From amphibians to anecdotes

RIGHT BRAIN OR LEFT BRAIN? Senior Rachel Mahan had a dilemma about whether to study science or creative writing.

Both of Mahan’s parents work in conservation — her mom for the Missouri Department of Conservation and her dad for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Science has been a major part of their lives, yet Mahan’s parents also have supported her major in English.

“I came here because of the great creative writing program and MU’s investments in the life sciences,” she says.

Mahan’s study helps determine how much forest habitat the tree frogs need and its importance — information that can guide conservation managers as they make informed decisions on the management of writing.

A distinguished author who values the art of writing, O’Brien has published several hundred articles and written or edited 24 books. Three of his books published since 1994 received Choice Book of the Year awards. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Rice University and a doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin.

O’Brien joins a distinguished group of deans since the College received its official name in 1907. University Archives provided the following list of A&S deans:

A&S Deans

1907–21 J.C. Jones
1922–33 Frederick H. Tisdal
1939–40 Winterton C. Curtis (acting)
1940–46 Winterton C. Curtis
1946–55 Elmer Ellis
1955–69 W.F. English

1969–82 Armon Yanders
1982–93 Richard Wallace (interim)
1983–88 Matt Glick
1988 Larry Clark (interim)
1989–98 Larry Clark
2006–present Michael O’Brien

How do we look?

EDITOR’S NOTE: Not to be noticed the redesign of Mosaics magazine. Although the new splash of color photos most likely will catch your attention first, the more contemporary layout should make your reading more enjoyable.

Talented designer Blake Dinsdale, BA ’99, completed the redesign, and, as an important related element, found a way to print the 46,000-piece, four-color press run at a lower price than previous black-and-white issues.

Blending the past with the present through design is an interesting process. Twenty past issues of the magazine sit on my desk as historical reminders of where we’ve been and insight into how to proceed in the future. You know, of course, that we use this magazine to promote our students, past and present, and the faculty who teach them.

Please be sure to note our students’ contributions to this 2007 issue: reporter Priya Ratneshwar, a graduate student in journalism; writer Rachel Mahan, a senior majoring in English and biological sciences; and photographer Colin Suchland, a graduate student in sociology.

In the early years of the magazine, there were fewer pages (16 to 28) and a different title. The first issue appeared in 1962 as Arts & Science. After a name change to Mosaics in 1994, a framed mosaic border soon decorated the cover, but that gave way to a cleaner cover in 2000. In 1995, the first four-color cover made its debut.

I would be remiss if I didn’t thank the Arts and Science Alumni Organization, which so generously provides financial assistance to help pay printing and mailing costs. We are fortunate that A&SO leaders understand the value of communicating with fellow alumni about this remarkable college, and we are grateful.

Thank you, too, A&S readers, for your many comments, compliments and suggestions throughout the years. One of my recent favorites came from James G. Hall, BA ’57, MD ’60, of Laguna Beach, Calif.: “I think you are producing an exceptional magazine, and I read it from cover to cover. I have no advice, have no change to suggest and look forward to future issues. Keep up the totally good work.”

And as usual, with or without suggestions for change, your comments are totally welcome at moenn@missouri.edu.

— Nancy Moen, editor

New hand at the helm

THE LARGEST academic unit at MU has a new leader with a familiar face. Former Associate Dean Michael O’Brien became the 11th dean of the College of Arts and Science on July 1.

O’Brien came to campus in 1986 as an assistant professor of anthropology and director of the American Archaeology Division. Now with 20 years of experience as associate dean, he views the responsibilities of his new role as a public trust.

“My job as dean will be to see that that trust is never broken,” he says. “I am humbled by the enormity of the job facing me.” See Page 3 for a message written by O’Brien.

The College of Arts and Science comprises 26 departments and seven programs with about 200 tenured or tenure-track faculty members, 300 staff members, 10,000 undergraduate majors and several thousand graduate students.

O’Brien credits his two immediate predecessors, deans Richard Schwartz and Larry Clark, for teaching him what it means to be the “dean of a great college.”

Schwartz, who had been dean since 1998, stepped down to devote time to writing and the teaching of writing.

Senior year, O’Brien was a publishing intern with The Missouri Review.

“Less than a year later, I was asked to join the magazine. Although I was absolutely thrilled, I was also humbled by the enormity of the job facing me,” she says. “See Page 3 for a message written by O’Brien.

The Missouri Review.

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