Selected News Stories Sept. 2013

Boston Globe (September 1)

College swimmer sets sights on Antarctica

Avery Palardy, a junior at the University of Rochester, already was back at school last week, fast-forwarding her studies and ensconced in her cozy campus housing not too far from the Genesee River. She’ll resume formal classes this week, return to workouts with the school’s swim team later in the month, then in early November trade in all her college comforts for an airplane ticket and tent space on the giant block of ice that is the Taylor Glacier in Antarctica. Palardy, 20, will be among eight scientists, four of them from the University of Rochester, charged with drilling into the glacier in order to study climate change, according to Vas Petrenko, a Rochester professor and the expedition’s leader.

Time Magazine (September 5)

The Hottest Seats in Class

But professors don’t have to be famous to be big names on campus. As undergrads head back to campus, TIME surveyed students to gather the unofficial list of teaching stars. Harry Reis, “Relationship Processes and Emotions” at University of Rochester. “I study the beginnings of relationships,” he said, “and many college students are at the stage where that’s becoming very important to them.” His course titled “Relationship Processes and Emotions” covers commitment, marriage, and intimacy, and attracts students from all different majors. He recently defended online dating in The Atlantic, arguing that an increase in dating options does not actually cause a decline in commitment.

Inside Higher Education (September 9)

Fake Professor, Real Course

As the first meeting for Chemistry 131 started at the University of Rochester this semester, the instructor walked to the front of the lecture hall, told them that the course was "extremely hard," and that 55 percent of last year's students failed last year. Then, another professor walked in, asking the first instructor "who the hell are you?" before taking over the class. The first instructor was there as part of a prank pulled off by the Chamber Boys, a student radio show. The real instructor -- Benjamin Hafensteiner -- was in on the joke."The first class is always tough to get through and I though this would be an ice breaker to beat all ice breakers. It set a pretty high energy tone that I hope I can carry through the rest of the semester. (Also reported by Time Magazine, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, England Daily Mail, Huffington Post, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, YNN, 13WHAM-TV, CNET News)
Wall Street Journal (September 15)

Book Review: 'Down in the Chapel,' by Joshua Dubler

Toward the beginning of "Down in the Chapel," Joshua Dubler describes a conversation he had with an inmate at Graterford Prison, a maximum-security facility about 30 miles northwest of Philadelphia. "I don't want to disillusion you," the inmate tells Mr. Dubler, "but a lot of these dudes just come to the chapel for something to do." But Mr. Dubler chronicles something remarkable at Graterford as well: committed worshipers who, at times, debate what religious belief is or should be. (Subscription required) Editor’s note: Josh is an assistant professor of Religion at the University of Rochester.

WROC TV CBS 8 Rochester (September 6)

U of R Prof's Op-Ed on Science Denial Goes Viral

A University of Rochester professor's op-ed in the New York Times has been widely debated since it was published on August 21. Adam Frank wrote about growing skepticism of science. He cited climate change and the refusal to get vaccinations. The article spent time as the New York Times' most-emailed story. "I think the climate has changed about science because it's so pervasive in our lives. It's affecting so many things. The post-war bargain where basically politics left science alone to create things for the military or create things for our prosperity, that bargain has been pushed aside now," said Frank. "Especially with something like climate change, the results of science seem to impinge upon what some people see as their political beliefs."

Philadelphia Inquirer (9/17/2013)

Tamoxifen's mental fog is real

Some women who take tamoxifen to treat or prevent breast cancer report experiencing a mental fogginess while on the drug, and researchers have now confirmed that there's a biological basis for those symptoms. "Patients aren't always taken seriously when they report these mental side effects, but now we can say this is an organic syndrome to which we have to pay attention," said Mark Noble, senior study author."And, now we know there are paths to protection. This is not a hopeless situation," added Noble, a professor of biomedical genetics, and director of the University of Rochester Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine Institute, in Rochester, N.Y. (Also reported by BBC News, Newsday, US News & World Report, WebMD)

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle (September 25)

Woman to watch: Wendi Heinzelman

While so many young girls are inadvertently discouraged from math and science careers, Wendi Heinzelman's parents encouraged her growing abilities in these subject areas. So, it should come as no surprise that when it was time to choose a career, Heinzelman chose to pursue an advanced degree in electrical engineering from MIT. She is now a Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Dean of Graduate Studies for Arts, Sciences and Engineering at the University of Rochester, where she also serves as faculty advisor for the Society of Women Engineers on campus.

The Huffington Post (9/13/2013)

Recycle yourself: Consider Donating Your Organs

Throughout the United States, more than 115,000 people are currently waiting for organ transplants, and last year almost 7,000 individuals died waiting; about 90 percent of them for a kidney. Roughly the same number will die this year too. "That's equivalent to 13 747 jets filled to capacity crashing every year," Dr. Barry said in a TEDx talk he gave last year on the subject of organ donation. "And there are no survivors." Dr. Barry works out of the University of Rochester Medical Center and is one of the co-founders of bLifeNY, an ongoing transplant awareness campaign. In 2012, transplant surgeons like Dr. Barry performed some 28,000 organ transplants in the United States, nowhere near as many as they could have if they had the requisite parts. Here Dr. Barry discusses the reasons for the shortfall, and how it might be overcome.

Reuters Health (9/24/2013)

Insurance type tied to dying dementia patients' care

The chance that nursing home residents with advanced dementia will receive inappropriate care may be related to their insurance coverage, a new study suggests."There is no question that the care that was provided in nursing
homes was superior to the care they got in hospitals," Dr. William Hall, who wrote an editorial accompanying the new study in JAMA Internal Medicine, said. Hall, a professor of medicine at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York (Also reported by Chicago Tribune)

The Wall Street Journal (09/14/2013)
NY's Eastman School student launches peace project
A senior at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester is expanding the concept of public pianos. Marissa Balonen-Rosen has launched a public art and music project dubbed "Pianos for Peace" that uses music to promote non-violence and community building. She's assembled supporters and volunteers to help paint donated pianos with peace themes and placed them in city neighborhoods to boost a sense of community. (Also reported by Epoch Times) dialogue takes place that hopefully has a transformative aspect to it. (Also reported by Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, WXXI, YNN, WHEC-TV, WROC-TV)

CNBC (September 17)
Top court to rule on political spending limits
The Supreme Court agreed earlier this year to hear the case after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld the contribution limits already in place, by dismissing the lawsuit in September of 2012. But one analyst said donor limits have their own limitations. "It's worth noting that there is virtually no evidence that contribution limits per race have any effect on corruption or its appearance," said David Primo, a professor of political science at the University of Rochester who has researched the issue. "We're seeing more spending with every election, but I'm not sure this would increase what we've already seen," he said. "It just may make it easier to raise money. Candidates always find a way to raise money even with limits.

US News and World Report (9/27/13)
Smokers have higher complication rate after surgery
Smoking increases the risk of complications and death following colorectal surgery, a new study says. The study is based on an analysis of data from 47,000 patients in the United States who had major, non-emergency colorectal surgery. Researchers from the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York found that smoking raised the risk of complications such as pneumonia and other infections by about 30 percent. (Also reported by Yahoo! News, Newsday)

Newsday (September 17)
Special ed teacher is NY 2014 Teacher of the Year
A Niagara County special education teacher praised for her collaboration with parents and drive to improve has been named the state's 2014 Teacher of the Year. Ashli Dreher, who teaches students with developmental and intellectual disabilities at Lewiston-Porter Senior High School, received the award in Albany on Tuesday. Besides earning National Board Certification, an advanced, voluntary teaching credential that goes beyond state standards, Dreher is a doctoral student at the University of Rochester. She has been a teacher for 18 years and

on contemporary political attitudes in the American South, a team of political scientists from the University of Rochester examined party affiliations and views on race-related policies such as affirmative action of more than 39,000 southern whites. What they found: That a "slavery effect" persists among white Southerners who currently live in the Cotton Belt where slavery and the plantation economy thrived from the late 18th century into the 20th century. (Also reported by Rochester City Newspaper, American Thinker, Institute for Southern Studies, England Daily Mail)

Rochester City Newspaper (September 25)
NEWS: Albert Paley's "Soliloquy" installed at MAG
Albert Paley's monumental work, "Soliloquy," the fourth and final of the recent major commissions for the Memorial Art Gallery's Centennial Sculpture Garden, was installed Tuesday morning. The artist says that the 25-foot-tall, site-specific sculpture's title makes reference to the MAG as a cultural institution, and the fact that when individuals respond to artwork -- be it music or visual art -- an introspective, internal

Huffington Post (September 21)
Racism In The South Shows Slavery's Lingering Legacy, Study Suggests (INFOGRAPHIC)
In what is believed to be the first report to quantitatively demonstrate the lasting effects of slavery
has also served as a regional coordinator for the New York State United Teachers Education and Learning Trust, which promotes training and professional development for teachers. (Also reported by The Wall Street Journal, WTVH CBS 5 Syracuse)

UPI (September 18)
Greenland icepack shows lower CO levels now than in the 1950s
Researcher Vasili Petrenko, an assistant professor of Earth and environmental sciences at the University of Rochester in New York, concluded CO levels rose slightly from 1950 until the 1970s, then dropped to present-day values. "The CO decline coincides with improvements in combustion technology, in particular the introduction of catalytic converters in automobiles," said Petrenko. Petrenko said he and his team began their research by extracting air from the Greenland snowpack at various depths. After analyzing the samples, they created a CO history for the arctic over the last 60 years, showing that levels have been in decline since the 1970s despite a global increase in the number of vehicles being driven. (Also reported by UPI 9-17-13, Phys.org, Science Daily, Science 2.0, Summit County Voice)

The Wall Street Journal (September 23)
The Family That Fights Together
It is a quandary every couple with children eventually faces: Should we fight in front of the kids? "Kids are going to have disagreements with their friends, their peers, co-workers," says Patrick Davies, a professor of psychology at the University of Rochester. "If they don't witness disagreements and how they are handled in constructive ways, they are not well-equipped to go out into the world and address inevitable conflict." Dr. Davies and fellow researchers found that "constructive" marital conflict was associated with an increase in children's emotional security, in their study of 235 families with children ages 5 to 7 published in 2009 in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry.

Chicago Tribune (September 4)
How can we expand college access to low-income students?
As President Obama focuses on lowering the cost of college education, he is overlooking another equally important challenge: ensuring that all students, regardless of their income level, have the opportunity to attend selective colleges. The University of Rochester works with the CollegeBound Initiative in New York City, offering a two-year program to the most academically talented students from CollegeBound Initiative high schools. The summer before senior year, students attend a rigorous pre-college program on the University of Rochester campus. “We are investing in students’ long-term academic success,” says Assistant Dean of Diversity and Outreach Joseph Latimer. (Also reported by Yahoo! News)

New York Times (September 4)
A Multitasking Video Game Makes Old Brains Act Younger
There may be a new market for video games: octogenarians. Brain scientists have discovered that swerving around cars while simultaneously picking out road signs in a video game can improve the short-term memory and long-term focus of older adults. Some people as old as 80, the researchers say, begin to show neurological patterns of people in their 20s. The study highlights an emerging field in which researchers are trying to better define and even expand the limits of attention, which is seen as crucial to performance, memory and intelligence. Previous studies, done at the University of Rochester and focused more on young people, show that heavy use of certain off-the-shelf, intense shooting games can lead to improvements in a user's ability to ignore distractions, and even learn. (Also reported by Minneapolis Star Tribune)

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle (9/3/2013)
URMC Strong West opens urgent care, lab, imaging
On Monday, the University of Rochester Medical Center will officially take ownership of the licenses for Lakeside Health System's clinical practices and a Spencerport urgent care facility as part of a deal to rescue the debt-troubled health system. Patients should see no changes in services at the affected doctors’ offices and facilities, which include those of Drs. Vladimir Gaspar and Didem Miraloglu, located in LeRoy and the Lakeside Physician Office Building, as well as the Spencerport center.
Drinking with China’s lonely tycoons
John Osburg was an anthropology graduate student with no Mandarin language skills when he had an ambitious idea for a way to look at the rising power of China: to spend time behind the scenes with the country’s nouveau riche. Osburg, now a 38-year-old professor of anthropology at the University of Rochester in New York, turned his fieldwork into his doctoral dissertation research and has two articles about his experiences coming out this fall. He recently published a book with Stanford University Press, “Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality Among China’s New Rich.”

Big banks: Credit unions should pay federal tax
Congressional lawmakers currently working on tax reform are caught in a war of words between banks and credit unions. At issue is the longtime federal tax exemption for credit unions: The credit unions want to keep it, while the banking industry wants it to end. As for the tax exemption itself, that's likely to stay in place, said David Primo, a professor of political science and business administration at the University of Rochester. "While it's not clear the exemption is justified, I think the credit unions have the upper hand politically," he said. "There are credit unions in so many congressional districts, it would be hard for Congress to repeal it. They can mobilize and are well connected to their lawmakers," Primo added.

The Rise of MOOCs
Two years ago the modern massive open online course, or MOOC, came to prominence when a Stanford computer-science professor named Sebastian Thrun made his artificial-intelligence course freely available to anyone with an Internet connection — and 150,000 people signed up. MOOCs began with offerings heavily weighted toward computer science and math — edX’s most popular remain a pair of introductory computer-science courses from Harvard and M.I.T. — but classes now cover everything from finance and law to poetry and music. Through Coursera, you can take “The History of Rock, Part One” (University of Rochester) and “How Green Is That Product? An Introduction to Environmental Life Cycle Assessment” (Northwestern University).

E-Cigarette Use Doubles Among Middle & High School Students
Twice as many middle and high school students are using electronic cigarettes. That's according to a new report by the Centers for Disease Control. The director of the Greater Rochester Area Tobacco Cessation Center, Dr. Scott McIntosh, says he blames the increase on how manufacturers market the e-device as being a less harmful than regular cigarettes and "cool". (Also reported by Channel 10, YNN)

Laser Physicists Levitate Tiny Diamonds for Quantum Experiments
Levitating in midair, a fleck of diamond just 100 nanometers across glows brightly in a green laser beam. “This nanodiamond is just suspended in free space, and the way we hold it in place isn't with tweezers or our fingers,” says optical physicist Nick Vamivakas of the University of Rochester. Instead Vamivakas and his colleagues use a second laser, with an invisible infrared beam, to produce an electric field that traps the diamond in place.

Douglas Lowry, dean, resigns from Eastman School of Music
The dean of the Eastman School of Music has stepped down for health reasons, the school announced Monday. Douglas Lowry’s departure came with honors bestowed by the school’s Board of Trustees, which named him the Joan and Martin Messinger Dean Emeritus and awarded him an honorary Doctor of Music degree. (Also reported by Rochester Business Journal, WXXI, YNN, WHEC-TV)
Henrietta’s Dan Krenzer focused on the future

Dan Krenzer’s long decade of blindness and sight, surgeries and infusions, started on picture day in first grade. It has been long. Eyedrops failed at first, and Krenzer started learning to read braille and walk with a guide cane. He’s had seven eye surgeries, cataracts and glaucoma and injections directly into his eyeballs. He pronounces the names of multisyllabic medications with a smoothness unnatural for a high schooler. But that’s changed: This spring, Krenzer turned 16 and got a learner’s permit with the blessing of his doctors at the University of Rochester Medical Center. His recovery is attributable to a new medication that emerged during the course of his treatment and to a collaborative approach by specialists at URMC.

Making Computers Smarter, and Helping Deaf People, Too

A friend of mine is very hard of hearing — not quite deaf enough to fully belong to the deaf community, but sufficiently deaf that participating in a conversation is terribly hard work for her. One of the young researchers here is developing a solution that could make a big difference for people like her, as well as the fully deaf — and even for journalists. In particular, Walter Lasecki of the University of Rochester (together with his advisor Jeffrey Bigham) is creating a system to transcribe conversations in real time, with no advance planning, for a fraction of the cost of a skilled human transcriber. Lasecki’s basic idea is to crowdsource the problem, using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (or another service) to get six or seven people to simultaneously transcribe bits of the conversation.

Don't Try To Clean That Messy Desk

Writer and astrophysicist Adam Frank says: Make friends with science, and the ordinary, everyday stuff will transform into the extraordinary. Now look around you — the mail, the kids' toys, the mess on your desk, the constant daily chaos? It's inevitable, and science proves it. SIEGEL: Adam Frank teaches physics at the University of Rochester, and he blogs for us at npr.org. His most recent book is called "About Time: Cosmology and Culture at the Twilight of the Big Bang."

Academic Minute: Performance and Beneficial Stress September 23, 2013

In today’s Academic Minute, Jeremy Jamieson of the University of Rochester explains why stress can be useful for performers. Learn more about the Academic Minute here.

University of Rochester to participate in vaccine trial

The University of Rochester Medical Center will participate in an international clinical trial of a vaccine for a potentially life-threatening intestinal bacteria that often infects patients in hospitals and other health care settings. Faculty in URMC’s Infectious Disease Division will oversee local sites for the trial of a vaccine for Clostridium difficile. Participating hospital sites will join more than 200 others in 17 countries. (Also reported WHAM AM 1180)

City chalkboard scratches at life's purpose

Before you die: what?

The question has been posed, boldly, on a chalkboard at Jefferson Avenue and Bartlett Street in southwest Rochester, and some of the people there waiting for the bus or walking their children to school or going to get food — people busy living — have taken time to answer it, chalking in their answers on the painted lines. "I felt like the community needed it," said Corinne Calabretta, the 20-year-old University of Rochester student who put the chalkboard up. "I know it's a high-crime area, but I think any community could use that reminder — where am I going, what are my life goals? That's not just low-income areas." (Also reported by 13WHAM-TV)

UR researchers delve into Common Core

The Rochester City School District was at the bottom of districts statewide in new math and English test results. Researchers from the University of Rochester say there may be some deeper-seated problems to address before scores can rise. A group of researchers from a consortium of institutions, including UR, surveyed 403 middle school mathematics teachers on the Common Core standards in math. The study, funded by a four-year, $2.2 million grant through the National Scienc
Foundation's Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings, found that more support is needed for both teachers and districts as they enact the new standards.

National Public Radio (September 9)
Banjos, Bartók And La Belle Époque: New Classical Albums
Caleb Burhans, a 33-year-old Eastman School of Music graduate who moved to New York in 2001, has played in rock bands, a disco band and a number of new music outfits like Alarm Will Sound, which is featured on Evensong, his impressive new album. Burhans is a multi-instrumentalist, but the key to his composing is the voice. Burhans has keen sense for vocal layering and harmonic blending in pieces like "Super Flumia Babylonis. Evensong is an eclectic and beautiful debut from a composer to keep an ear on.

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle (9/16/2013)
$2M gift supports geriatric fracture care at URMC
The gift, provided by businessman Hansjörg Wyss, establishes a Hansjörg Wyss Professorship in Orthopaedic Surgery, which will support work by Stephen I. Kates, M.D. in the Department of Orthopaedics and the Center for Musculoskeletal Research at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle (September 11)
School district opens new health center on Douglass campus
Students attending the city's Northeast and Northwest high schools will now be able to get vaccines, seek mental health counseling and get tested for sexually transmitted diseases right on the Douglass campus, where the schools are located. The services will be offered through a new health center that opened this year as part of a partnership with the University of Rochester School of Nursing and the University of Rochester Medical Center. The center aims to provide health care to students who may otherwise have limited access. (Also reported by WHEC-TV, WROC-TV)

PhysOrg.com (September 11)
Researcher wins best paper award for automated interview coach
University of Rochester researcher M. Ehsan Hoque has won a best paper award at the 2013 ACM International Joint Conference on Pervasive and Ubiquitous Computing for a computer system designed to help people practice social interactions. The system, called MACH (My Automated Conversation coach), consists of an animated character that can see, hear and respond in real time. "MACH offers the possibility for people to practice social interactions in their own home, without anyone knowing, as many times as they need and review their performance," explained Hoque. "This addresses requests we had received from people who struggled with social interactions, but feared the social stigma of seeking help from other individuals." (Also reported by WXXI)

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle (9/16/2013)
UR and RIT scientists develop new way to detect prostate cancer
Researchers at the University of Rochester and the Rochester Institute of Technology are working together to develop a new imaging technology which could dramatically improve the ability to detect prostate cancer. URMC radiologist Vikram Dogra and Navalgund Rao, a physicist at RIT, received a patent earlier this year for the new technology, called photoacoustic imaging. Their system uses rapid bursts of laser light to bombard a specific region of the body, with the resulting sound waves captured to create a series of high resolution images. The technique has several potential applications, but Rao and Dogra have focused on detecting prostate cancer because of its potential to make a significant impact.

Rochester City Newspaper (September 12)
ART: Otterness sculpture complete; MAG sculpture park proceeds
Over the past few months striking progress has been made on the Memorial Art Gallery's Centennial Sculpture Park, as well as the ArtWalk Extension project that has transformed the surrounding neighborhood. Sections of the forbidding iron fence that previously surrounded the gallery's grounds have been removed, and the at-one-time boiling controversy over the large-scale sculptural installation by internationally renowned artist Tom Otterness has been reduced to barely a simmer. "Life is dynamic and life does not stay fixed in the past," says MAG curator Searl. "We don't bring to any other work of art the life history, typically, of the artist who created it, and if we did, we would certainly have a hard time with
some of the works of art that are most valued in our culture."

**WHEC TV NBC 10 Rochester (September 15)**  
*Students and staff use Legos to recreate natural disaster response*

A busy afternoon for a group of scientists and local children working to recreate the impact of natural disasters using Legos. It was all to kick off the Finger Lakes FIRST Lego League Tournament at the University of Rochester. Organizers wanted to show students the impact that a natural disaster can have and how crews respond. (Also reported by YNN)

**Rochester Business Journal (September 19)**  
*Simon School's Zupan to step down*

Mark Zupan will step down as dean on the Simon School of Business after the end of the school year, the University of Rochester announced Wednesday. In a letter to the university community, Zupan said he plans to serve as dean until June 30, 2014, and then take a one-year sabbatical. When he returns, Zupan will become the John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics and Public Policy and director of the Bradley Policy Research Center at Simon. (Also reported by Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, WHEC-TV, YNN, WHAM 1180, WXXI, Financial Times)

**WROC TV CBS 8 Rochester (September 20)**  
*Construction To Begin On College Town Project*

The huge College Town project along Mount Hope Avenue is progressing and construction of buildings are expected to get started in just a couple of weeks. "I think they did a lot of homework and hired the right people to move it along at a quick pace like this," Monroe Roadways president Jeff Taylor said. "I think this is a very dated area, and the University of Rochester and Strong have been making great strides towards improving the buildings and facilities."

**13WHAM-TV (September 19)**  
*U of R celebrates Dark Side of The Moon*

The U of R studies "Dark Side of the Moon"

**Rochester Democrat & Chronicle (9/23/2013)**  
*2013 Nurses of the Year made a difference to patients, institutions*

More than a dozen nursing professionals were honored at the third annual March of Dimes Upstate New York Nurse of the Year Awards. This year, The March of Dimes once again sent out the call for nominees from Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and the Southern Tier. Winners were chosen by a panel of judges, then announced at a gala held Sept. 20 at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. Here are the winners in each category, with comments from them and their nominators on how they work to make their workplaces better.

Oncology: Patti Murray of Canandaigua; BSN, MS, Associate Director of James P. Wilmot Cancer Center, Strong Memorial Hospital

**The Wall Street Journal (September 26)**  
*Amid Probe, Chinese Moguls Vanish*

When the government of this southwestern city needed a landmark for a new district, billionaire developer Deng Hong picked up the land cheap five years ago and erected a building almost three times the size of the Pentagon. Now, over the past several months, all of those tycoons have disappeared from view. Their absences come amid an alleged corruption scandal that may broadside the economic vitality of this gateway to China's rugged west and indicate a fresh front in Chinese political infighting.

Now uncertainty hangs over Chengdu, a city that in both 2011 and 2012 was declared by the Washington-based Urban Land Institute as the best place to buy real estate in China. This year, government figures show Chengdu's apartment prices are up 8% but the increase trails gains in other big cities. "There is a kind of interdependency between business and the government," said John Osburg, a University of Rochester professor whose book, "Anxious Wealth," details three years he spent interviewing and socializing with Chengdu-based property mining and car-industry magnates. "Government patronage is key for them," Mr. Osburg said.