increase in the minimum wage and Earned Income Tax credits, opportunity for training, and part-time benefits for part-time employees.

**Benjamin Bowser**, chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Services at California State University, East Bay, and former president of the Association of Black Sociologists, spoke on April 10th about “The Black Middle Class: Social Mobility and Vulnerability.” Bowser’s lecture was based on his most recent book, and presented the grim prediction that if things do not change, the African American middle class could completely disappear in as little as 20 years. Bowser believes that the lack of a successful middle class in America is evidence that racism is prevalent in our country today. He further argued that in order to become wealthy, black families must maintain assets as large lump sums that can be passed down to subsequent generations via trusts, without spending the principal. An upper class requires this build-up of intergenerational wealth, Bowser stressed, and the fact that black families tend to consistently share and split their assets amongst each other prevents a legacy of wealth.



This year’s Speaker Series concluded with a lecture by **Richard Wasserstrom** (*far left, speaking to Professor Bob Simon*) on April 23rd. Wasserstrom, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at University of California, Santa Cruz, and a member of the California State Bar, spoke about the morality of affirmative action programs. In his discussion, he argued that “programs of preferential treatment based on race” are morally permissible on the grounds of justice as well as their many positive effects on society. Wasserstrom put forth two premises in support of his argument: race is still a significant factor in our society and black Americans are at a significant disadvantage in opportunities and treatment; and the system of racial disadvantage will perpetuate itself unless black Americans gain greater representation and

positions of authority in our important social institutions. “Significant, pervasive inequality is comfortably preserved by systems where the dominant group is in power,” he said. Wasserstrom concluded his lecture by addressing the main moral objections put forth by opponents of affirmative action programs, and discussing examples providing a causal relationship between these programs and increased equality for black Americans.

*Hamilton students Caroline Russell O’Shea ’07 and Mariam Ballout ’10 contributed material for the speaker articles in this publication. Their complete stories appeared on the Hamilton College website: <http://www.hamilton.edu/news/> or in The Spectator, Hamilton College’s weekly student-written newspaper: <http://spec.hamilton.edu>.*



# Sustainability Initiatives

This past year, the Levitt Center received a gift from the Blue Moon Fund to finance projects related to sustainability. These funds, supplemented by Levitt Center resources, helped to support several projects, including a youth poll, faculty research and independent studies. Plans for further research are in progress, with a national household survey planned for Fall 2007.

## Hamilton College Climate Change and Environmental Issues Youth Poll

Hamilton Economics Assistant Professor **Julio Videras** and his students collaborated with the polling firm Zogby International to conduct the poll of the nation's youth. Nine hundred high-school sophomores, juniors, and seniors from across the U.S. were contacted by phone in November 2006. According to the national survey, most American high school students don't adequately understand the issue of global climate change, despite increasing emphasis at school and in the media. To learn more about this year's youth poll, please refer to page 11.

## Faculty research

Several faculty members conducted research with Levitt Center assistance. Economics professors **Ann Owen** and **Julio Videras** completed two research projects. The first, "Culture and public goods: The case of religion and the voluntary provision of environmental quality," studied how religious beliefs affected pro-environment attitudes and behavior. Results of this study will be published in the *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*. A second project by Owen and Videras is still in progress, "Trust, cooperation, and implementation of sustainability programs: The case of Local Agenda 21." This project studies the importance of trust in implementing sustainability programs that require the coordination of multiple stakeholders.

Economics lecturer **Nesecan Balkan** and **Gwyn Kirk**, a former Jane Watson Irvin Chair in Women's Studies (1999-2001), traveled to El Salvador during Hamilton's Spring Break in 2007 to research sustainable development in Central America with a focus on El Salvador. During their stay, Balkan and Kirk visited the Permaculture Institute and a permaculture demonstration farm in La Libertad, grassroots groups in Chalatenango

City and Las Vueltas, and initiatives for creating sustainable communities in Santa Ana and the indigenous region of Nahuizalco.

## Independent Study in Guatemala

Eight Hamilton students and one Hamilton alumnus spent three-and-a-half weeks of winter break in Eastern Guatemala for an independent study service-learning experience with the Guatemalan Project ([www.guatemalanproject.com](http://www.guatemalanproject.com)), a community development organization in the poor rural community of El Triunfo. The trip was spearheaded by Meghan Stringer '07 who learned about the service opportunity through her brother and Hamilton alumnus Matt Stringer '03. For the complete story, please see page 14.



*Hamilton students in Guatemala*



## Hamilton College Climate Change and Environmental Issues Youth Poll

It's an inconvenient truth that would make Al Gore shudder: Despite an increasing emphasis at school and in the media on the causes and effects of global climate change, most American high school students don't adequately understand the issue, according to a national telephone survey of 900 students. Even in a year when Gore's global-warming documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," is nominated for an Oscar, American high school students believe climate change has no consequences for them in their lifetime, according to the survey. The average high school student fails a quiz on the causes and consequences of climate change.

Conducted by Hamilton College economist Julio Videras and his students in partnership with Zogby International, the national phone survey of 900 randomly selected high school students also indicates that home life influences students' "pro-environment" behavior much more strongly than school. And whether they rely on science class or the media for information, students have the same level of knowledge about the issue, says Videras. "There's no difference in what students know about climate change regardless of where they get their information," he says. "Schools don't seem to be teaching many specifics about climate change."

In addition to a limited understanding of the science behind climate change, most students don't see themselves at risk: Only 28 percent believe it's very likely that climate change will affect them personally in their lifetimes. Despite these findings, 70 percent think the U.S. should start reducing emissions of pollutants contributing to climate change rather than wait for more evidence about the benefits of reducing greenhouse gases. Yet only 20 percent say a candidate's position on climate change would strongly influence whether they would vote for the candidate.

"Most of the students polled aren't doing much in the way of pro-environment behavior," says Videras. "Their behavior is related more to how much they talk about it at home and among their friends, rather than whether it's taught in school." Those who discuss environmental issues informally, with friends and family, are 16 percent more likely to believe the U.S. should mandate the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Other significant findings from the poll include the following:

- Although 66 percent of the high school students in the sample agree that humans have the right to modify the natural environment, more than two-thirds of the respondents think that the earth's resources are limited and mankind is severely abusing the environment.
- Almost 83 percent of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that we must consider the impact that our actions will have for the welfare of future generations vs. 70 percent who strongly agree with the statement that we must consider how our actions influence the well-being of people living in other countries.
- Although there is no systematic difference in pro-environment efforts based on concern for future generations, those who claim to care about people in other countries engage in more pro-environment behaviors than their counterparts.

Videras and his students collaborated with Zogby to conduct the telephone poll in November 2006. Hamilton College's Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center and the Blue Moon Fund funded the poll, which has a margin of error of plus/minus 3.4 percent.

The poll is the ninth in a series of national youth opinion polls developed by Hamilton College students and faculty. Previous polls can be found at [www.hamilton.edu/news/polls](http://www.hamilton.edu/news/polls) and include Hot button issues (2005), Patriotism (2003), Muslim Americans (2002), Gay issues and rights (2001), Youth and guns (2000), and Racial attitudes of young Americans (1999).

--by Holly Foster



# Community-Based Learning

The Levitt Center develops extensive community partnerships to provide students and faculty with an experiential laboratory that connects academic learning to real life experiences. These experiences can be classified into either service learning or community based research opportunities. Service learning is community service that enhances academic learning in the context of a course and addresses a community-identified need, while community-based research is research that is designed to address a community-identified problem. The Levitt Center provides support through coordination and technical assistance to faculty who offer service learning components with the courses they teach.

## Service Learning

Approximately 150 students were involved with service learning courses this year, completing over 1,000 hours of community service that was integrated into their academic courses. Students tutored adult learners for English language or citizenship classes, completed tax returns for low-income residents, and participated in other meaningful civic engagement activities. The two largest service-learning projects are Project SHINE (Students

Helping in the Naturalization of Elders) and VITA (Voluntary Income Tax Assistance.)

### Service Learning Courses

#### *Fall 2005*

**Communications 210:** Rhetorical Act, John Adams

**Philosophy 111:** Contemporary Moral Issues, Rick Werner

**Russian Studies 213:** Politics in Russia, Sharon Rivera

**Sophomore Seminar 285:** 1968: All You Need is Love, Jeff McArn

**Women's Studies 101:** Intro to Women's Studies, Margaret Gentry

#### *Spring 2006*

**Comp.Sci. 107:** Applications, Implications, & Issues, Brian Rosmaita

**Econ 235:** Policy, Poverty and Practice (VITA), Steve Owen

**Educ 310:** Field Experience, Susan Mason

**English CRW 305:** Intermediate Fiction, Doran Larson

**Govt 202:** Refugees & Immigrants in the US: Issues in Resettlement and Integration, Judy Owens-Manley

**Philosophy 351:** Theory & Practice of Nonviolence, Rick Werner

**Russian Studies 100:** Intro to Russian Studies, John Bartle

**Sophomore Seminar 200:** Ethics of Globalization, Rick Werner

**Sophomore Seminar 200:** Globalization and Democracy, Chris Willemsen

**Women's Studies 101:** Intro to Women's Studies, Vivyan Adair

**Women's Studies 101:** Intro to Women's Studies, Margaret Gentry

**Women's Studies 201:** Feminist Thought, Anne Lacsamana

## Project SHINE

**Project SHINE** completed its third year of linking the work that students do in their courses at Hamilton to work in the community. Students in the SHINE project completed twenty hours of service over the semester in an adult learning classroom for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) or Citizenship Class. More than 100 students participated in the Fall and Spring semesters, primarily from 12 academic courses, ranging from Philosophy to Women's Studies and including Government, English, and Russian Studies courses. Two new partial credit courses were offered this year that will give Hamilton students new opportunities with Project SHINE: one in the Government Department that studies issues affecting immigrants and refugees in the U.S., and one in the Education Department that provides certification for tutoring ESOL students.

**Project SHINE** students provided nearly 900 hours of tutoring to new immigrants and refugees in the Utica area from Bosnia, Belarus, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan, Puerto Rico, Columbia, and other countries around the world. Project SHINE works with three community partners: Madison-Herkimer-Oneida BOCES, the Mohawk Valley Latino Association, and the Utica City School District Adult Learning Center, housed at the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees.



# Community-Based Learning



## VITA Project

The Levitt Center also completed the third year of **VITA (Voluntary Income Tax Assistance)**, a project with the Internal Revenue Service and the local Mohawk Valley Asset-Building Coalition. A major focus of the VITA program in Oneida County is to provide Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)-eligible taxpayers with free tax preparation and financial literacy training. Hamilton students in Econ. 235 (Poverty, Policy & Practice), taught by Professor Steve Owen, volunteered with staff and faculty at four tax sites: Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, the Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network in Utica, GPO Federal Credit Union in New Hartford, and Harding Nursing Home in Waterville.

*Matt Kotlove works with an adult learner at BOCES Access site in Utica. In the spring semester, Project SHINE placed more than 80 volunteers at 4 different adult education sites in Utica.*

As a requirement of the Economics course, each student spent 10-15 hours in the community preparing taxes and 12-15 hours completing training with the IRS prior to the start of the course. Professors Owen and Pliskin of the Economics Department and staff from the Levitt Center and Financial Aid volunteered, providing technical assistance to student volunteers.

As a requirement of the Economics course, each student spent 10-15 hours in the community preparing taxes and 12-15 hours completing training with the IRS prior to the start of the course.

*(continued on page 14)*

## Student reflections on service learning

“What I liked most about the class was that it was relevant to Utica, to our community. Before taking this class, I never knew that there were so many immigrants and refugees in this area.”

“Project SHINE has been so much more rewarding and influential in my college career than many other past classes.”

“This course was my most interesting class of the year. It got me interested in non-profit work and back into community service. Although we were learning about immigration in the United States, I feel like I learned more about other countries and their problems than ever before.”

“Before the class I knew almost nothing about refugees, what those individuals have to go through to become a citizen and hot topics about citizenship. Through doing Project SHINE and attending the classes, my knowledge on these topics has been expanded.”

“Filling out tax returns for impoverished individuals does not make me an expert on the worldwide poverty issue. But it did provide with some insight as to what poverty really means.”



## Community-Based Learning

Hamilton College volunteers completed more than 90 tax returns from February to April and saved taxpayers an average of \$100 each in tax preparation fees. Their efforts resulted in more than \$178,181 in combined state and federal refunds to taxpayers, and \$79,500 of the refunded money came from the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a credit that specifically benefits low-income working families. This represents an increase from 2004, when volunteers completed an estimated 54 returns, bringing over \$51,425 in tax returns to the community. Bilingual Hamilton students joined volunteers from the Mohawk Valley Latino Association, Inc. as interpreters, providing free Spanish Interpretation to taxpayers at Martin Luther King, Jr. School. The new rural site in Waterville and Spanish translation brought over 30 taxpayers into the free tax assistance program who had not participated previously.

The Mohawk Valley Asset-Building Coalition is a coalition of human service agencies that run the VITA program in Oneida County. Developed in partnership with the Resource Center for Independent Living and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County, the Coalition receives financial support from the United Way of the Greater Utica Area and the Internal Revenue Service.

### Hamilton students in Guatemala

Eight students participated in a service trip to Guatemala as a part of an independent study focused on community development. They joined Dr. Cecelia Campoverde and several students from Florida Atlantic University for two weeks in December to work with The Guatemalan Project ([www.guatemalanproject.com](http://www.guatemalanproject.com).) Students lived with host families in El Triunfo and volunteered in social, cultural and environmental organizations.



They prepared their proposal for study prior to leaving and kept journals during their trip. Upon their return, they attended a series of discussion/lectures by several different Hamilton faculty and organized by Judy Owens-Manley, Associate Director for Community Research in the Levitt Center, who also facilitated the last talk of the series on community development models. Other speakers on topics of self-efficacy, sustainability, women's issues, and land use were given by Professors Nese Balkan, Erol Balkan, Economics; Tara McKee, Psychology; and William Pfitsch, Biology. Students participated in lectures given by Professors Guerrero and Gilbert in the Sociology Department prior to leaving. The students included a very successful fundraising effort, taking thousands of dollars to Guatemala that will build homes for families, and the culmination of their study was a dinner and public presentation that brought an audience of 60 people together, including a group of students who are interested in recreating a trip for next year. Dr. Campoverde was a featured speaker at the presentation, along with the students. Students who participated in the trip were: Meghan Stringer '07, Laura Hartz '07, Heather Michael '07, Miranda Raimondi '08, Annie Harleman '08, Emily Goughary '09, Melissa Young '09, and Jessie Stromwick '09. The group was also accompanied by Matt Stringer '03 and Anne Stringer P '03, '07, '08.



# Community-Based Research in the Levitt Center

The Levitt Center expanded its involvement in community based research this year with students in Economics, Education, Government, and Women's Studies, completing substantive research projects on community issues. This work was facilitated by a new \$25,500 grant over a three-year period that the Levitt Center received through its membership in the National CBR Networking Initiative.

This year the Levitt Center worked with the HOPE VI Project, a program of the Utica Municipal Housing Authority through an Independent Study in Fall 2006 and the Seminar in Program Evaluation, held in Spring 2007; the Women's Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties and the Office for the Aging, through a Women and Aging course; and the Mohawk Valley Asset-Building Coalition, with an Economics Senior Thesis. In addition, students in Introduction to Disability Studies completed policy briefs posted on the CBR website, and several students completed local research projects with community partners in lieu of senior theses for Professor Gary Wyckoff's Public Policy program.

Fifteen students in Professor Owens-Manley's Seminar in Program Evaluation conducted focus groups of residents living in the area of the inner city targeted for revitalization in the HOPE VI grant. Individual reports will be made to the agencies that hosted the focus groups, and a combined report to the Utica Municipal Housing Authority will be available in August 2007. Students reported that the "community-based research was a really beneficial and positive component to the class" and that "there should be more classes with a CBR component."

Students in Professor Margaret Gentry's Women and Aging course conducted interviews with women over 60 who are caregivers for a spouse or parents, in their home. Questions were focused on the caregiver's sense of burden, awareness of and use of community resources, and ability to maintain a sense of self outside of the home, including social relationships. Students enjoyed meeting people in the community and noted that some interviews were significantly more challenging than others. That report will be forthcoming and will be shared with both community partners.

## Americorps VISTA Volunteers in the Levitt Center

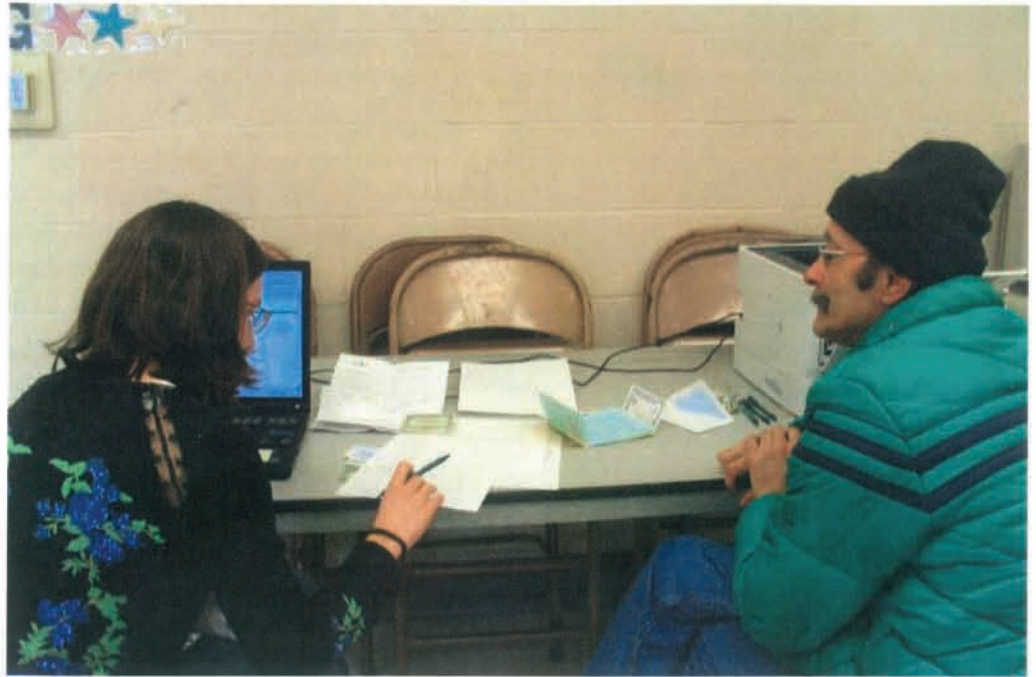
We've been very fortunate in our third year of participating in the Americorps VISTA program to have three VISTA workers! Courtney Johnson, Project SHINE Coordinator, and Haley Reibold, Cornhill Outreach Coordinator, both graduated from Hamilton College in 2006; and Christie Seaver, Community-Based Research Coordinator, graduated from Bard College in 2006. All three VISTAs coordinate community outreach projects with service-learning opportunities and invest themselves in making a difference – both at the college and in the community. The VISTAs live in the community and split their time between work responsibilities at the college and in the community. We give them our heartfelt thanks and wish them the best of luck as they complete their jobs in mid-August and go off to their next adventures!

On July 30, three NEW Americorps VISTAs will be joining us on the Hamilton College campus. Chrystal Pridemore is a new graduate from Lexington, Ky and will be the new Cornhill Outreach Coordinator, a position that includes coordinating the new Bonner Leaders Program. Stephanie Wolcott '07 is a recent Hamilton graduate and will be the Project SHINE Coordinator. Susan Weber, a Clinton resident, who has completed a previous Americorps VISTA year with Health Friends, a non-profit agency in Utica. Susan was looking for another similar opportunity, and is just a thesis away from her master's degree in Telecommunications from SUNY/IT. Susan will be the Community-Based Research Coordinator.



# Community-Based Research

Students completing tax returns with low-income residents in Oneida County through our VITA (Voluntary Income Tax Assistance) service-learning project also asked residents this year to complete a survey of their plans for refunds, savings, and spending. Student Research Assistant Jessica Lewis helped to input the data, and Patrick Ridall prepared an analysis of the survey data and background research on the Earned Income Tax Credit as his senior thesis for Economics 495, taught by Professor Paul Hagstrom. Patrick's report will be presented to the Mohawk Valley Asset-Building Coalition.



*Christie Seaver prepares a tax return for William French (right) at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School tax-preparation site, as part of VITA.*

Students registered in Professor Tom Savas' course, Introduction to Disability Studies, completed policy briefs on disability issues of importance to the agencies. Student reports are posted on the website listed below and were shared with the local agencies. Professor Wyckoff's students' public policy projects are described on page 22 and include a cost-benefit analysis of a wireless telecommunications proposal for Otsego County, completed by Dan Hewitt; a cost-benefit analysis of alternative sites for relocation of a public works facility for the village of St. Johnsville by Dan Carroll; a survey analysis of demographic trends for the New York Mills Union Free School District, by Eileen Starrett; and an analysis of the effects of crime on the economy of Glens Falls by Jessica Lewis. In addition, Meredith Falzone completed a program evaluation of an Artists-in-Residence Program for Sculpture Space as an independent study with Professor Wyckoff.

Overall, students completing evaluations of the CBR courses reported that they would be interested in community research beyond the term of the course; their understanding of the course content was improved by the research experience; the CBR project was of value to the community partner; and the CBR project will add to social change.

The National CBR Networking initiative is administered by Princeton University's Community-Based Learning Initiative in partnership with the Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation. With the grant from the Corporation for National & Community Service, the Bonner Foundation reports that: "the National CBR Networking Initiative will support the development of high-quality community-based research (CBR) as a form of service-learning and create a national networking structure that assists and connects practitioners." The intended outcomes of the grant are to spread the practice of CBR by students, faculty, and community partners; to provide tools and resources to ensure quality and collaboration at the local, state, and national levels; to expand faculty development and document innovative practices; and to increase the organizational capacity of our community partners.



## Bonner Leaders at Hamilton College

Hamilton College joined more than 50 other colleges and universities nationwide to create a Bonner Leaders Program through a program sponsored by the Bonner Foundation, a national philanthropic organization based in Princeton, New Jersey. As a key outcome, the program seeks to value and include young people in meaningful acts of citizenship. More than 200 children and youth in Cornhill participated in activities this year through the Bonner Leaders Program.

The program is co-directed by Judy Owens-Manley in the Levitt Center and Amy James in the Dean of Students Office to create an academic and student development partnership. Eight sophomores who are committed to civic engagement began a place-based project as Bonner Leaders in September, 2006. The students' focus for this project is Cornhill, with the goal of developing a long-term relationship with one agency or organization for their two years of involvement.

Bonner Leaders applied for the program at the end of their freshman year, and were selected and notified over the summer. The students and their placements sites are: Emily Chamberlain, St. Martin De Porres, Catholic Charities; Colin Forwood, The Cosmopolitan Center; Amanda Levin, For The Good, Inc.; Rachel McReynolds, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School; Emily Powell, The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees; Emma Stewart at JCTOD Outreach, Inc.; Jesse Stromwick, Thea Bowman House, Inc.; and Rita Tran, The Underground Café, a project of Utica Safe Schools Healthy Students.

Bonner Leaders make a two-year commitment between their sophomore and senior years at Hamilton, allowing for a semester or year away and a choice of at least one summer of service. They are paid for 120 community service hours during each of four semesters (240/school year/student). In addition, they become eligible for Americorps educational grants in return for their work in this project. Americorps VISTA slots are allocated from the Bonner Foundation. Bonner Leaders attend weekly group training and reflection sessions with Americorps VISTA Haley Reimbold and Hamilton College Chaplain Jeff McArn. In addition, two student representatives attend a national Bonner Congress each year, and all eight agency representatives and eight Bonner Leaders meet together for planning at least twice a year.

The eight Bonner Leaders engaged approximately 40 other Hamilton students in volunteer activities in the Cornhill agencies throughout the year. Activities ranged from tutoring/mentoring, engaging older youth in reporting/writing, performing, running workshops, and grant writing. Rita Tran received \$1,000 from Youth Service America Youth Venture after writing a grant proposal for a College Preparatory Program for high school youth, and Emma Stewart submitted a grant proposal to the Staples Foundation to fund a storybook program with JCTOD Outreach, Inc.



*Bonner Leaders Emma Stewart '09 and Colin Forwood '09 (front, right) treat Cornhill youth to a treasure hunt in Hamilton's Root Glen.*



# Levitt Scholars Program

Every year since 1993, the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center has sent Hamilton students to area high schools to speak on a wide variety of topics. These Levitt Scholars are juniors and seniors selected by faculty members for their outstanding research and communication skills. This year, our 18 scholars represented 13 different majors. Levitt Scholars first complete an Oral Communications course taught by Professor Susan Mason. During this class, they refine their public speaking skills and learn to tailor their presentation to a high school audience.

This year, 18 students participated in the program. In addition to speaking at several area high schools, most of this year's Scholars brought their presentations to their home town schools during Hamilton's Winter and Spring Breaks. Local educators participating in the program consistently commented on the high quality of the students' presentations, and Scholars embraced their task with enthusiasm and enjoyed the experience.



*Levitt Scholar and Public Policy major Jessica Lewis '07 described her experience working as an independent intern for a public policy organization in Mexico in her hugely popular presentation "Not just an other Gringa," which was available in both English and Spanish.*

## Comments from Teachers about Scholars' Presentations

"[The Scholar] was very interesting and quite passionate about his work. I know that I was touched with the content of his talk."

"I was so impressed with his ability to connect to the students."

"[The Scholar's] presentation was a perfect complement to our class. [Her] personal involvement, her passion and concern were the elements that made her presentation so effective."

"The Levitt Scholars program is an excellent way to give students an opportunity to put into practice the skills they learn at Hamilton, and [the Scholar] represented the best qualities of young adults. Confident, prepared, comfortable with the students, [he] did an excellent job!"

"This was so well presented and received by our students!"

"I liked [the Scholar] so much that I invited her to come back any time for some classroom observations. She mentioned that she was considered teaching as a profession. Nothing like a high school audience to test one's skill!"



# Levitt Scholar Topics 2006-2007

Elaine Coggins: *Effective Ways to Cope with Teacher Burnout.*

Ben Johnston: *Pediatric Health Care with HIV Complicated Pregnancies.*

James (J.P.) Maloney: *Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Situation.*

Margaret Van Wyk: *Autism Awareness and Inclusive Classrooms.*

Michael Blasie: *Advocates in Action: The Skills Necessary to Become a Successful Attorney*

Melissa Coffey: *Politics, Culture, and the Craic on the Border of Northern Ireland.*

## ***Participating High Schools, 2006-2007***

Briarcliff High School  
Chatham H.S., Chatham, NJ  
Chittenango High School  
Christian Brothers Academy  
Clinton High School  
C.W. Baker High School  
Cortland High School  
Fair Haven High School, Fair Haven, VT  
Geneseo Central School  
Hamilton Central School  
Jamesville DeWitt High School  
Kingwood High School, Kingwood, TX  
Lincoln Academy  
Marcellus High School  
Madison Oneida BOCES  
Mohawk Central School  
Moses Brown High School, Providence RI  
Mount Markham High School  
New Hartford High School  
Oneida High School  
Ramapo Regional High School, Wyckoff, NJ  
Rome Free Academy  
Roosevelt High School (Seattle, WA)  
Sherburne-Earleville High School  
St. Paul's School for Girls, Brooklandville, MD  
St. Peter-Marian High School, Worcester, MA  
Stockbridge Valley High School  
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart,  
Bethesda, MD  
Vernon Verona Sherrill High School  
Waterville Central School

Hilary Gamble: *Biochemistry: A Life Beyond the Test Tubes.*

Julianne Jaquith: *Democracy 101.*

Tierney Rogers: *How to Successfully Transition from the High School to the College Environment with a Learning Disability.*

Kristin Alongi: *Food Science: Adding Flavor to Your Everyday Chemistry!*

Colleen Granahan: *A New Drug: Pet Therapy and Animal Assisted Therapy Enter Biomedical America.*

Katherine Kenney: *2008 Beijing Olympics and the Implications for China's Environmental Future*

Ethan Shoemaker: *Oil in Africa: Blessing or Curse?*

Alexander Caruso: *Leadership and You.*

Jessica Lewis: *Not Just Another Gringa: Working with a Public Policy Organization in Mexico.*

Leanne Pasquini: *Raman Spectroscopy: A Novel Method of Gem Identification*

Ross Ufberg: *Manufacturing Luck: Making the Best Out of Lousy Times.*

Ashbel Wall: *Corrections: What Happens after the Conviction.*



# Student Conferences and Projects

Significant learning experiences can take place off campus. With Levitt Support, a number of students had the opportunity this year to participate in regional conferences and other educational events. Students also received funding from other on-campus agencies, such as the President's Office, Dean of Students and Student Activities. Highlights of this year's events included:

## Economics Class Participates in College Fed Challenge

With the support of the Levitt Center, students in Associate Professor of Economics Ann Owen's monetary policy class competed in the Fed Challenge, a competition sponsored by the Federal Reserve in which college students make presentations that provide economic analysis and a recommendation for monetary policy to finance professionals and policy makers. To help prepare for the competition, the students attended a seminar at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in Manhattan on Oct. 10th. They heard presentations by Federal Reserve economists and officials about the implementation of monetary policy, current economic conditions, fiscal policy considerations for monetary policy, the current state of the labor market and its implications for policy, as well as a general discussion of interest rates. Students who participated in the competition were Tamim Akiki '08, Tierney Boisvert '07, YiYang Cao '09, Syngen Kanassatega '08, Stuart Lu '07, Pat McGarry '07, Chris Moore '07, Nick Rockwell '08, Zarrette Rogers '07, and Kim Walker '07.

## 12 Hamilton Students Participate in Model UN Conference

Twelve Hamilton College students (*pictured, right*) traveled to Philadelphia the weekend of November 2-5 to participate in the University of Pennsylvania Model United Nations Conference (UPMUNC). Participants in this conference were Matt D'Amico '08, Rachel Horowitz '09, Kari Arneson '10, Matt Arnold '09, Melissa Kong '08, Tyler Logan '09, Sarah Moore '09, Ryan M. Murphy '08, Amanda Pooler '08, Danielle Rauli '10, Mike Viveiros '08, and Ntokozo Xaba '08. Seven students represented delegates from Latvia, while five others represented Bosnia and Herzegovina. The delegates represented their countries' viewpoints on a variety of committees, all of which are committees in the United Nations. Throughout the weekend, the students spent many hours in committee, writing resolutions to solve problems that are being discussed in the United Nations. These topics included: the Middle East, Avian Flu, Paramilitary Groups, UN Reform, and Humanitarian Aid.



## Students Participate in Harvard National Model U.N.

Ten Hamilton College students traveled to Boston to participate in the Harvard National Model United Nations (HNMUN) from Feb. 15 -18. Participants in the conference were: Rachel Horowitz '09, Henok Alemayo '10, Kari Arneson '10, Matt Arnold '09, Mariam Ballout '10, Rachel Bigelow '10, Wesley Kirby '10, Oscar Lied '10, Priscilla Rouyer '10 and Meghan Stringer '07. Hamilton represented the Republic of the Philippines at the conference. Students representing U.N. member countries served on committees such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Asian Regional Forum (ASEAN), and Disarmament and Security. These committees ranged in size from 20 to 200 countries. Students from more than 100 colleges and universities from throughout the world participated. "It was a unique opportunity not only to engage in substantive debate about some of the most pressing and controversial issues of our time with well-informed students from around the world, but more importantly to find common ground and mutually-agreeable solutions. The extraordinary variety of perspectives voiced in one room was incredible," said Hamilton team member Ballout. *(continued on page 21)*



Students spent their time in committees attempting to write and pass resolutions on a variety of topics. These topics included Iran's nuclear program, the use of torture in the war on terror, rights of refugees, Third World debt, Iraq and democracy in Myanmar. They also heard from experts in the topics that they were discussing in their committees. "Discussing the political future of Iraq was a really difficult task to achieve, as our own personal opinions were also involved, but the purpose was to represent our country's position. It was intellectually challenging and required sincere personal commitment," said Priscilla Rouyer, a French exchange student studying at Hamilton for the year.

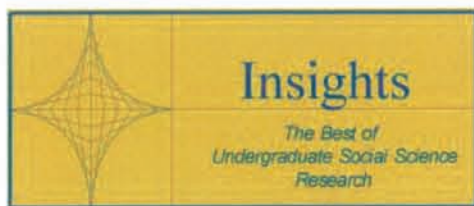
## Hamilton Students Participate in European Union Simulation

The annual EuroSim meeting of the Trans-Atlantic Consortium for European Union Studies and Simulations was held on the campus of Canisius College from April 12-15. Hamilton College was represented by Mariam Ballout '10; Henok Alemayo '10; Priscilla Rouyer '10; Steve Sallan '09; Murtaza Jafri '08; and Elena Filekova '08. Professor Ted Lehmann, faculty advisor from the Government Department, accompanied the group (pictured, right).



Elena Filekova summarized the experience of the students and the simulation:

"This simulation was a great experience for all of us, because it let us engage with a very important topic not only at the European but also at the global level. We debated on behalf of our respective countries and experienced both progress and deadlock in the negotiation process. It was quite exciting to sit in a room with students from different countries and educational backgrounds, to exchange ideas and learn from each other." This year the discussion topic was EU Energy Policy and Environmental issues - the Commission proposal dealt with the green house gas emission reduction from cars and energy savings from increased building efficiency.



## Professor Gary Wyckoff Launches Undergraduate Student Journal *Insights*

Paul Gary Wyckoff, Associate Professor of Government and Director of Hamilton's Public Policy Program, has long felt that outstanding student work has all too often ended up on some professor's dusty shelf, never to be read again. His belief that work of this quality deserves to be part of the scholarly discussion in the social sciences, to be read, discussed, lauded, and critiqued, led him to create *Insights*. His goal is that *Insights* will publish the best in undergraduate social science research, in print form and via the Internet. *Insights* is both written and edited by undergraduate students. Professor Wyckoff solicited papers from both professors and students, and hashed out guidelines to help referees sort out the papers that were merely good from those which were exceptional.

According to Wyckoff, the inaugural issue of *Insights* takes the reader on a Cook's tour of pressing social issues around the world. In the US, Elizabeth Conway examines the controversy over rising medical malpractice insurance costs, and empirically tests the reform proposals of the 2004 Presidential candidates. Then Philip Holdredge posits a new explanation for suicide terrorism, including the attacks in the troubled Mideast, based on the work of Emile Durkheim. From there, Yejun Qian takes us to Taizhou City, China, to examine the environmental consequences of the growing practice of electronic recycling. Next, Jessica Tepper invites us to Cape Town, South Africa, where changes in post-apartheid society have been reflected in that city's landscape. We then return to the US, where Drew Thomases visits some Hindu temples in Queens, New York, to find out how Hindu traditions have been altered to fit the cultural landscape of the US. Finally, Luke Forster takes us to Eastern Europe, and asks whether the democratic reform that swept through Ukraine could also transform Belarus.



# Public Policy and Analysis Projects

Each summer, analysis projects are solicited from state and local agencies and government officials. The seniors in the Public Policy Program taught by Professor Paul Gary Wyckoff are offered the option of a traditional thesis an academic subject, or a public contract thesis, in which the project has been suggested by a state or local government. In the case of a public contract thesis, the final report serves as both the student's thesis in public policy and an analysis and recommendation to the agency submitting the project. Senior projects may take one or two semesters, depending on the nature of the project. Students in this course work independently or in teams of two, and meet weekly with Professor Wyckoff. This year, 10 student conducted public policy projects, nine of them for the major, and one as part of an independent study course.

## Local Projects

**Dan Hewitt** (pictured, right), *The Wireless Otsego Initiative: The Plan to Bring Wireless Telecommunications to Otsego County*

Community Sponsor/Supervisor: Carolyn Lewis, Economic Development Specialist, Otsego County Department of Economic Development, Otsego County, N.Y.

Otsego County's emergency communication system is old and outmoded. A group of community leaders has proposed updating this system by installing a wireless system that would also provide Internet access to all county residents. Dan was asked to provide a cost-benefit analysis of this proposal. His report provides a thorough description of the planned system, a description of its benefits, an estimate of its costs, and suggestions for financing the system.



**Dan Carroll** (pictured left), *The Village of St. Johnsville Marina and Campground: Past, Present, and Future*

Community Sponsor/Supervisor: Karen Crouse, clerk/treasurer, Village of St. Johnsville

New York State is working to develop the Erie Canal as a recreation and tourist resource. As a part of this effort, the Village of St. Johnsville is planning to improve its marina and adjoining campground. One of the impediments to future development is the location of a Department of Public Works facility on the banks of the canal. Dan provided a cost-benefit analysis for alternative sites for relocation of the public works facility. He also made suggestions for the improvement of the harbor and campground.

**Eileen Starrett** (pictured, right), *Should the New York Mills Union Free School District Expand Existing Educational Facilities?*

Community Sponsor/Supervisor: David Langone, Superintendent, New York Mills Union Free School District

Due to recent redevelopment in the area, the New York Mills School District became concerned that additional capital investment might be required. Eileen conducted a mail survey/census in which survey forms were mailed to one-half of the households in the district. She also provided an analysis in which the results of this survey were compared to those of the 2000 US Census, and pointed out the demographic trends in the community. Finally, she made recommendations for the district's future capital improvements.



**Jessica Lewis**, *The Effect of Crime on the Tourist Economy of Glens Falls, New York: A Statistical Analysis and Policy Proposal*

Community Sponsor/Supervisor: Kathleen Hogan, District Attorney, Warren County, N.Y.

Warren County is attempting to secure funds for police officers under the federal government's Weed and Seed program. The county is in the Adirondack Mountains, and depends on tourism for a good part of its economy. In order to bolster its case for funding, the county asked for an analysis of the effect of crime on the economy of Glens Falls, its largest town. Using a database of 187 cities in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York, Jessica performed a statistical analysis which estimated the effect of crime and police on tourism revenue. She then provided a simulation which demonstrated the effect of crime and police on the economy of the town, and analyzed the question of where to place additional police officers in the community.



# Public Policy and Analysis Projects

## Projects for State Agencies

**Brian Hannon**, *An Examination of Non-Structural Measure for Preventing Damage from Coastal Hazards, as Implemented by the State of Coastal Management Policies of New York State and North Carolina*

State Sponsor/Supervisor: Barry Pendergrass, Coastal Resources Specialist, Coastal Resources Division, New York Department of State.

Hurricane Katrina has provided an impetus for states to re-examine their policies on coastal development and protection. Structural methods for combating coastal damage include dikes, levees, and breakwaters, but these methods are very expensive and tend to degrade over time. Brian provided an overview of non-structural methods for handling such damage, including beach nourishment, wetland conservation, dune restoration, setback laws, construction and zoning regulations, and open-space acquisition. He also provided an analysis of the effectiveness of these measures in protecting the coastlines of North Carolina and Long Island, N.Y.

**John Moore and Noah Fisher**, *Green Building in New York State: Creating Incentives for Small Commercial Buildings in New York State to Build Green*

State Sponsor/Supervisor: Jeff Sama, Director, Division of Environmental Permits and Pollution Prevention, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

New York State currently operates the Green Building Tax Credit, a tax credit for firms that build green commercial buildings. However, the stringent bureaucratic requirements and high standards under this program restrict it to just a few very large buildings in the state. How could the state encourage green construction in smaller commercial buildings? John and Noah investigated other green building programs, at the national, state, and local levels, from around the nation. They then made specific recommendations for creating a workable program for small commercial buildings in New York State.

**Inga Stots**, *Integrated Domestic Violence Courts: An Examination of the Relationship Between Judges and Probation*  
State Sponsor/Supervisor: Bill Schaefer, Domestic Violence Program Administrator, New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

Currently, twenty-seven counties in New York State have integrated domestic violence courts. In these courts, family, criminal, and matrimonial matters that relate to domestic violence are all handled by one court. Each family in court is assigned to one judge, who gains a more complete view of that family's needs and problems. Also, these courts integrate the probation department with the courts, so that more comprehensive supervision of domestic violence offenders is possible. But how well do judges and probation departments actually work together? Through a survey and interviews with judges and probation officers, Inga investigated the strengths and weaknesses of the judge-probation relationship in these courts, and made recommendations to improve cooperation.

**Mitchell O'Connor** (pictured, right), *Noise Pollution in New York*

State Sponsor/Supervisor: Jeff Sama, Director, Division of Environmental Permits and Pollution Prevention, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation asked for a review of the state's noise pollution laws. Mitchell examined the health and quality of life impacts of noise pollution, explained the different noise measurement standards currently used, discussed the noise laws in 38 states and 18 New York cities, and made recommendations for improving New York State's laws and regulations.



## Project for Independent Study Course

**Meredith Falzone**, *A Program Evaluation of the Artists-in-Residence Program at Sculpture Space*  
Community Sponsor/Supervisor: Sydney L. Waller, Executive Director, Sculpture Space

Each year, Sculpture Space offers 20 promising sculptors two-month residencies that allow these artists to concentrate on their craft. For several years, the agency has been surveying artists about their satisfaction with the program, but it has not had the time or expertise to analyze the data. Meredith used these surveys to do an evaluation of the program from the point of view of the artists, and made recommendations about how to improve the program.



# Think Tanks combine stimulating topics, conversation and lunch

*“Just bring an open mind and an empty stomach!”*

Think Tank luncheons once again engaged students and faculty in thoughtful and lively discourse. Drawn by fascinating topics and free food, students and other Hamilton community members gathered for lunchtime discussions on topics ranging from voting machines to education reform. Think Tank is a student-directed organization sponsored by the Levitt Center that strives to increase dialogue between professors and students outside the classroom. On Fridays, students and other members of the Hamilton community gather for lunchtime discussions, which are facilitated by a faculty member.

This year, **Shannon Mims '07** and **Meghan Morrissey '07** coordinated a wide-ranging and fascinating program of Think Tank lunches, including one special discussion about Utica, N.Y., led by AmeriCorp VISTA coordinators **Haley Reimbold '06** and **Courtney Johnson '06**. **Vivyan Adair**, the Elihu Root Peace Fund Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Director of the ACCESS Project at Hamilton College, opened this year's Think Tank with “The Missing Story of Ourselves: Poverty, Higher Education and the Ethics of Representation.” Adair's discussion focused on the development, goals, reception, and ethics of the Hamilton gallery exhibit “The Missing Story of Ourselves: Poverty and the Promise of Higher Education.” In October, **Gordon Hewitt**, Director of Institutional Research; and **Meredith Harper Bonham**, Executive Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees discussed the impact recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education might have on private liberal arts colleges with “The Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education: What It Means for Hamilton College.” Assistant Professor of Mathematics **Michelle LeMasurier** led the next lunchtime discussion in October with a graphically-appealing presentation about “The Poincare Conjecture.” Later that month, **Stephen Ellingson**, Assistant Professor of Sociology, spoke about the role religions have played in reform movements throughout American history, and their surprising absence in the American environmental movement with “Why Isn't Religion Green?” Assistant Professor of Psychology **Tara McKee** wrapped up the fall semester with “The Pros and Cons of Diagnosing Individuals with Mental Illness,” a thought-provoking discussion about the social consequences of diagnostic labels.

Hamilton alumnae and AmeriCorp VISTA workers **Haley Reimbold** and **Courtney Johnson** commenced the spring 2007 semester with “Utica, N.Y.: Post-Industrial Wasteland?” Haley and Courtney discussed Hamilton student experiences in and perceptions of Utica, analyzing their interactions with the local community, and exploring possible venues for involvement and fun. **Brian Rosmaita**, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, presented a sobering discussion of the reliability problems of Direct Recording Electronic voting machines as addressed by the Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act with “Electronic Voting: Silicon Snake Oil or Savior of Democracy?” Other April topics included “Is Geisha a Prostitute? A Comparative Study with Nightclub Hostesses in Japan” facilitated by Assistant Professor of Anthropology **Haeng-ja Chung** and “The State of Reform in New York State Public Education” with Chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents **Carl Hayden '63**. **Janelle Schwartz**, Visiting Instructor of Comparative Literature, wrapped up the year with “A College Divided? Thoughts on the State of (Inter)Disciplinary Study.”

Shannon and Meghan have passed the torch to upcoming seniors **Deanne Katz** and **Katie Naughton**, who will co-direct Think Tank in 2007-2008.



*Shannon Mims (left) and Meghan Morrissey (right) coordinated this year's Think Tank luncheons*