Robert Rauschenberg

Visionary Artist

Photo: Ellen Wilson

HOMESCHOOLING
pages 26-28
Interview with Nobel Laureate Dr. Paul Nurse, President, Rockefeller University

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

Education Update (EU): As the 2001 Nobel Prize winner for medicine (along with Dr. Tim Hunt and Dr. Leland Hartwell, an American), as a Fellow of the Royal Society, and at the time as chief executive of Cancer Research in the UK, what considerations led to your leaving the UK to take up the position of president of The Rockefeller University?

Dr. Paul Nurse (PN): Rockefeller University obviously has an enormous reputation, and research conducted here has had a huge impact on science and medicine. For example, the discovery of blood groups, that a virus can cause cancer, that DNA is the chemical basis of heredity, are but three of the many discoveries that have helped improve human life. I’d like to help continue that tradition into the 21st century by attracting the best talent and encouraging young people to take on the most challenging scientific problems.

EU: You have stated to recent graduates that “science transcends all cultural barriers within the world” but recent studies in this country point to a growing fundamentalism on the part of those who would excise Darwin (et al.) from school texts and require teachers in some states to give equal weight to creationism. What would you say to educators about this growing trend and is there similar expression in the UK?

PN: In the UK and Europe, there is real mistrust among the public about genetically modified foods, which I don’t observe in the U.S. In contrast, in the U.S. the disturbing pressure to give evolution, creationism and intelligent design equal weight is not an issue in the U.K. and Europe.

An important aspect of both problems is lack of public understanding of science and of good engagement between the public and scientists. Sometimes minority groups with rather extreme views end up having an inappropriate impact on these complex issues.

EU: Reasonably, what might be done to encourage a more scientifically literate general public at a time when science seems increasingly so complex and specialized?

PN: Scientists have a responsibility to the public that goes beyond their science. Scientists must engage the public in a dialogue so that people can understand and make informed decisions about scientific advances that affect society, such as genetically modified foods or embryonic stem cell research. This dialogue should include public policy makers. Scientists need to listen better to the general public.

EU: We have read that your own achievements are all the more remarkable for your having come from modest beginnings. Who were the major influences (or mentors) in your life? You spoke of Imperial Cancer Research Fund taking you on “as a young scientist with a mission to understand the biology of cancer.” What prompted this sense of “mission”?

PN: Very early in my education, while I was at grammar school, I had a wonderful biology teacher who encouraged his pupils to study natural history and to do real experiments. As an undergraduate, I had a tutor who was hugely stimulating and entertaining, and although sometimes wrong was always wrong in an interesting way. He taught me the value of the alternative view. During my Ph.D. studies, my supervisor was an enormous influence. He was a great experimentalist and I rapidly learned the need for good experiments to make any progress at all in a research project. And my postdoc supervisor was pivotal for my entire research career. He gave me both complete support and total freedom.

I emphasize my mentors at all stages of my career because they enthused in me the passion to do high quality science, to honestly pursue the truth wherever that might lead. This is what I have tried to do with my studies of cell biology and cancer.

EU: Do your new duties as president of The Rockefeller University interfere in what we have heard are some of your abiding interests—flying and motocycling?

PN: Unfortunately, flying and motocycling have taken a backseat to my duties as president, but I still find time to keep them up and to pursue my more relaxing hobby of looking at the stars with a telescope.

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Interviews with Nobel Laureates Around the Nation

Illustrious CCNY graduates, Nobel laureates, recently came together to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the seminal discoveries of Albert Einstein who had visited City College when he came to New York in 1921. Education Update interviewed several of the nobelists about their school days, lives in science and views about stem cell research. [Ed.]

Herbert Hauptman, SUNY Buffalo

I attended elementary school in the Bronx, then Townsend Harris Hill High School in Manhattan, (CCNY (B.S.), Columbia University (M.A.), University of Maryland (Ph.D.)

Outstanding Teachers: Professor Emil Post who taught “Theory of Functions of a Real Variable” (CCNY). Also outstanding were Professors Dick Wick Hall and Richard A. Good who taught “Topological Groups” at the University of Maryland.

The greatest challenge was the phase problem of x-ray crystallography. This challenge was overcome through hard work and persistence spanning many years despite universal opposition from the crystallographic community.

Winning the Nobel Prize meant acceptance of our work on the part of the crystallographic community that for many years had rejected our work as not valid. To be vindicated in this way was important and meant a lot to me.

I continue to work on the phase problem that, like any good problem, continues to provide significant challenges.

Stem cell research is of the greatest importance and should receive major unconditional support. I find it incredible, and incredibly short sighted, that there is any resistance to this research.

What can one say about Einstein’s work but that it demonstrates once again that the importance of fundamental scientific research cannot be exaggerated and should receive major public support and encouragement because of the benefits to society which it returns.

Kenneth Arrow, Stanford University

I attended Townsend Harris High School, a special high school (entrance by examination) run by The City College in 1933-6. Its staff included several Ph.D.’s, mostly of whom were hoping for a university position. They were perfect for me. I remember a French teacher, Leo Cortines; he was a tyrant and perfectionist, and I disliked him while in his class, but immediately understood that I had learned from him afterwards. I also remember two mathematics teachers, Irwin Rothman and Rene Albrecht-Carrie; the latter eventually became a professor of history at Columbia.

In City College, I majored in mathematics, with side interests in history, education, and economics (really statistics). There was one great mathematics teacher, Bennington Gill; the rest of the faculty were helpful without being outstanding.

In my graduate education at Columbia, I had several fine teachers, especially Harold Hotelling.

To whom I owe very much indeed in many ways, and Abraham Wald.

I had two significant challenges. One was to stay the academic course. My parents had undergone great economic insecurity, and I wanted to avoid that. In the postwar period, I was tempted to go into some private financially rewarding activity. Both Hotelling and another economist, Tjalling Koopmans, prevented this. The other was to write a dissertation that would satisfy the high aspirations that I had for myself and that I felt others had for me. After years of work with little to show, a chance question to me led me in a few days to a brand-new idea that satisfied me and others.

Winning the Nobel Prize obviously was very pleasant, and it has given me some influence. But my own judgment of myself and the judgment of these I respect is much more important.

My current work involves two main lines of research. One is an attempt to bring meaningful models to the extent to which economic behavior is influenced by social interactions; the other is to improve the measurements of the economic impacts of environmental failures.

On stem cell research: I am a layman in this area. It clearly has great potential, and its study should be pursued. But I do think that some respect must be paid to those whose religious convictions lead to judgments on the value of potential human life, even though I think these judgments are incorrect. The distinction between therapeutic and genetic stem cells seems just about right to me.

My reflections on the 100th anniversary of Einstein’s seminal work; the idea that one person could write four basic papers on very distinct branches of physics and have them published in one year is so beyond the norm that one can only marvel. It is a tribute to the possibilities of humanity.
Puppies Behind Bars

By MITCHELL LEVINE

Fans of HBO’s Oz probably recall several episodes of the drama last year which focused on a guide dog training program figur ing strongly into the series’ final season. While the Oswald State Penitentiary was strictly fictional, readers might be interested to know that the service it was based on is not. In 1997, Gloria Gilbert Stoga began New York’s first such inmate program in Bedford Hills Prison, Puppies Behind Bars (PBB), bringing dogs to bond and be trained by long-term prisoners in explosive detection and support for the blind.

Coming from a public service position in the Guilian administration, she had little to no experience with either dogs or corrections, but found herself fascinated after hearing of the country’s first prison dog program, begun by Florida veterinarian, Dr. Tom Lane. Her initiative became a huge success, expanding to five more institutions, and now employing 400 volunteers.

After carefully screening inmates by the nature of their crime, emotional and psychiatric stability, work history and other key factors, PBB matches Labrador retrievers with selected participants, guide dogs are accepted into formal training, and now by a series of four months. The film’s content and style bar striking similarities to Rikers High. Buhler says that he wanted to get involved with a volunteer project, teaching film to get involved in the real world. “I was hoping to volunteer my time teaching film to students in school.” During his research, Buhler came upon a listing for the “Island Academy” on the Department of Education’s website. “I got in touch with the school principal.” What he uncovered was a school behind bars, located safely within the walls of Rikers Island, a maximum-security prison.

With his curiosity and interest piqued, Buhler set out to gain access to the prison facilities. He visited and began talking with students in the Academy. For a year he visited prisoners without a camera, getting to know the prisoners on a personal level. "I was hoping to volunteer my time teaching film to students in school." During his research, Buhler came upon a listing for the “Island Academy” on the Department of Education’s website. “I got in touch with the school principal.” What he uncovered was a school behind bars, located safely within the walls of Rikers Island, a maximum-security prison.

With his curiosity and interest piqued, Buhler set out to gain access to the prison facilities. He visited and began talking with students in the Academy. For a year he visited prisoners without a camera, getting to know the prisoners on a personal level and familiarizing himself with their routines. It was Buhler’s persistence, determination and commitment to make the film that finally paid off two years later, when he successfully received permission to bring cameras within the walls of the school. Despite being $30,000 in debt, he persevered and won the support of Showtime Networks as producer of the film.

Rikers High, the 90-minute documentary, examines the lives of three students in the Academy. Producer Victor Buhler, an eighteen-year-old aspiring rapper with a history of petty crime and gang involvement. He has not spent more than four months out of prison since he was twelve and is back again for armed robbery, after holding up a woman with a cigarette lighter shaped like a gun. Teachers at Rikers High struggle to help him channel his sharp thinking skills and gift for rap into his schoolwork, to no avail. He is released from Rikers without a diploma and returns to the news that his girlfriend is pregnant.

In the final scenes, we see him struggle to fill out a job application with very little skills and education.

The second character, Andre Blandon, is about to turn nineteen, spending time setting her aunt’s car on fire to claim the insurance. He has a history of intense depression and running away from home. His struggle to cope with a domineering father is compounded by news he receives while in prison that his younger brother is following the same path. The news seems to overshadow his success at the Academy where he has acquired his GED and is cultivating his natural talent as a cartoonist. He dreams of creating his own comic books while he is transferred to an adult facility to serve out the remainder of his sentence.

Shawn Johnson, the Valedictorian of Rikers High, is the great hope of the Academy. He is serving time for robbery. Soft spoken, brilliant, and embarrassed by being considered a coward, he reacts to the rejection of classmates by robbing two groups of teenagers at gunpoint. At the Academy he flourishes academically and uses his gift for poetry and self-expression to inspire others to reach their true potential. Shawn delivers a touching, articulate valedictorian speech at graduation, to the roaring applause of his peers.

The film opens with a teacher and student in the academy in a discussion of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein. The teacher encourages the student and the viewers to see the parallels between the perceptions of Frankenstein as a monster and how society demonizes criminals. He encourages Rodriguez to recognize the anger it evokes in himself.

As we watch the stories of these young men unfold, and see them released, we can’t help but root for them and hope they can break the cycle of incarceration. The film’s strength is in its incredible access, and its ability to transport its audience into the scene. You really feel like you’re there, but Buhler urges us not to make the mistake of thinking that viewing the prison and being in prison are the same. This access is not simply a result of the proximity of the camera, but a result of intimate and open relationships between the director and the student. Buhler describes that his success in earning their trust was a delicate balance of listening and watching.

I think something different happens when you

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ISLAND ACADEMY: HS STUDENTS FACE THE CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL IN JAIL

By LIZA YOUNG

With the striking contrast between the view of water on one side and barbed wire on the other, as well as a landscape of trees and grass interspersed with small buildings and mobile structures, we traveled the roads of Rikers Island on the way to a meeting with Principal Dody of Rikers Island Academy.

Passing through heavy security at Rikers to get to the school site, elements of a regular school setting were noticeable, with the walls displaying student achievement, a camaraderie among staff and the students passing through the hallways were friendly with each other as well as with teachers.

Austen H. McCormick—Island Academy currently encompasses six sites at Rikers divided based upon crime classification, with additional separation based on gender.

The program at the Island Academy focuses not only on academics, but on psychological services and transition to society.

All major subject areas are taught at the Island Academy, with teachers certified in each specific area. There are additionally arts programs as well as vocational educational programs which includes auto shop, print and barbering classes, and cooking classes for the girls.

Upon arrival to the program, the educational level of students is tested through STAR Reading and Math, a computerized assessment tool which indicates math and reading levels and provides an outline of suggested instructional goals. According to Principal Dody, the majority of students arrive at the program with very deficient skills; the average reading level at admission is the fifth grade level. IEP conferences are held with parent participation via telephone. Thirty five to forty percent receive some form of special education.

Students are additionally screened for psychological problems. There is a team of mental health counselors composed of 12 social workers, three psychologists and one guidance counselor. They work with students on a daily basis, with the ratio of counselor to student at one to 40. There is a relatively low turnover at the school for teachers as well as counselors, with the average length of employment at nine years.

Counselors focus on life skills and provide transition planning. They work closely with community organizations, such as CUNY Catch and Friends of Island Academy, which assist with successful reentry to society, focusing on job skills and college placement.

Parent involvement at Island Academy is encouraged to the fullest extent possible. A parent coordinator organizes a parent support group, although attendance is not high ranging from 8-10. Parent Teacher Conferences are held as well with a better attendance range of 65-70. When possible, students assist in maintaining contact with parents through administrative work, such as stuffing envelopes with PTA information, and students are encouraged to contact their parents via telephone in the after school setting.

Progress is being made at the Island Academy. Those students who score at the ninth grade level in reading and math can go on to take the GED. Principal Dody stated that last year there was a 73 percent passing rate, with 237 passing out of 323 having taken the exam.

Among the challenges at Island Academy, the biggest challenge is the issue of transients. As Rikers is a jail and not a prison, the length of stay is relatively short, with the average length of stay being 43 days. To deal with this is with modules of one week duration, so new students are presented with a fresh module, where modules from week to week may or not be related.

In general, there are many obstacles to overcome for students released from Rikers. The recidivism rate for adolescents is not of the hopeful numbers it is for the adult prison community receiving education. The legal and social obstacles for students released from Rikers is the stigma attached—in seeking employment, as offenders return to society and ensuring safety. He also feels that more programs to assist those released from Rikers should be created. “Kids are in jail short term. We get them interested. When they leave, more programs are needed that continue training. They are ripe for more programs,” explained Principal Dody.

It is worthwhile to invest the proper resources for these youth, with society as a whole standing to benefit.

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Rikers High

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make a difference in people’s lives.
Buhler states that “the ability of documentaries to change perceptions and raise awareness is what he finds most rewarding about the profession. I hope that people ask questions, formulate their own opinions and get involved. I wanted the film to leave the viewer asking questions, simply because the answers are wide ranging.”

Buhler transforms the criminals from threatening, Frankenstein, into human beings with their own struggles of conscience, dimension and depth. The lines and boundaries begin to dissolve. By graduation, the viewer becomes so immersed in the celebration, that it becomes easy to forget these graduates are in prison, “I’ve seen a lot of films about jail that portray the inmates as animalistic and disturbing to interact with. I think the aggressive personalities that many inmates adopt are survival mechanisms for them in jail and on the street. I was determined not to be scared of them.”

“The Answer to the Riddle”

Victor does not offer easy answers to what he refers to as the “riddle” of recidivism, other
Interview with Dr. Michelle Fine

“College in prison is a powerful intervention and relatively cost effective,” says Dr. Michelle Fine, Distinguished Professor of Psychology, Urban Education, and Women’s Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

In a recently published report, Changing Minds, Dr. Fine, in collaboration with women in prison at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility (BHCF), found that college in prison programs radically reduced recidivism rates from 30 percent for women who did not attend college while in prison to 7 percent for women who did. A cost-benefit analysis further revealed that providing inmates access to higher education is fiscally far more efficient than incurring the inflated rates of re-incarceration and diminished employability. Specifically, the report estimated savings of about nine million dollars for every 100 prisoners, over a period of four years.

In addition to fiscal savings, however, college in prisons programs have far-reaching implications that extend well beyond the inmates themselves. “The best predictor of a child’s education is his or her mother’s education,” says Fine, and “educating [incarcerated] mothers is one way to dramatically interrupt the cycle of imprisonment of the next generation.”

Instability is an enormous assault on child development, says Fine. Children with incarcerated mothers are in need of tremendous support because not only are their families disrupted but many children, especially those of elementary school age, are bounced between foster homes and have to deal with the stigma of a parent in prison. College in prison programs allow inmates to set a positive role model for their children in spite of their circumstances or environment.

Furthermore, college in prison programs provide inmates with “a kind of intellectual stretching” and community building which enables them to have confidence in themselves, their abilities, and to become functional members of society. Some of the women Dr. Fine interviewed, post-release, described their college in prison experiences as teaching them “to recognize their own intellectual signatures, to persist, revise, and imagine a world bigger and more interesting then the one they had been accustomed to, and to face their weaknesses.”

However, not all inmates come to prison with a sufficient educational background that allows them to jump into college level courses. In fact, the average inmate has about 10.6 years of schooling with the Math and English proficiency of a sixth grader. There are a disproportionate number of high school drop-outs in prison, says Fine. The number of men and women without high school diplomas or GEDs ranges from 50 to 80 percent depending on the prison. She also mentions a growing concern that high stakes testing may result in an increase in drop-out rates thereby limiting the economic and social options available to young people and potentially increasing their involvement in criminal activities.

Although many prisons do not offer college programs to inmates, they do offer basic adult education and literacy, GED classes, and vocational programs. “Evidence of vocational training is certainly better than no education,” says Dr. Fine, “but it is not as powerful as a liberal arts education and I think that is true particularly for women.” We need federal and state funds for college in prison and pre-college programs.

Integrating Ex-Inmates Into Society

By LIZA YOUNG

Even with the discontinuation of Pell Grants in correctional facilities for adults, there are those whose belief in the value of higher education and the power of the individual to continually improve goes beyond funding crises. Evidence of this phenomenon is clear through the efforts which occur at the Episcopal Center College Initiative, a non-profit organization with the mission of assisting recently released individuals to pursue their goal of beginning or continuing college. The organization additionally works closely with individuals currently in correctional facilities who wish to engage in educational planning. Currently enrollment includes 92 individuals—about 10 percent women—and 27 different colleges. Funding comes from foundation grants and from the organization itself which has access to some funds from the church. There is funding from the State Government through the support of Republican Senator Dale Volker and upstate NY Assemblyman Jeff Aubrey.

Talking with Beny Rubenstein, Director of College Initiative, it is easy to see her enthusiasm for the mission of reintegrating those who have been, or are currently in correctional facilities, into society. Rubenstein began her career 20 years ago working at Marist College, where she coordinat-ed programs at Federal Correctional Institutions (FCIs). At the time, Pell Grants and Half Grants

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Michele Smyth
Principal: Brian O’Connell
Superintendent’s Name: Dr. Kathy Cashin

**Student Progress:** We are nominating Ms. Michele Smyth. Ms. Smyth is a phenom-
inal teacher, coach, school leader, and mom. Ms. Smyth has been a signifi-
cantly influential figure in the efforts of our school’s improvement specifi-
cally in the area of mathematics. During the 2003-2004 year, Ms. Smyth was a leader who helped spearhead an approximate 9% increase in mathematics scores for all tested students across grades. The student progress is unmistak-
able.

Ms. Smyth has worked with teachers on a one to one basis, has worked with our Academic Intervention Team to identify and develop a comprehensive plan for remediation and differen-
tiating instruction. Ms. Smyth has gone above and beyond her role as coach in offering her services to her colleagues on her lunch hour, before, and after schools. This coach/partner relationship has had a tremendous impact on student work progress.

**Innovative Teaching Strategies:** Ms. Smyth embraces the workshop model. To this end, she has modeled during professional development, coaching sessions and via push in coaching sessions, how to plan for, structure, and implement an ideal math lesson. Ms. Smyth has created many teacher resources linked to her interdisciplinary approach to teaching. She has taught children to be completely engaged in whatever content is being taught. The classroom was transformed into an African-like jungle. The children created pic-
tures of African animals and ate African food.

Ms. Smyth has also been a strong supporter of the Principal of P.S. 214K and working with local teachers and parents to create an ideal math lesson. Ms. Smyth has created a bridge between home and the school.

**Parent/Community Involvement:** With regard to parent involvement, Ms. Smyth has presented Everyday Mathematics workshops to parents on every grade both during, after, school, and in the evenings to facilitate their apprecia-
tion and support of the work that their children are doing. Moreover, Ms. Smyth has introduced to the teachers how they can incorporate such workshops, Ms. Smyth has presented in our library, auditorium, lunchroom, or classrooms. Most presentations were followed by accompa-
nying visits with parents into the classrooms where the instruction was taken place. For fol-
low up, Ms. Smyth debriefed with each parent group in the library to field questions, make con-
ductions, and develop how “Can I help?” strategies with the parents. By increasing par-
sent in the classroom, Ms. Smyth has improved the quality of homework and classroom work. Moreover, her efforts have raised the level of parent education and comfort with a new math program. Ms. Smyth has taken the lead with regard to parent involvement have paid dividends for children and parents alike. Many a kitchen table are now much more calm and much more capable when it comes to math.

Yolonda Cartagena
Principal: Joyce Woda
**Superintendent’s Name:** Kathleen Cashin
**Name of School:** P.S. 214K

**Student Progress:** Ms. Cartagena has been a teacher in P.S. 214K for the past eight years and has worked in the New York City Public School big idea. Students get hooked and interested in math. Teachers begin their instruction based upon where their students are. Differentiation takes place every day by breaking a lesson into sub parts, games, plate boards, computer centers, the ever-
loved carpet for sharing and reflecting have all invaded our rooms to our students delight. Ms. Smyth is all about student engagement.

**Innovative Teaching Strategies:** Ms. Cartagena offers an Early Childhood program for K-grade three. The children learn to adjust their style to meet the needs of their students. She motivates her students when they are not engaged. Ms. Cartagena takes a thematic and inter-
disciplinary approach to teaching. Ms. Cartagena is all about student engagement.

**Parent/Community Involvement:** Besides being an excellent Early Childhood teacher, Ms. Cartagena has been a strong participant in LESP. ELL parents learn the basics of the English language. She has been doing this for the past few years and has a devoted population of par-
ticipants. Ms. Cartagena is an excellent instructor and pleasant demeanor. Her classroom has an open door policy, which enables parents to come and participate in classroom activities, thus building a bridge between home and the school.

Ben Sherman
Principal: Martha Polin
**Superintendent’s Name:** Doreen Cokley
**Name of School:** Lower East Side Preparatory HS

**Student Progress:** Ms. Cartagena has been a strong supporter of the principal and the administration, a powerful instructional leader and has helped bring money, technol-
y and change to the forefront at Lower East Side Preparatory HS. Ms. Cartagena has been an extraordinary journey, has been an extraordinary journey, has been an extraordinary journey, has been an extraordinary journey, has been an extraordinary journey, has been an extraordinary journey, has been an extraordinary journey, has been an extraordinary journey.

Laura Bertolotti
Principal: Mrs. Eva Garcia
**Superintendent’s Name:** Ms Laura Rodriguez
**Name of School:** Public School 60

**Student Progress:** It is indeed a pleasure to nom-
ine Laura Bertolotti as an Outstanding Teacher of the Month. Ms Bertolotti has taken students to the NYC Marathon and has done the Bike

NY 40 mile ride with students twice. Ben was instrumental in bringing the organization “Ken’s Kids” to LESP along with I-mentor.

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NY 40 mile ride with students twice. Ben was instrumental in bringing the organization “Ken’s Kids” to LESP along with I-mentor.
Laura Bertolotti’s ability to program her students for mastery in all facets of the curriculum is well known. This measurement of progress is also well documented and therefore worthy of merit and acknowledgement. As indicated by Ms Elena Garcia, a colleague, “Ms. Bertolotti, has worked with my students for the last four years. She is an advocate of the Academic Intervention Services Program. All of the students assigned to her program for remediation have shown progress. The students love to learn. Bertolotti wants the children to be successful and it comes through. She addresses the needs of each student. And she has designed a program that works with them. Ms. Bertolotti is always ready to roll into action. She is highly skilled and well prepared to meet all challenges.”

Innovative Teaching Strategies:
For Ms. Bertolotti, individualizing instruction is key. As a specialist in Reading and Special Education, designing a multi-strategy Education Program Plan with long- and short-term objectives is only one facet of her action plan for each student. Informal assessment batteries in Reading and Language Arts must also be crafted: behavior modification plans must be developed; Briggance assessments are needed in Reading and Mathematics. This program must be effective in the Academic Intervention Skills Program. The program provides test preparation for students in reading and math in Grades 3 and 4. The students also receive help in developing effective reading and study strategies. Tests are administered. Grade conferences are held to review and organize test preparation materials. Ms. Bertolotti has modeled these dynamics at Grade Conferences and Professional Development Workshops. This has been of incalculable benefit to the teachers of our staff.

Motivating Students: Ms. Bertolotti’s ability to program students for success is evident to parents as well as teachers. Her belief that all students can learn is mirrored in the seriousness of purpose of the work at hand. Every student is held accountable for the work prescribed. Work in the classroom as well as the homework is carefully monitored. Parent conferences are an integral part of every step of the child’s education. The rigorous academic atmosphere as well as extra-curricular activities is the goal for the child to learn at every turn. Bertolotti’s students were delighted to have received rewards for two science fair presentations on photosynthesis and “The Five Senses.” Literacy is a daily happening in her room. Through the balanced literacy model, students are engaged in various approaches i.e. read alouds, guided and independent reading, and the writing process. Her Reading Recovery training at NYU has been beneficial. These strategies are incorporated in her lessons. Hence, each year Ms Bertolotti’s students’ academic advancement is significant. No child goes unnoticed. No child is left behind.

Parent/Community Involvement:
Educators know that parental and community involvement is important in the child’s education. Ms Bertolotti has fostered a permanent alliance with the parents and members of the Hunts Point community in several ways. First, Ms Bertolotti has developed behavior modification plans in conjunction with the parent of each of her students. Next, she provides for ongoing articulation with the parents throughout the school year. Then, Ms Bertolotti has participated in the Staff Development Retreats, the Curriculum Team Meetings, Learning Walks, and Comprehensive Educational Plan Forums with workshops of the P.S. 75X Family. And if it takes an entire village to raise a child, surely the goal of the school must be to include parents in the planning and decision making for its children. Therefore, we are fortunate to have Ms. Laura Bertolotti as a highly skilled professional in our midst. She is one educator who will enable the youth of tomorrow to read, study, and explore because their future is in her hands. Adalante! Adalante! Adalante!

TERESA KURITA
Principal, Grade 3-4
DeAngelis Superintendent’s Name: Michelle Fratti
Name of School: New Dorp High School
School District/Region: Region 5
Student Progress: Mrs. Kurita is the teacher of Living Environment (Biology-ninth grade course), and Anatomy and Physiology (College Level Course.) Her students have shown progress in the following ways: student test scores on the Regents have increased; test scores on departmental exams have shown significant improvement; application of information to new situations. Student apply their creative skills to create projects which demonstrate physiological processes, using different media such as, sculptures, models, poems, video’s and CD’s. Students celebrate the information they learn by creating and displaying varied products. Students are engaged in various approaches i.e. reading, writing, and comprehensive educational plan.

INNOVATIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES:
VIDEO: Ms. Bertolotti’s students learn about specific scientific topics via videos. Examples of such products include: foldables, that demonstrate the structure and function of the DNA molecule in the biological process of Replication, as well as the negative feedback mechanism of hormonal control. Using everyday materials such as Gum Drops (candy) and pipe cleaners, students construct the Double Helix model of the DNA molecule and the sarcomeres of skeletal muscle, and cardiac muscle. She provides opportunity for students to create products that facilitate the understanding of specific biological processes. Examples of such products include: foldables, that demonstrate the flow of energy in the ecosystem; flip books that are used to tell the story of protein synthesis; models that are created using pipe cleaners that demonstrate the process of mitosis; and the cooperative learning strategy jigsaw that enables a group of students working cooperatively to learn large chunks of information from current science journal articles. She uses popular games such as Wheel of Fortune, and Jeopardy in review lessons. She incorporates the use of current scientific information into the curriculum, via audiovisual technology, and Internet instruction, using the NIH (National Institute Of Health) video, The Immune System, The Brain. She also incorporates writing in the content area is accomplished through the use of Double Entry Journals, Critical Essay, and Word wall creations that incorporate the specific science vocabulary.

SCHOLASTIC

Scholastic, the name that kids love, parents trust, and teachers rely on has a new retail store in Scarsdale, New York that offers the best books, toys, activities, and more to keep kids learning while having fun. This unique destination was designed to engage and educate children in an interactive, entertaining and fun, learning atmosphere, and offers a wide variety of educational, fun, and professional resources under one roof. The Scholastic Store in Scarsdale is an “experiential retail” store that brings learning to life with the best range of educational toys, games and other products for parents, teachers, and children and has an activity area in a glass greenhouse where children engage in crafts, build-a-book workshops, and private birthday parties. The Scholastic Store also offers free events every Saturday, such as author readings, character visits and special story times, free gift-wrapping, and customized gift cards.

One of the unique experiences that The Scholastic Store offers is The Klutz Book Factory workshop, a hands-on crafting activity for kids and adults where learning comes to life. The Klutz Book Factory™ workshop is the perfect event to get kids to write, draw, and create! This hands-on, materials-rich workshop provides kids with a one-of-a-kind experience to create a book that is uniquely all their own. Learning is no longer a spectator sport with the Klutz Book Factory™ Workshop, where kids can build their own book and have a blast while doing it! The Scholastic Store™ hosts build-a-book workshops for parents, kids, organized groups, class trips, and more.

The Scholastic Store is an interactive experience where learning comes alive. Parents can engage in learning and play together and have the opportunity to take that experience home with them through the purchase of educational products.

Parents, teachers, and children can also enjoy visiting The Scholastic Store’s flagship in SoHo, New York where they can find the best of their favorite characters, including Clifford The Big Red Dog, Magic School Bus, Harry Potter, and more. The SoHo store also offers Book Factory birthday parties, and free events.

Scarsdale, NY
557 Broadway
(Scarsdale Park Mall)
50 Central Avenue
(Scarsdale Park Mall)
557 Broadway
(Monday through Saturday 10 a.m.-7 p.m. and Sunday 12-6 p.m.)
87 Scarsdale (914) 257-7301

Web Site: www.scholastic.com/scholasticstores
Remembering Fathers in Different Ways

By RICHARD KAGAN

Fathers Day is just around the corner. For some families it will be a happy day. For some fathers it will be a lonely day. Dad may be paying child support because of a court order, unable to see his kids.

To address the issues of young dads with children, who are paying child-support, the Male Development and Empowerment Center of Medgar Evers College held a workshop on “Fathers, We Stretch Our Hands To You.” There are 400,000 cases that deal with child support in New York City. According to Judith Albury, Director of Administration for Children Services Child Support Enforcement/Paternity and Community Outreach Unit, 65 percent of dads do pay their court-ordered child support payments on a regular basis.

Ms. Albury and several colleagues from her office, joined Alicia Crowe, attorney and advocate for fathers rights along with Eric Leggette, founder of Fathers with Voices, Inc., and Efrain Rodriguez, President of New York State Fathers’ Rights Association for a workshop designed to inform and empower single fathers who desire to not only be financially responsible for the children, but to be a caring dad as well.

Peter Holoman, Director of the MDEC at Medgar Evers College notes that of the 5300 students on campus only 1250 are male. Of those, 30 to 40 percent have children.

This workshop was held to offer information that a father needs to successfully deal with the Family Courts, and how to navigate through the Administration for Children Services.

“We have a lot of fathers who do pay and don’t see their children,” Albury said. Dads who are willing to own up to being financially responsible and yet being unable to visit children can have a significant emotional impact on the father. Both Leggette and Rodriguez, note that fathers can get depressed and suicidal when being prevented by a resentful mother, still hurting from the emotional toll of a broken relationship. Leggette says fathers need to learn “how to protect themselves from becoming victims in the system.”

Those fathers who attended the workshop were advised to keep records of court dates, receipts of purchases made on behalf of the child, and any record of financial change that might affect the status of child support payments. Crowe, who works with fathers in child-support and visitation matters in upstate New York, stressed that it is very important to establish paternity and that a father should not take this lightly.

Dwight Boone, 34, is the father of four children by three different mothers. Boone works as a laborer at Medgar Evers College. He loves his children and supports all of them financially either through agreements with their respective mothers, or by compliance with court-mandated payments of child support. He has been dealing with the child-support system for years. He has recently established a joint custody arrangement with the mother of two of his daughters, Nahketah, 12 and Nadiza, 11 where the children would stay with his ex-wife half of the week. Boone is now going to court in hopes that this plan will be approved. Boone also has a son, Enrique, 7, with whom he shares a financial arrangement with his mother.

“Money is not an issue when it comes to my kids,” says Boone. Boone says when he goes to Family Court on child support matters, the Judge assumes he is a “deadbeat” dad. So Boone brings his receipts and documentation of money he has spent on his two daughters to counter the speculation.

For more information call 1-888-208-4485

My Father

By NAZNEEN MALIK

I have always admired my father for his stubborn self-confidence and courage. To travel across distant oceans and adopt a foreign land, alone and without much money, is no small undertaking. He is a confidant of sorts, a persistent reminder that to achieve one only has to believe in the possibility; the hero of my childhood memories, bearing gifts of books and chocolate, and the conqueror of midnight monsters and unwanted bugs. He is the storyteller who awakened my imagination and encouraged me to create my own fiction. And although there are many things about my father that remain elusive to me, hidden in conversations we are yet to have, as I grow older, I no longer regard him as simply a parental figure but as a friend. Happy Father’s Day!

I steal away from you: my caretaker, my hero.

In my newfound freedom, I forget you.

Then I remember you;

In a hesitant moment I turn, fall and cling to you,

Your eyes

I search for safety and find it in the pools of the pavement

My gait quickened to match my pace

In a hesitant moment I turn, fall and cling to you;

Then I remember you;

In a hesitant moment I turn, fall and cling to you,

My caretaker, my hero.

In my newfound freedom, I forget you.

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In a hesitant moment I turn, fall and cling to you.

I wrap myself safely in their embrace.

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A Bicycle Ride,

By GILLIAN GRANOFF

To MY FATHER, MY TEACHER/ MY COACH AND MY FRIEND

My hands clench the handlebars, flushed red in anticipation
With you behind me, I pedal faster your gait quickened to match my pace just a few steps behind me you hold tightly to the fender.
I sail smoothly on solid ground, Exhilarated by my independence, I pedal faster.

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Email: marvelwood@snet.net

New York Teacher

It takes more than an apple to reach today’s teachers...
Instead of negotiating in good faith, the school system’s administration has rejected our proposals and embarked on a media campaign to demonize the union and strip away most of our contractual rights and protections. For example, the administration says it wants more productivity from teachers even though we are among the lowest paid teachers in the region with the highest class sizes. We responded by proposing to add 10 percent more instructional time, or equivalently, 15 percent more pay for teachers over four weeks—but the administration rejected the idea.

The administration says it wants the best teachers assigned to the worst schools. A year ago we proposed a school enterprise zone for the 200 lowest-performing schools in the city. The proposal included a 15 percent pay differential for everyone working in the zone. The administration said no.

The administration says it wants to get rid of incompetent teachers. We offered a way to streamline and expedite the process, but the chancellor and the mayor rejected that, too, determined instead to strip teachers of the due process protections that shield teachers from cronyn and patronage.

We have always maintained that any kind of sexual harassment between a teacher and a student is unacceptable and that any teacher proven to have engaged in such activity has no place in a classroom. Last November, the union proposed a zero tolerance policy on this issue that would ensure the safety of children and safeguard teachers against false accusations. The city rejected it.

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Tips on Teaching Forensics

The growing interest in forensics—fueled by popular TV crime shows—is giving teachers a new and exciting way to teach basic sciences. "Your readers may be interested in a new classroom science kit from Ward’s Natural Science that gives students hands-on experience in a range of authentic forensic techniques. Developed with Sgt. Louis Savelli, one of the NYPD’s most decorated criminal investigators—the kit uses story lines based on actual criminal events that Sgt. Savelli encountered in his career." Lessons in the WARD’s Forensic Detective Lab Activity begin with examples of how to properly document a crime scene. Students can then use their memory and observational skills to create a composite sketch of a suspect using FACES police software. They will also explore simulated blood typing, blood spatter analysis, fingerprint analysis, glass analysis, luminol detection, and DNA analysis. The kit includes a detailed teachers curriculum and enough materials for 30 students.

To help students use their new forensic knowledge to better protect themselves, the kit also includes 30 take-home personal ID kits that allow the students’ parents or guardians to collect fingerprint, DNA and other personal information as a record in the event of an emergency. The forensic kit also provides an ideal opportunity for teachers to engage local law enforcement officers to discuss their work and participate in the lab activities. Teachers can find out more about the forensic kit at http://www.wardsci.com

New York Aquarium Unveils Exhibit Featuring Bathysphere

On June 9, 2005, one of the founding fathers of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) will be celebrated at WCS’s New York Aquarium. The Aquarium will unveil a special new exhibit of the Bathysphere used by William Beebe and Otis Barton in 1934 to establish a new deep-sea diving record for that time. This unique, two-seater deep-sea explorers ushered in a new era of ocean research and opened the doors for many others to follow. The Bathysphere was developed and constructed by Otis Barton in 1929. By 1930, Mr. Barton, Dr. Beebe and his staff were working out the deep-sea diving record in the coast of Nount Island near Bermuda. On August 15, 1934, Beebe and Barton descended to a record 3,028 feet.

In addition to breaking depth records, Dr. Beebe, as a naturalist, was interested in observing and cataloging the creatures of the deep. Until the turn of the century, scientists believed that life could not exist below 500 feet of water. Dr. Beebe showed otherwise—bringing back accounts of strange and exotic creatures from his deep-sea explorations—giant fish, large silvery eels, transparent shrimp, and many creatures that replenished their own sources of light through what scientists now call the process of bioluminescence.

Beebe went on to make biological discoveries and opened the doors to better protect themselves, the kit also produces an ideal opportunity for teachers to engage local law enforcement officers to discuss their work and participate in the lab activities. Teachers can find out more about the forensic kit at http://www.wardsci.com

Environmental Education: An Interview with Jake Kheel

By Nazeen Malik

New York City is brimming with natural treasures, of which most people are simply unaware. As urban ecology came into its own in academia, organizations like Nunn Nunn (NNYN) bring environmental awareness into the forefront of our collective consciousness. Renowned mediator, Theodore Kheel, founded NNYN in 2003 with a gift from artists Christo and Jeanne Claude entitling it to funds raised from products and events related to The Gates of New York City on the condition that all proceeds are directed towards environmental issues and not for profit activities. "We created NNYN to be the ongoing steward of that license agreement," says Jake Kheel, Project Director of NNYN and great-nephew of Theodore Kheel.

Soon afterward, they approached The City University of New York with a book written by David Rosanne on the nature of New York in hopes of developing it into a course. CUNY accepted their proposal and offered the course through the School of Professional Studies the following semester. “The course was extremely well-received,” says Jake Kheel.

Although NNYN stresses environmental awareness in urban environments, and focuses on New York City, its efforts are by no means confined within domestic boundaries. Theodore Kheel has been an investor in Punta Cana since it was the fastest growing development in the Dominican Republic, for the past 35 years. In 2001, Kheel, in conjunction with the Punta Cana Ecological Foundation and Cornell University created the Punta Cana Center for Sustainability and Biodiversity, a research and education facility complete with laboratories, and dormitories that can accommodate up to 24 students. It also offers five to ten-week long research programs with Harvard University, Columbia University, Stevens Institute of Technology, University of Miami, and Virginia Tech.

"Typically the way that the program works," explains Jake Kheel, "is that a professor will bring a group of students to Punta Cana as either part of a course or as a stand alone course. Although the programs vary in terms of research focus, we try to apply it to the needs of the local area," says Kheel.

For example, Punta Cana’s natural resources and coastal location provide graduate students from the University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science with the perfect opportunity to study coral reefs and coastal ecosystems while working directly with the Ecological Foundation to improve the area’s drinking water.

Columbia University’s program, however, caters to a slightly different crowd—non-science majors—and uses Punta Cana as a laboratory for learning. Students receive basic training in field research and investigation.

Early environmental education may foster an appreciation for the environment and a desire to protect it. Kheel attributes his own passion for the environment to a week long intense look environmental issues while in grade school. They measured tree size in math class and studied nature writing and environmental literature in English. “Our school was dedicated to the environment and for that week each course was taught thru an environmental lens. It really stuck me and since then I knew that I wanted to go into this,” he jokes.

With a graduate degree in environmental management from Cornell University’s Center for the Environment, Kheel began working closely with Theodore Kheel, in 2003, creating NNYN. He admits that he was attracted to his great-uncle’s solution oriented approach and the way he viewed the issue of sustainability as a conflict between environmental protection and development. “I’ve been converted to conflict resolution; it rubs off on you the more time you spend with Ted,” he jokes.

I think the idea of urban ecology is really relevant and becoming popular, says Kheel. NNYN is currently promoting a book, published in collaboration with National Geographic, entitled Go Wild in NYC. The book is intended for all ages but works well for grades 4, 5, and 6 and is accompanied by a website, www.gowildnyc.org.

The challenge, of course, is to get people’s attention. "I think the idea of urban ecology is really relevant and becoming popular, says Kheel. NNYN is currently promoting a book, published in collaboration with National Geographic, entitled Go Wild in NYC. The book is intended for all ages but works well for grades 4, 5, and 6 and is accompanied by a website, www.gowildnyc.org.

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Pleased with gavel in hand, Peter Boneparth, President and CEO of Jones Apparel Group, Inc., stands in the balcony overlooking the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), the commercial capital of the world. At exactly four o’clock, he rings the closing bell, signaling the market’s close with the pounding of his gavel.

Earlier in the afternoon, Boneparth announced the launch of Jones New York "In The Classroom," the first corporate-wide program dedicated to improving the quality of education through teacher recruitment, retention, and recognition. Education was an issue where we thought that we could make a difference, says Boneparth, and our research indicated that funneling resources towards teachers would be most valuable. He also relates a few disturbing facts about the challenges facing the educational system today, and more specifically, the difficulties that teachers encounter. Research indicates, he says, that over the next decade the nation will need more than two million teachers; however, nearly fifty percent of teachers leave their profession within the first five years. In addition, teachers spend roughly $1,200 dollars, on average, of their own money to equip their classrooms.

The Jones New York In The Classroom program, offers both monetary support and access to human resources to combat these problems. Jones Apparel Group employees are allotted up to three hours of paid time off each month to donate their time to communities and schools. Employees in distribution centers and retail stores have already begun taking initiative, comments Boneparth. From bake sales to face painting, they are starting to raise money in their local communities to give to schools and other educational endeavors. In addition, the Jones Apparel Group has partnered with four non-profit organizations who share a similar vision—a teacher-centered approach to improving education. These organizations include: TeachersCount, Teachers College New Teacher Academy, Fund for Teachers, and Adopt-A-Classroom.

“We believe that over time we will be able to elevate the stature of teaching, and these organizations will be able to provide tangible resources that will improve teachers’ experiences,” states Boneparth. Teachers will have access to grant programs that will enhance their professional development, and be given the support and recognition they deserve so that they can be effective educators. Through Adopt-A-Classroom, teachers will receive a 500 dollar stipend for classroom supplies and equipment.

“I think that a company of our size has a responsibility to try to do something,” says Boneparth, “we benefit greatly from the workforce and the talent pool throughout the country, so we have a vested interest in the educational system. We need to give something back to that.” Indeed, the Jones Apparel Group, has already begun. “We wanted to adopt an entire school to make a statement locally,” explains Boneparth. Persuing mission statements of various schools, they selected The Global Enterprise Academy, housed in Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx, due to its heavy focus on business related education. “The idea is to build a lasting relationship,” he says, “and not only will we continue working with students there, we are also going to be bringing the students out of the school to visit places like NYSE.” In addition, the Jones Apparel Group will also offer internships. “We want students to have that experience so they can apply what they are learning in school to the real world,” he adds.

The response has been wonderful. Troy Richards, a Computer Arts teacher at the Global Enterprise Academy, is among those who will be receiving a 500 dollar stipend as part of the Adopt a classroom program. “The people at Jones are really interested,” he says, “and they are coming back and showing us that they want to work with the students.”

Tamusia Johnson, a ninth grader at Global Enterprise Academy is excited about the program, especially the internship opportunities. “I want to be a fashion stylist,” she says with certainty, “and an internship will help.” Ninth grader, D’ashley Moreira, shares her enthusiasm and wants an internship to learn more about business.

“We want to be leaders in this field and we want to have other corporations join us,” says Boneparth. “For us the pride of authorship is less than the pride of leadership. We spent a lot of money up front to create an infrastructure that could support a much bigger program because we want to grow and we want long term visibility for teaching as a profession.”

The Global Enterprise Academy is among those who will benefit from Adopt-A-Classroom. It is housed in Christopher Columbus High School and wants an internship to learn more about business. “We want to be leaders in this field and we want to have other corporations join us,” says Boneparth. “For us the pride of authorship is less than the pride of leadership. We spent a lot of money up front to create an infrastructure that could support a much bigger program because we want to grow and we want long term visibility for teaching as a profession.”

The Global Enterprise Academy is among those who will benefit from Adopt-A-Classroom. It is housed in Christopher Columbus High School and wants an internship to learn more about business. “We want to be leaders in this field and we want to have other corporations join us,” says Boneparth. “For us the pride of authorship is less than the pride of leadership. We spent a lot of money up front to create an infrastructure that could support a much bigger program because we want to grow and we want long term visibility for teaching as a profession.”
Helping Children with Hearing Impairments

By DIANNE FOUTCH, M.A.

It wasn’t too long ago when a student who was identified as having a hearing impairment was automatically relegated to a life of silence. Hearing testing was basic and hearing aids were bulky and often prescribed in a trial and error method. Complicating matters further was the lack of specialized care and education that focused on improving a child’s hearing and spoken communication.

Today, children who are deaf or hearing impaired can learn to hear and talk with the assistance of advanced technologies, such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, and highly trained educators and speech-language pathologists at oral deaf education facilities like The Center for Hearing and Speech in Houston. With those skills comes access to a mainstream, hearing world that was unavailable to past generations of children with hearing impairments.

For more than 55 years, The Center for Hearing and Speech in Houston has been working with children who have hearing impairments, teaching them to listen and speak without the use of sign language. Each year the Center provides educational, rehabilitative, and counseling services, have the potential to help students acquire a high level of spoken communication and listening skills.

Eighty percent of the Center’s preschool children wear a cochlear implant, a hearing assistive device that is surgically placed in the inner ear and connected to an external unit that contains a tiny receiver, computer and battery. The implant sends electrical signals directly to the auditory nerve, bypassing the damaged parts of the inner ear. The implants, combined with intensive rehabilitation services, have the potential to help children improve verbal skills.

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Helping Children with Hearing Impairments continued on page 14

Barbara Corcoran Speaks at the NYU Child Study Center

By RICHARD KAGAN

Dyslexia is a learning disorder that can be overcome. That is the message that Barbara Corcoran, Founder and Chairman of the Corcoran Group, imparted at the Adam Katz Memorial Lecture Series held at the New York University Medical Center recently.

The Adam Katz Lecture Series was created in 2003 in memory of Adam Katz, son of NYU Child Study Center board member Howard Katz. Adam Katz struggled with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and learning difficulties throughout his life. The Corcoran’s talk, “Brokering Success: The Possibilities Within A Disability” focuses on her struggle to cope with dyslexia which affected her reading and writing skills as a child.

Corcoran, discovered that she had difficulty reading while in 3rd grade and did not perform well in grammar or high school. She became an outsider and didn’t fit into the social circles that one finds while in school. But she did not let this stop her and went on to become, according to CNN, one of “the most sought after (real estate) brokers in New York City, and a nationally known estate executive.” The Corcoran Group has sales of $5 billion dollars, with 1200 agents operating in New York City, The Hamptons, and Palm Beach, Fl.

According to NYU’s Child Study Center, approximately 10 to 30 percent of children have some form of learning disorder. Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability and occurs to people of all background and intellectual levels. There is a genetic predisposition of acquiring a learning disorder from a parent who has one.

Corcoran spoke about feeling lonely and an outcast at school because of her learning disorder, but she compensated by using her mind to imagine and think of great possibilities. Barbara Corcoran was one of 10 children. Her mom gave each child a label, describing a positive trait. Corcoran’s Mom dubbed her the “Imagination Child” of the family. Feeling frustrated by her inability to read well, she sat in class and daydreamed.

Brokering became a time where Corcoran developed her sense of visualizing, of creating images and ideas. This later served her well in business. At a business meeting, she could see a business plan in all its detail, without having to read the numbers.

Being an outsider as a child led to her becoming an “innovator” in her career. “You can see differently,” said Corcoran. It became a great advantage for her in building a business which started out with a $1,000 loan from an ex-boyfriend in 1973 to become a multi-billion company. Corcoran sold the Corcoran Group in 2001 to NRT, the nation’s premier residential real estate company but retains the title of Chairman, and is actively involved in generating publicity with many television appearances.

Corcoran remembers the day her college teacher told her that she was not smart enough to become an “innovator”. She came back the next day with a business plan.

Barbara Corcoran Speaks at the NYU Child Study Center continued on page 14

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When you first realize you are having a child your imagination runs wild. Mine envisioned all sorts of things as I lived nine months with blissful anticipation. The fact that tennis balls helped deaf children became important to me in raising my first-born child never entered my mind.

The birth of a child is the world’s most nearly miraculous event. Our child’s birth was miraculously perfect, but with a crooked “t.” They could tell at birth that our daughter was hearing impaired by looking into her ear canals. Her diagnosis would be bilateral atresia; bilateral meaning both sides are affected, atresia meaning a blockage. Ultimately, her hearing loss would be diagnosed as mild. At birth, they whisked her away to check her kidneys because who are born with ear anomalies can also have kidney problems since both organs develop, in utero, at about the same time.

We were told Gigi’s loss should be viewed as deaf. I was crushed but the petite maternity nurse waited until the doctors left the room, and she knew more. “That little baby is not deaf,” she said. “You will see. Don’t worry too much.” She would be right. She, this maternity nurse had the old-fashioned skill of observation down to a science. When the phone rang in my maternity room, that new little baby exhibited a startle reflex. I did not quite know what to think since I was a first-time mother and my concerns were bigger than the hospital, at that point.

Still, I had been on a journey and the journey would lead us many, many places.

There was the brain stem test that we did first. That involved a lot of wires and electrodes hooked up to a computer and things were graphed and written up. It did not give us much hope. It looked as if Gigi might be nearly deaf. During a lengthy and intensive search, the name of a cardiologist kept coming up. Her method was called “Behavioral Observation Technique.” It was actually fine, in a complicated way.

Ultimately, Gigi’s loss would be labeled conductive, meaning it was how she perceived sound by virtue of her ear canals and ear drums. There are many reasons for hearing loss, such as the inner ear not working and often those children are candidates for cochlear implants. They hear the world in a more electronically reproduced way. Gigi hears more like your Aunt Tillie, who has lost hearing as she went past the 80 year mark. Still, your Aunt Tillie grows up with language in her ear, so her loss will not impede her progress through toddlerhood and the elementary years. A family has to be very vigilant in the face of any kind of skill set back in infants. In our case, we put a headband on Gigi for four months. On one side she would have conduction of sound through her skull because a small porcelain-like box would receive the sound and on the other side she would have input of sound through a tiny microphone. Although it was “there,” it was a long way from the world of hearing for Helen Keller or Edison, who was also hearing impaired. In fact, Edison knew about conductive loss, and when a famous pianist was playing for him he actually put his teeth around the piano in order to “conduct” the sound into his middle and inner ears, which were intact. This explains his love of producing sound, like the invention of the phonograph.

Educating a hearing impaired child takes a lot of thinking, analyzing, guessing, trusting your instincts, advocating, persuading, teaching, and never will be able to do so. I have tried for 13 years to hear the world through her ears, and this has been an amazing adventure.

My first gift was her response to her world—her singing, her father’s guitar playing, our dog, Asta’s bark and growl. Every night for nearly the first six months of her life I sang her the same French lullaby while I walked her around our dining room table until she fell asleep. Finally, after six months, I changed tunes! At about ten months I sang the unsung lullaby and there was no mistaking her reaction: her head was a slice in them and then slip them over the bottom of the chair legs. This makes the scraping sound of the children’s chairs much less loud and it leaves the room free of wall-to-wall carpeting. Audiologists from the New York City Board of Ed told me that they had trouble getting balls for the kids, so now it has become a little mission for me. I have an old Buick station wagon, and have been known to show up at tennis clubs in Westchester and Manhattan begging for bags of dead balls. At first I felt pretty awkward, but now I feel that it is such a great thing to do. After 9/11
By Gillian Granoff

Channel Thirteen recently hosted the fifteenth Annual Literacy Day Conference. The conference, with 148 participants, brought together adult literacy educators, computer and technology professionals, and representatives from New York’s Department of Education. The emphasis was on finding ways to improve curriculum and resources to combat Adult Illiteracy.

The conference featured a series of engaging speakers on topics ranging from advocacy in adult literacy to presentations featuring the latest innovations in technologies to help facilitate curriculum planning. The day opened with opening remarks from Ronald Thorne, The Vice President and Director of Education Channel Thirteen/NET New York. “Since 1990, Adult Literacy Day has been our opportunity to bring together adult literacy educators and leaders to share these resources and many others with the network of institutions in the adult basic education community and ultimately the students who are empowered through our efforts.”

Participants had the opportunity to attend workshops on a range of issues from advocacy to technology and the challenges faced by Adult ESL students, the challenge of sustaining adult literacy programs in a climate of government cutbacks. Channel Thirteen executives presented a sampling of Channel Thirteen’s four major adult literacy programs: TV411, GED Connection (a biweekly program which includes lessons on reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science to help prepare students to pass the new GED), GED en Español, and Learn to Read (which airs Monday through Friday 5:30 to 6 p.m.). Assistant to Mayor Bloomberg, spoke on the Mayor’s behalf to express appreciation and support to Mayor Bloomberg, spoke on the Mayor’s behalf to express appreciation and support to the adult educators for the important work they do and affirmed the Mayor’s commitment to support their effort. Jeanne B. Mullgrave, the President and Director of the Literacy Assistance Center, also spoke passionately about the importance of advocacy and perseverance for adult literacy in a challenging political and government cutback.

The conference came on the heels of a rally challenging the proposed 64 percent budget cuts to adult education. The proposal, called “The Workforce Investment Title II,” proposed a decrease in spending in adult literacy programs at large does not provide any kind of opportunity or outlet. It’s very easy for these guys to go back to school. When they leave, they haven’t had a criminal record. The enticement to sell drugs and continue with their old life is overpowering and is really a societal issue. It is illuminating and disheartening.”

From his mother Diana Griffin-Strauss, a former special education teacher, Buhler inherited an innate respect for teachers and an implicit understanding of the frustration of having a talented student who squanders his potential. After making the film, Buhler is left with no simple answers on how to solve the cycle of incarceration and recidivism. The U.S. imprisons a fifth of the world’s prisoners, and 8 out of 10 are re-arrested within a year, although they do not necessarily return to prison. With such a high rate of recidivism, Victor Buhler acknowledges it’s easy to be hopeless about the possibility of imagining a better life for these prisoners through rehabilitation. “Certainly these guys do commit crimes; however, our fetish with building prisons is a short-term gain but creates a larger problem when these guys go to prison and make no real contribution to society.”

Rikers High featured at the Tribeca Film Festival and will air at Showtime networks and France 2. It is a stunning example of how film-making can generate dialogue on a significant policy issue.
By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

The 33rd annual Irma S. and James H. Black (ISB) Awards for Excellence in Children’s Literature, hosted by Bank Street College of Education, reached hilarious heights last month when 2004 ISB winner Mo Willems brought down the house with his acceptance speech. If he couldn’t make it as a writer, one guest was overheard to say, he certainly could make it as a stand-up comic.

Humor and good cheer were noticeable from the start when Augusta Souza Kappner, President of Bank Street College, welcomed the audience and the benefit recipients, and reminded the audience of the “unique selection process” for the ISB awards: kiosky every Monday at 3 P.M., sponsored by Keyes up Sierras, who has been a puppeteer, storyteller, children’s librarian, professor of children’s literature, and an ISB winner, spoke of her own early love of reading and writing, noting that she particularly likes to write for children, for whatever reason, come to reading late. With them particularly in mind, she announced that she was the audience was called to receive her award. DeapPPining his way in, the six-time Emmy Award winner began by saying that a motivating factor for him as a writer was a moment of truth that he had at 13, when he found himself alone in a kayak, nearing a dangerous falls. Soon, however, the plausibility factored yielded to load of humor. Mo Willems brought Mo Willems brought down the house with his acceptance speech. If he couldn’t make it as a writer, one guest was overheard to say, he certainly could make it as a stand-up comic.

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President Judith R. Shapiro

Bank Street College of Education awarded Honorary Doctorates of Humane Letters to:

Wendy Ewald, photographer, writer, and community activist who has worked around the world in communities such as Labrador, Appalachia, Colombia, India, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, and the West Bank. She uses photography to educate children. Partnering her observational skills and her personal experiences, she encourages them to use cameras to create individual self-portraits and portraits of their communities. In doing so, she makes children participants in the world, and hopes while working with her in visual and verbal collaboration. Ms. Ewald is the creator of a Bhopalphotography exhibition and the author of numerous awards and recognitions, such as a Fulbright Fellowship, a MacArthur Fellowship, several grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Lillian Wallicke Reader’s Digest Visual Arts Fellowship.

Bryan Stevenson, Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama in Montgomery, Alabama, and a professor of law, New York University School of Law. Mr. Stevenson’s work with the poor and people of color has been nationally recognized through numerous awards such as National Public Interest Lawyer of the Year, the Thurgood Marshall Medal of Justice, the ABA Wisdom Award, the New York City Bar Association Nettie Maria7 Medal of Liberty, the Reebok Human Rights Award, the Olaf Palme Prize for International Human Rights, and the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

For their achievements, the recipients were presented with the Barnard Medal of Honor by President Judith R. Shapiro. Honorary degrees were conferred. President Shapiro presented the Barnard Medal, the College’s highest award, to economist Arvatiya Sen, a Princeton alumnus, and to Carla Hayden, past president of the American Library Association. Sen was honored for his “devotion to the alleviation of deprivations and the reduction of inequalities of all kinds,” particularly as they impact women, through his transformative research and extraordinary humanitarian work that has been at the forefront of the debate over the USA Patriot Act, received the medal as a leading voice in the fight to safeguard privacy and guarantee the free flow and open exchange of ideas.

**CCNY: OSCAR DE LA RENTA & JOSEPH H. FLOM**

The City College of New York (CCNY) conferred honorary degrees on fashion designer Oscar de la Renta and prominent attorney Joseph H. Flom. Class of 1948, at its 159th Commencement Exercises. In addition, the City College President’s Medal for Distinguished Service was presented to Dr. Lucy Cabrera, president and chief executive of the Food Bank for New York City, which supplies over 240,000 meals a day to disadvantaged New Yorkers. Dr. Gregory H. Williams, CCNY’s President delivered the commencement address. This year’s graduating class includes approximately 2,500 students, of whom approximately 1,500 are candidates for bachelor’s degrees.

The valedictorian was Amie N. Dave, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences from the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education. Ms. Dave will enroll at the New York University School of Medicine. The distinguished students were Lev Sivridov and Erja Vettenenara. Mr. Sivridov, a Chemistry major, is the first City College graduate to receive a Rhodes Scholarship since 1939. Ms. Vettenenara, an outstanding scholar-athlete, was a double major in English and Spanish.

Dr. Lucy Williams is the 11th president of The City College. Under his leadership, the College has gained increased national recognition. Dr. Williams has published three books including the award-winning “Life on the Color Line: The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black.” Dr. Williams holds five degrees, including a J.D. and a Ph.D. from George Washington University. He came to CCNY from Ohio State University, where he was Dean of the Law School.

Oscar de la Renta left the Dominican Republic at age 18 to study painting in Spain. Art would lead him to the world of design. Mr. de la Renta, moved to New York in 1963 and is now one of the world’s leading fashion design- ers. In 2016, he was, for the ninth consecutive year, named to the list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by Time Magazine. He is also the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Council of Fashion Designers of America and the 2016 CFDA Fashion Icon Award. In 2016, he was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize.

Joseph Flom (’48) has in his 56 years at New York City College of Technology (City Tech) marked the annual rite of passage for graduating students at its 65th Commencement Exercises at Madison Square Garden. President Russell K. Hotzler conferred 1,766 degrees, including 1,063 associate and 703 baccalaureate. President Hotzler also presented the President’s Award.

The City College is part of the City University of New York. Her future plans include earning a Ph.D. in German, Dutch and Cherokee Indian descent, Caruso is a symbol of the diversity of the student body at City Tech and The City University of New York. She earned a master’s degree in education and is an early childhood teacher.

“My main problem,” she says, “is having too strong a drive for perfection. During my second year at City Tech, for example, I took 22 credits in one semester, had no free time and actually burnt myself out. I’ve since learned to pace myself a little better,” she adds, “so that this semester I’m taking only five classes and have more time for myself.”

“They’ve learned to trust me,” she adds, “so that I can be more patient, more observant, and can listen not for what is just on the surface, but for the thoughts and concerns behind the spoken words.”

**BARNARD COLLEGE: ANNA QUINDLEN, AUTHOR & JOURNALIST**

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author Anna Quindlen challenged the graduates at her alma mater, Barnard College, to resist the country’s “culture of conformity” and bravely embrace their own direction in life instead of following the “muddled mess- age that ‘we’re all the same.’” She said, “You must refuse to be cowed by the opinions of others. Everyone is just as important as you are.”

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The City College is part of the City University of New York. Her future plans include earning a master’s degree in education and becoming an early childhood teacher.

“My main problem,” she says, “is having too strong a drive for perfection. During my second year at City Tech, for example, I took 22 credits in one semester, had no free time and actually burnt myself out. I’ve since learned to pace myself a little better,” she adds, “so that this semester I’m taking only five classes and have more time for myself.”
So it has come to this—graduation day, and today I know the sacrifices you’ve made to be here and I know the joy of standing up and saying “I did it!” For me this is a kind of homecoming. My first real job, when I was in graduate school, was working at the City University (CCNY) and I still remember my students with great fondness. I’m a writer and I’ve spent more than three years working and putting words in the right order, and trying to make sense—which to me means telling the truth. My work has never really gone out of style, but it has gotten harder these days because the language we speak has been captured by deliberate liars. Who are the liars? Politicians, movie stars and other celebrities who all have what they think are good reasons to say the opposite of what is true.

Telling the truth has never been harder because our very words have been corrupted. But our country was founded on the truth that the plain facts are more important than the fancy words of kings...

I guess I’ve been chosen to talk to you because as a writer I’ve published nineteen books—poetry, fiction, non-fiction. I’ve never stopped expecting it, never stopped trying my best to tell it and never stopped getting mad when it is not told to me. I want you to learn to get mad when you are deliberately lied to. That’s one of the main things an education is for—learning to distinguish between lies and truth.

It’s not lies so important? Because our survival depends on it, our republic depends on it. Our lives depend on it—whether it’s pharmaceutical companies lying about the side effects of drugs or chemical corporations lying about pollution or politicians lying about why our young people are coming home in boxes. We are in danger unless we know the truth and the truth depends on words.

There’s no getting around it. The class of 2005 is also the class of 9/11. You entered Cooper Union exactly two years before the towers fell and you are now graduating into another world, against the backdrop of a wounded city that has emerged from shock but is still in transition. It has never been easier to lie.

We suddenly saw that our world harbored terrorists who had in fact been moving in plain sight through America for years. We learned that there were Al-Qaeda, terrorists, political movie stars and musical singers, and that they outnumbered the terrorists: the firefighters, police and other emergency workers. And also the good Samaritans who were not in uniform but were in the towers that day and extended a hand to a stranger nearby, some of whom paid with their lives.

There is no pretense in the land of 9/11 that we were at war. It was supposed to mark a goodbye to all that. A terrorist attack was no more than a small reminder to force us to get real, to reorder our priorities and address a world that in our complacency we had misunderstood. But as many of you have noticed, a funny thing happened on our way to becoming more than we are today. It is not so easy to navigate a world in which so much fiction masquerades as reality. You have it harder than my generation did. We too entered a real world defined by a controversial war, Vietnam, with no end in sight—taking place in an uncertain world on the other side of the world. But you enter this world fresher for the task than many of us are, premiere ready to go to battle in the name of freedom.

You have your pioneers and your wordsmiths who have a passion for writing during their first Honors College seminar. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, she has received four awards for excellence in English, as well as the Bertha and Philip Goodman Short Story Award for her recently published novella, Innocence, In a Sense. Ms. Despasquel, graduated with a double major in creative writing and journalism. She discovered her passion for writing during her first Honors College seminar. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, she has received four awards for excellence in English, as well as the Bertha and Philip Goodman Short Story Award for her recently published novella, Innocence, In a Sense. Ms. Despasquel graduated with a double major in creative writing and journalism. She discovered her passion for writing during her first Honors College seminar. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, she has received four awards for excellence in English, as well as the Bertha and Philip Goodman Short Story Award for her recently published novella, Innocence, In a Sense. Ms. Despasquel graduated with a double major in creative writing and journalism. She discovered her passion for writing during her first Honors College seminar.
By HERMAN ROSEN

Zydeco, a foot-stompin’, hand-clappin’ music is an integral part of the culture of Lafayette, Louisiana. It is considered black, Creole music, with French lyrics and comes from a song called “Les haricots sont pas sale” or “The snap beans aren’t salty.” Historically, when people talked about “les haricots” music it was slurred in their speech to morph into “zydeco.” Musicians played during a breakfast recently at Café Des Amis in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana, which bears the signatures on the doorposts of Tim Zagat as well as Rauschenberg. Local art is displayed on the walls while patrons munch on local delicacies such as spicy crawfish stuffed cornbread, fried alligator, various flavored grits, sweet beignets dusted with powdered sugar and boudin patties (spicy meat).

Meanwhile, dancing to the beat, men and women are doing a brisk variation of a two-step while musicians play the accordion, guitar (bass and regular), a washboard (frottoir), drums, a triangle (fer), accompanied by a singer.

In the afternoon, we go on to a jam session of Cajun music. It’s a relaxed place for music lovers to just drop in and practice, enjoy, brush up on old songs, learn new ones and chat in-between. Mama Redell has spicy jambalaya on the stove with white rice and pork rinds, self-service in the kitchen while out in front, CDs of Cajun music along with souvenirs are sold. Called Louisiana Heritage and Gifts in Lafayette, it is definitely worth a stop.

Participants include violinists, accordion players, and guitarists. Some players are farmers in this area where rice and sugar cane proliferate. The group gradually swells to about 25 in a small room where about 20 are players who congregate every Saturday, while during weekday eves, lessons are given. Most of the players don’t read music; they learn by just playing along. The accordion player chooses the song and sings loudly while the musicians all tap their feet in time.

Linda Castle lives nearby in Arnaudville, Louisiana. Originally from San Francisco in the biotechnology field, she has traded the hectic pace of the big city for jamming with her violin for over three years.

Murphy Smith, age 76 comes to jam from Eunice. Originally an oil worker, he’s been coming here for two years. His first fiddle, made from a cigar box when he was seven years old, had strings made from window screens. He recalls his abject poverty and how proud he was when his daddy finally bought him a fiddle for $5.

As we left, two young men were jamming alone on the porch: Joshua Richard on leave from the marines was fiddling at a fast pace with fancy finger work while Aaron Chesson accompanied him on the accordion. They had formed their own group called The Hadiah Playboys.
A MEMORABLE VISIT TO LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA WITH ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG, CHRISTOPHER RAUSCHENBERG AND DARRYL POTTORF

By POLA ROSEN, E.D.D.

To speak to and see the master artist Rauschenberg in his hometown of Lafayette, Louisiana alongside his son, sister and friends amidst an opening of his world famous paintings, was an extraordinary experience. Add to that some spicy gumbo and tasty alligator meat, rhythmic, foot-tapping Zydeco music, primeval swamp tours with rare roseate spoonbills, and the southern hospitality of Kay Doré at her 80-acre plantation and you have a vision of Lafayette not readily available to the casual visitor.

The stark modernity of the new Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum underscored the huge, complex images of Bob Rauschenberg’s canvases. In fact, Rauschenberg said, “I feel like my canvases are in a cathedral.” Remembrances of drawing throughout his childhood and seeing Blue Boy at the Huntington Library, made him realize that a human being actually made it thus launching his career as an artist.

Christopher Rauschenberg, son of Robert, had a different experience about how he came to be an artist. “As a math and science major, with three parents are artists, I was the black sheep of my family,” he quipped. “I eventually ended up in painting.” Pottorf never thought of himself as an artist. Later he became Rauschenberg’s assistant and ultimately developed his own style. A notable shared characteristic in all three artists is their penchant for collaboration. Bob’s view is that one idea invites another; Chris was raised to see art as a team sport; Darryl also generates ideas when working with others.

The three artists shared insights on how to deal with criticism. Bob stressed the importance of feeding one’s curiosity and nourishing it every day while Chris stressed the pragmatic need to find friends and galleries that have work similar to yours.

As far as pursuing a career in art, Chris said, “Go for what you can do now; use the web or technology, for example. He feels his “role as an artist is to be an antidote to society becoming all the same. An artist should bring uniqueness to a culture and to society.”

What is Rauschenberg’s greatest fear? “I might run out of the world!” Particularly outstanding in the exhibit was Party Line 2003 with the red phone booth seemingly popping out at the viewer. Pottorf’s Face of September 2001 was a moving portrayal of 9-11 while in another part of the museum, Christopher’s photograph of Pompeii drew me back into the misty history of the ruin as well as a remembrance of my own visit in the past. Christopher stated his reward as an artist is in “people saying they love my work.” Pompeii is one of his personal favorites. “In general, I don’t have people in the photographs because I want the viewer to come up and be in the picture.”

Born in Port Arthur, Texas and coming home from the military to life in Lafayette, how did Rauschenberg make the quantum leap from local artist to acclaim that commands worldwide prices from $100,000 to $1 million? A key event was the Biennale that granted credibility but Chris underscores the fact that his father was interested in just doing his work, not with the goal of becoming an international artist.

Reflecting back on his education, Rauschenberg recalls Black Mountain College, North Carolina, as a place of freedom where he found out who he was; a place to milk cows, wash dishes, study dance and learn Russian. “People did their best when they were there,” he said. When Chris stated that his father had found a community of people there, Bob laughed and pointed out that Chris was being carried around in a laundry basket at that point so how would he know.

Rauschenberg now has a home and studio in Captiva, Florida, a place that for him has a magic that includes yellow butterflies and turtles. Chris has a photography gallery in Portland, Oregon where he “thinks with his hands” referring to his intuitive placement of objects. “An artist,” he says, “takes ordinary objects and sees them in unusual ways.”

In this memorable exhibit, Herman Mhire, director of the stunning University Art Museum, has presented the works of the triumvirate, father, son and friend, enabling us to transcend the ordinary and enter the visionary world of the artist.

Exhibit runs through September 3rd.

Robert Rauschenberg & Christopher Rauschenberg

Party Line 2003 by Robert Rauschenberg

Pompeii by Christopher Rauschenberg

Face of September 2001 by Darryl Pottorf
Health Effects of Omega-3 Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids

By ARTEMIS P. SIMOPoulos, M.D.

There are two families of essential fatty acids, the omega-6 and omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA). They are called essential because human beings cannot make them and they must be obtained from the diet. On the basis of estimates from studies in Paleolithic nutrition and animal experiments, it appears that human beings evolved consuming a diet that was much lower in saturated fatty acids than is today’s diet. Furthermore, the diet contained small and roughly equal amounts of omega-6 and omega-3 PUFA (ratio of 1:2:1) and much lower amounts of trans fatty acids than today’s diet.

The current Western diet is very high in omega-6 fatty acids (the ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids ranges between 10:1–30:1) because of the increased intake of meat and poultry, dairy products, and corn oil, sunflower, safflower, cottonseed and soybean oil—that are high in omega-6 fatty acids for hydrogenation to lower serum cholesterol concentrations. Furthermore, intake of omega-3 fatty acids is much lower today because of the decrease in fish consumption, and the industrial production of animal feeds rich in oils containing omega-6 fatty acids, leading to production of meat rich in omega-6 and poor in omega-3 fatty acids. The same is true for poultry, eggs and farmed fish. Even cultivated vegetables contain fewer omega-3 fatty acids than do plants in the wild. In summary, modern agriculture, with its emphasis on production, has decreased the omega-3 fatty acid content in many foods: green leafy vegetables, animal meats, eggs, and even fish, while it has increased the amount of omega-6 fatty acids in foods, leading to high omega-6 intake for the first time in the history of human beings in many countries around the world.

The traditional diet of Crete (Greece) is consistent with the Paleolithic diet relative to the omega-6:omega-3 ratio. The Lyon Heart Study, which was based on a modified diet of Crete, had an omega-6:omega-3 ratio of 4:1 resulting in a 70% decrease in risk for cardiac death. The higher the ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids in platelet phospholipids, the higher is the death rate from cardiovascular disease. As the ratio of omega-6 PUFA to omega-3 PUFA increases, the prevalence of type 2 diabetes also increases. A balance between the omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids is a more physiologic state in terms of gene expression, eicosanoid metabolism and cytokine production.

Today, more is known about the mechanisms and functions of omega-3 fatty acids than other fatty acids. Research has shown that docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)—an omega-3 fatty acid found in fish oil—is essential for the development of the premature infant relative to visual acuity, visual function and maturation. In the full term infant, DHA may influence visual acuity and neurologic development. At the molecular level using transgenic rodents that the physiologic omega-6:omega-3 ratio is 1:1 or 2:1. Japan has already recommended a ratio of 2:1. The time has come to return the omega-3 fatty acids into the food supply and decrease the omega-6 intake. There is good scientific evidence from studies on the Paleolithic diet, the diet of Crete, other traditional diets (Okinawa), intervention studies, and finally studies at the molecular level using transgenic rodents that the physiologic omega-6:omega-3 ratio is 1:1 or 2:1. There is a need to move away from the long-term prospective studies, and proceed with genotype specific clinical intervention trials.

Most of the research on the role of omega-3 fatty acids has been carried out in patients with coronary heart disease. Intervention trials have clearly shown that omega-3 fatty acids have anti-inflammatory, anti-thrombotic, hypolipidemic and anti-arthritic properties, and decrease sudden death and all cause mortality in the secondary prevention of coronary heart disease and in one study also in the primary prevention. Omega-3 fatty acids lower c-reactive protein (CRP) more than any other nutrient, which accounts for decreasing the risk for coronary heart disease. The decrease in sudden death is most likely due to the anti-arrhythmic effects of omega-3 fatty acids. Inflammation and cell proliferation are at the base of many chronic diseases and conditions, especially atherosclerosis and cancer, but also diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, mental health, and various autoimmune diseases. Individuals carrying genetic variants for these conditions are much more prone to develop them because the high omega-6:omega-3 ratio leads to pro-inflammatory and pro-arthritic states.

In the past, industry focused on improvements in food production and processing to increase shelf life of the products, whereas now and in the future the focus will be on nutritional quality in product development. This will necessitate the development of research for the nutritional evaluation of the various food items and educational programs for professionals and the public. The definition of food safety will have to expand in order to include nutrient structural changes and food composition. The dawn of the twenty-first century will enhance the scientific base for product development and expand collaboration among agricultural, nutritional, and medical scientists in government, academia and industry. This should bring about a greater involvement of nutritionists and dieticians in industrial research and development to respond to an ever-increasing consumer interest in the health attributes of foods.

Artemis P. Simopoulos, M.D. is the President of The Center for Genetics, Nutrition and Health in Washington, D.C. and author of The Omega Diet (Harper Collins, 1999)
MARYMOUNT COLLEGE’S MORTIMER LEVITT ESSAY WRITING CONTEST

She began by recalling a hesitation to give advice to contest winners, but finding a compromise by providing a list of 10 recommendations that she feels is key to being an excellent writer. Among these are “Read everything from George Orwell to the New York Times” and read from the point of view of the writer; that is, consider how the writer created the work.

Also, Prose advises, be observant and alert of surroundings. Listen carefully when communicating with others, paying attention to how something is being said, to the language used. She went on to point out the importance of having the courage to write what you notice. Ms. Prose emphasized that we keep in mind that there’s something each of us knows which no one else may know. We each have unique experiences and perspectives and the more this comes out in writing, the more “valuable and beautiful it will be.”

What was also evident at the awards ceremony was the value of writing powerfully with an economy of words. Mr. Frumkes indicated that first prize winner, Matthew Lopez, was able to successfully write the essay using relatively few words—350 out of a possible 500—but that Matthew had related to him that it took him a while to realize the significance of Mr. Levitt’s words. The end result according to Mr. Frumkes was a “stylish and poetic piece.”

Invited guest Dr. Gurcharan Singh, Professor Emeritus of International Studies at Marymount College, took a few moments to emphasize the power and also the difficulty of writing something that gets the point across without any wasted words. He recalled the story of Lord Byron who won first place in an essay contest whose subject was “Why the color of wine was red rose?” Lord Byron’s one sentence response —“Master saw the water and it blushed”—won first prize in the contest.

Illustrating the time involved in being economically, yet powerful with words, Professor Singh related the story of Winston Churchill who during World War II wrote a letter to the President beginning with “I wish I had more time to write a short letter.”

All winners of the contest received certificates of achievement as well as generous bonds, sponsored by Mr. Levitt, and of course the chance to respond to the inspiring words of this charismatic and philanthropic gentleman.

By LIZA YOUNG

Mortimer Levitt is 98 and still inspiring thousands. Not only does Mr. Levitt provide philanthropic support to educational institutions, he inspires students and educators alike with his wit and his passion for living.

Named in his honor, the topic of this year’s Mortimer Levitt Writing Contest of Marymount College was a quote from his latest book 96 and Too Young to Die. “Endless trouble is the price.”

College was a quote from his latest book Mortimer Levitt Writing Contest of Marymount and his passion for living inspires students and educators alike with his wit.

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National Book Award for the novel Blue Angel, critically acclaimed novels and a finalist for the

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These words generated essays which were intense and touching, as indicated by Director Lewis Frumkes at the recent awards ceremony for winners of the contest. Professor Frumkes explained that he chose not to read any essays aloud as they are of a personal nature, with many students requesting their essays not be read aloud.

Guest speaker, Francine Prose, author of eleven

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Generation Baruch.

We may not look like we’re part of the same generation, but while we grew up at different times, we come from the same place. We attended a college whose campus was New York. And we got there via the IRT, not the LIE, which was good, because it’s easier to do your homework hanging on to a subway strap than a steering wheel. We all worked hard, became the first members of our families to graduate from college, and pulled ourselves up by our own bootstraps to achieve success. And if that sounds like the American Dream at work, it is. It’s what brings us together and makes us one generation.

Now we need your help so that future generations can join Generation Baruch and help keep the dream going.

No generation better reflects the American Dream than ours.

Mayor Bloomberg’s Proposed CUNY Capital Budget

By MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN, CHANCELLOR, CUNY

We celebrate further progress in CUNY’s renewal with the announcement by Mayor Bloomberg of the largest community college capital construction program in the history of the University.

Mayor Bloomberg’s proposed capital budget will infuse more than $157.4 million in new city funding for new science laboratories, classrooms, research facilities, student computer laboratories and long needed renovations and health and safety improvements. This is in addition to the more than $166 million in reappropriated City funding for a total of $323.9 million.

These new funds will be matched by the State total of a $569 million investment the first large infusion of capital dollars for our community colleges in more than a decade. The Mayor’s actions will greatly enhance the learning environment on CUNY campuses across the City and send a lasting signal of support as we modernize programs and services.

The Mayor’s initiative, when added to the expanded State capital budget approved by the New York State Legislature and the Governor in April, provides $1.983 billion in support for CUNY’s senior and community colleges through-out all five boroughs and creates a capital program that will dwarf any capital program this University has had in its history.

The Mayor’s 2005-06 Executive Budget provides capital funding for Borough of Manhattan Community College, Bronx Community College, Hostos Community College, LaGuardia Community College, Kingsborough Community College, Queensborough Community College and Medgar Evers College, a senior college that offers both two-year and four-year programs.

With this support, City and State officials are affirming the ongoing renewal at CUNY. Enrollment is at its highest level in thirty years, our colleges are attracting many of the most academically talented faculty and students, and they are winning top awards from our two Rhodes Scholars and our Intel Science winner to our faculty Pulitzer Prize and McArthur Foundation genius award winners.

We will further leverage this public support with a competitive matching strategy that will seek private donors and other philanthropic dollars to further scale up our efforts.

We look forward to working with a most supportive City Council to achieve a final budget that will enable CUNY to continue to offer high quality educational programs and services.

My thanks to all who worked so tirelessly to make this historic capital budget a reality.

For more information on how you can support future generations, please call 212.802.2900. Or visit www.baruch.cuny.edu/bcf/.

Above, from left: Max Berger, Class of ’68, Senior Partner, Bernstein, Litowitz, Berger and Grossmann • JoAnn Ryan, Class of ’79, MS ’83, President and CEO, Con Edison Solutions • Alan Liang, Class of ’05, Baruch BBA in Finance, CUNY Honors College • Evelyn Taveras, Class of ’96, Baruch BBA in Marketing Management, Senior Media Planner, Della Femina Rothschild Jeary & Partners

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Reflections on Visiting the Extermination Camps: 2005

By HOWARD MAIER

Margaret and I have returned from the March of Living trip to Auschwitz and two other Holocaust extermination camps. Joining us from the Nassau County Holocaust Center were Holocaust survivor Gloria Glantz, her son Craig, and Holocaust survivors Eddie and Judy Weinstein. Also in Poland for the March of the Living were 21,000 others—many students and Holocaust survivors from throughout the United States, Israel and over 65 other countries. This was the first time Holocaust survivors and other adults were invited for this annual march of teenagers. The inclusion of adults was inspired as a commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the liberation of the Holocaust camps.

We heard detailed survivor testimony about their horrific experiences, we saw crematoriums, gas chambers and many graves. On the other hand we were exhilarated by being among thousands of youth carrying Israeli flags and singing songs in Hebrew.

This trip also provided a view of Jewish life in Europe prior to the Holocaust. We visited old Jewish quarters in Warsaw and Krakow. We saw abandoned synagogues and walked through old cemeteries where great rabbis and every-day Jews were buried.

We heard historical talks from our tour leader, Dr. Bill Shulman, President of the Association of Holocaust Organizations, from our Israeli-born bus tour guide, and from our Polish bus guide. We were also blessed with testimony from survivors throughout the week.

Upon arrival in Poland, we boarded our bus and immediately drove to Treblinka, a death camp where over 800,000 people, primarily Jews, were exterminated during 1941-1942. This was an awesome sight. One could feel the death hidden by the surrounding forest. We heard the vivid testimony from survivor Eddie Weinstein, who was at Treblinka for seventeen days before he escaped. We all benefited from Eddie’s testimony that day. For the remainder of the trip I found myself often in conversation with Eddie, hearing about his time doing forced labor, his seventeen months being hidden by the owner of a fish hatchery, his time in the Polish Army and his journey post liberation.

Later that day we stopped at the site of the Warsaw ghetto and heard about the ghetto uprising. We visited a standing ghetto wall and memorials to the uprising. We asked about the current Jewish population in Warsaw and were saddened to hear that less than 300 Jews live there today. Although census numbers are not available, it is believed between 5,000 and 10,000 Jews live in Poland.

The second morning after minimal sleep, we went to the Warsaw train station for the four-hour ride to Auschwitz. On the platform our group stood along with hundreds and hundreds of other people from around the world, many young, carrying flags from their country and also holding Israeli flags. Adjacent to us was a group from Ecuador and next to them Canadian teenagers. The first train pulled in, jammed with smiling teenagers. When the train stopped the teens came to the window, and put out a sign saying “EITZ HAYIM MOSCOW.” The Ecuadorian group began singing in Hebrew and we all joined in, including the Russian teens on the train. We were all overcome with emotion.

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“HOW A COWGIRL GOT TO THE SUPREME COURT”

By NAZNEEN MALIK

“I was not seeking a position on the US Supreme Court,” says Justice Sandra Day O’Connor at a recent lecture at Barnard College. Originally intending to speak about women and the law, she instead decided to share her personal story with students, weaving together memories and experiences like a masterful storyteller, thus revealing an underlying principle that has governed much of her life—the unwillingness to take no for an answer.

Although Justice O’Connor is the first woman to be appointed to the United States Supreme Court in our country’s then 205 year history and became the first woman majority leader in the Arizona State Senate, her road to success was littered with many obstacles. But O’Connor has never been one to shrink away from challenges.

After all, her first pet was a bobcat.

Growing up on a cattle ranch in the American Southwest in an old adobe house with four rooms, and no running water or indoor plumbing, O’Connor learned self-reliance at an early age. “It [the ranch] was so remote and out of town that we would go once a week to get groceries, the mail and to pick up any supplies that were needed. If anything on the ranch needed to be built, or repaired, or doctor, or whatever it was, it was a place where you had to do it yourself,” she declares. But she loved it, nonetheless. It was education, however, that eventually played a significant role in shaping her future aspirations.

When she was ten, O’Connor was sent to live with her grandparents in El Paso so that she could attend school. My father never had a chance to go to college, she declares. But she loved it, nonetheless. It was a place where you had to do it yourself,” she declares. But she loved it, nonetheless. It was education, however, that eventually played a significant role in shaping her future aspirations. When she was ten, O’Connor was sent to live with her grandparents in El Paso so that she could attend school. My father never had a chance to go to college, she declares. But she loved it, nonetheless. It was education, however, that eventually played a significant role in shaping her future aspirations.

When she was sixteen, O’Connor enrolled in Stanford University and recalls being terrified for smaller estates she could manage from home. But it was an undergraduate class at Stanford, taught by a persuasive professor with legal training that inspired O’Connor to pursue a law degree. She applied to Stanford Law School, and was accepted as one of five women, at a time when the school allowed fourth year under-graduates to complete a law degree in three years. Today, over fifty percent of law school students are female; however, back then, they represented no more than three percent, nationwide.

Despite her high academic standing and having been editor of the Stanford Law Review, O’Connor experienced tremendous difficulty obtaining employment. Intrepid firms confidently disclosed their reasons for not hiring women, and there were no mavericks who wished to break precedent and hire a female lawyer. One firm went so far as to offer her a secretarial position instead.

In response, O’Connor took matters into her own hands, approached the California district attorney’s office and negotiated the terms of her first job—no pay.

But when her husband was drafted and sent to West Germany as part of the JAG unit, O’Connor decided to leave her treasured job and accompany him. When they returned, firms were still not hiring women so she opened up a law office with a colleague. Shortly afterward, O’Connor gave up her practice to stay home and raise her children. Aware that if she simply stopped working she would never get another job, O’Connor kept busy. Among other things, she opened up a lawyer referral service and took bankruptcy court appointments to be a trustee in bankruptcy. Firms were still not hiring women so she opened up a law office with a colleague. Shortly afterward, O’Connor gave up her practice to stay home and raise her children. Aware that if she simply stopped working she would never get another job, O’Connor kept busy. Among other things, she opened up a lawyer referral service and took bankruptcy court appointments to be a trustee in bankruptcy.

“All of this was fine but I was so busy I needed to make something of it,” she explains, “but you start at the bottom and you try to make something of it.” O’Connor was later appointed to the Arizona State Senate and became the first female majority leader. Ironically, it was the same man who had offered her the secretarial position in the beginning of her career that introduced her to President Reagan and played a central role in her appointment to the Supreme Court in 1981. “It’s a hard job,” admits O’Connor, “[but] I always knew that I wanted to work and I wanted to work at work worth doing and I have been privileged to have that kind of work.”

Justice Sandra Day O’Connor (l) and President Judith Shapiro
The use of corporal punishment in public schools attracts strong supporters and even stronger critics—few people are neutral. Surprisingly, the United States stands almost alone among industrialized nations in allowing corporal punishment in public education. Canada finally banned corporal punishment in 1998 and 10 other countries have followed suit. The use of corporal punishment in public schools does not violate the Fourteenth Amendment substantive due process guarantees or the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against cruel and unusual governmental punishment. Recognizing that state remedies are available, the Court reasoned that challenges to excessive corporal punishment should be handled under state law.

But the Ingraham decision did not foreclose a successful challenge to corporal punishment under the U.S. Constitution. Several federal appeals courts have recognized that excessive corporal punishment can impair public school students’ Fourteenth Amendment substantive due process protections against arbitrary and unreasonable governmental action if the punishment shocks the conscience. This standard was met when a coach knocked a student’s eye out of its socket with a metal lock and where a teacher restrained a student until he lost consciousness and fell to the floor. Yet, students must satisfy a very high standard to substantiate that corporal punishment violates the Fourteenth Amendment, and most claims have not been successful.

Students who are injured by teachers can always bring criminal or civil assault and battery suits, which might result in fines and/or imprisonment for the teachers or monetary awards for the victims. Where corporal punishment is banned by state law, school board policy, or even action of a local school council, teachers can be dismissed for insubordination if they repeatedly disregarded such prohibitions. And in schools that allow corporal punishment, educators are not required to use it. Teachers who elect to corporally punish students should be certain their actions are reasonable and preferably witnessed by another adult.

There is mounting criticism of corporal punishment, and more than 40 organizations, including the American Bar Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Education Association, have gone on record opposing the use of corporal punishment in schools. Although this discipline strategy is still widely used in American schools, there has been a steady decline in incidents of corporal punishment since the mid-1970s. If its use continues to decline, perhaps the U.S. will move more in line with the policies and practices of other countries.

Martha McCarthy is the Chancellor’s Professor at Indiana University.

**LETTERS**

**Prison College Programs Unlock the Keys to Human Potential**

To the Editor:

My name is Aldo S. Dominguez and you wrote an article on me on December 3, 2003. I am an ESL teacher at the Youngon Public Schools and a patient of Dr. Gerald Appel at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. I just wanted to inform you that I received a kidney transplant. I was called this year on my birthday, Friday, February 25, 2005, and on Saturday, February 26, 2005 at approximately 4:00AM I went into surgery. This was the best birthday gift ever! I just wanted to thank you and your staff for their efforts in writing the article about me and getting the word out on “Organ Donor Awareness.”

Aldo S. Dominguez
New York

**Debunking the Stereotype of the Female Boxer**

To the Editor:

How can I become a professional boxer like you?

Monaichael Seagroves
Sanland Park, NM

**Hospitality Management Excellence at Cornell University**

To the Editor:

I would like to have more information about the summer Hospitality program.

Marcia Alves
Brazil
**PRODUCT REVIEW: DISCOVER! ASTRONOMY**

By MITCHELL LEVINE

As any home education family in New York is probably aware, there is a critical lack of great science enrichment available for homeschoolers. While much curricula and supplementary material can be easily purchased for subjects like history, writing, math, and language arts, the complexity of the scientific field and the need for hands-on learning seems to have thinned out the herd in that marketplace.

EOA's Scientific Discover! Astronomy thus fills a critical void. As teachers realized long ago, the science of the cosmos is a unique branch of the sciences for students. By its very nature, it fascinates children and adults alike, and can be used as a basis for the study of a bewildering number of subjects. By creating an interactive environment for the investigation of astronomy and space science, this software presents an opportunity to exploit those built-in advantages in a fun and convenient manner for homeschooling parents and children.

Using the model of a 3D virtual laboratory, each of the CDs in the volume offers a different chapter in the basics of astronomy: Kepler and Newton's laws; the Big Bang; stars, planets and galaxies; the fundamentals of the scientific method, and much more. Each one begins with a 30 minute digital video, and a large number of supplementary multimedia tutorials (200 in all) as an exposition of the core knowledge. The real heart of the program, however, is in the labs, which allow the user to act as a scientist, and take samples, perform tests, and analyze and evaluate data for controlled experiments related to the topics. The experiments can be performed in many different settings, and parameter tweaks, for example, often permit the student to move the whole project to another planet!

Particularly helpful for home-based learning is the fact that all of the text in the series can be accessed at two different grade levels, 6-7 and 9-11, doubling the range of age-appropriate target groups. A sophisticated series of tests and quizzes are included, which are about as comprehensive as those bundled with any tutorial academic software I've seen, and provide full performance feedback to teachers. Best of all, the material has been directly correlated to the New York State standards, a rare luxury for NYS homeschoolers.

Although I wasn't able to trial them, EOA Scientific makes a number of other science packs available, like Discover! Geology, Discover! Weather, and Discover! Oceans. Based on what I have seen, though, I would be hard-pressed to believe that they were any less carefully planned, thoroughly researched, and masterfully presented to meet the needs of homeschoolers as this product so clearly is.

For more information, consult the manufacturer's site at www.scienceschoolhouse.com.

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**THE MYTH OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

By CHRIS KLIJKA

**SENIOR COUNSEL FOR HOME SCHOOL LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION**

Most education officials publicly claim that teachers need special "qualifications" in order to be effective. Although this seems reasonable on the surface, such requirements not only violate the rights of parents to teach their children as guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments, but virtually all academic research documents that there is no positive correlation between teacher qualifications (especially teacher certification requirements) and student performance.

I have talked with hundreds of school officials who cannot understand how a "mere mother" with a high school diploma could possibly teach her own children. These officials literally take offense that parents would try to teach their children and actually think that they will do as well as teachers in the public school who have at least four years and sometimes seven years of higher education. What is so laughable about this belief in teacher qualifications by public school authorities are the statistics which show the appalling decline in competency among certified public school teachers and the failure of their teacher colleges.

One of the most significant studies in this area was performed by Dr. Eric Hanushek of the University of Rochester, who surveyed the results of 113 studies on the impact of teachers' qualifications on students' academic achievement. Eighty-five percent of the studies found no positive correlation between the educational performance of the students and the teacher's educational background. Although 7 percent of the studies did find a positive correlation, 5 percent found a negative impact.

Two education researchers, R. W. Heath and M. A. Nielsen surveyed forty two studies of "competency-based" teacher education. Their findings were that there was no empirical evidence exists to establish a positive relation between those programs and student achievement. Four other education researchers, L. D. Freeman, R. E. Flood, R. Howans, and D. C. Corrigan, did separate studies in the effectiveness of teacher certification requirements. They all concluded that there is no significant relation between teacher certification and student performance in the classroom.

In July 1999, the Thomas Fordham Foundation published a study entitled: "Better Teachers, Better Schools," a 250 page study edited by Chester Finn & Marci Kanstoroom, employing data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988. The study also found that having a degree in education has no impact on student science test scores and, in mathematics, having a BA in education actually has a statistically negative impact on scores in math! All the studies demonstrate that parents' "hands-on" degree in homeschooling their own children is much more effective than spending all that time for a BA in education.

Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute released a report entitled, A Nationwide Study of Home Education: Family Characteristics, Legal Matters, and Student Achievement. The research revealed that there was no positive correlation between the state regulation of homeschools and the home-school student's performance.

Furthermore, this same study demonstrated that only 13.9 percent of the mothers (who are the primary teachers) had ever been certified teachers. The study found that there was no difference in students' total reading, total math, and total language scores based on the teacher certification status of their parents: Whether the home-school parent had a teaching certificate, a college degree, or a high school diploma or less, did not make any difference — all their children scored, on the average, in the 80th percentile. This study has been confirmed by two other studies of the qualifications of homeschool parents.

The trend in state legislatures across the country indicates an abandonment of teacher qualification requirements for homeschool teachers. In fact, Americans, in general, are realizing that the necessity of teacher qualifications is a myth. The teachers' unions and other members of the educational establishment make up the small minority still lobbying for teacher certification in order to protect their disintegrating monopoly on education.

This article appears courtesy of the Homeschool Legal Defense Fund, www.hslda.org.
Putting Homeschooling Programs to the Test Before You Invest

By MITCHELL LEVINE

Finding a homeschool curriculum that matches the needs of you and your child is one of the most difficult and important decisions a homeschool family makes. It isn’t easy. There’s a great deal of good information about homeschooling available from friends, neighbors, relatives, other homeschoolers, and the Internet. However, knowing what to look for will help you find a program that is right for your family and child.

A homeschooling program is a lot like a pair of shoes. It has to fit well to be comfortable and effective day after day. If you start off with a good program, you can tailor it with confidence. Careful evaluation is critical to success, say experts. “You want appropriate, academically challenging lessons that inspire your child to do his best,” says Jean C. Halle, president of Calvert School Education Services, based in Baltimore, Md. The company is the homeschooling provider arm of Calvert School, which in 1906 started to offer its private school curriculum to families who wanted to teach at home. Today, Calvert enrolls 17,000 students each year in its prekindergarten through eighth grade programs. Calvert School receives thousands of calls each year from families investigating whether the school’s complete classical curriculum is right for them. “We put a lot of time into helping families select what’s right for them, based on the students’ competencies,” says Halle. Sometimes student is placed ahead or below his age grade level. In math, for example, he may be placed at a different level than the balance of his studies. “It’s critical that the curriculum be well suited to that child’s needs in order for him or her to be successful.” Parents should explore four main components of a provider’s offerings when choosing a homeschool curriculum. The first step in a child’s academic experience should be appropriate placement in grade. The ideal placement assessment takes into account how your child arrived at answers in order to evaluate both concept knowledge as well as his ability to apply those skills. Because they offer details about a child’s writing mechanics, vocabulary and spelling levels, sentence structure, content, and organization skills, evaluations of writing samples are important. A good curriculum will draw material from a variety of sources, incorporate opportunities for practice to improve written and oral communication, and help your child to learn, analyze, and interpret information, not simply memorize facts. An integrated curriculum allows the student to write about all subjects, to think mathematically about subjects other than math, compare and contrast geographical statistics history facts, and to review and obtain valuable reinforcement of concepts taught.

Lesson manuals should provide good detail, including lessons that introduce topics, explain concepts, coordinate subjects with each other, and suggest added practice and enrichment. At the appropriate age, the manual should be directed to the student, and the role of the home teacher should turn to more of an advisory role. If the provider offers answer keys for all daily work, parents can confirm their child’s performance. Educational professionals, who can offer strategies for teaching children with all learning styles, should be available by phone, fax, or email, to answer any questions you may have and offer suggestions for accelerated or remedial work.

PRODUCT REVIEW: VISIONWORK READPHONICS

By MITCHELL LEVINE

Over the several years we’ve focused on homeschooling, I’ve noticed from our reader feedback that the #1 issue discussed in the responses has been reading pedagogy. Although we’ve certainly spotlighted some excellent programs, many of which have been phonics-based, few of them seem to have been truly comprehensive enough to allow the uncomfortableness of parents with the teaching of reading. Thankfully, Visionwork Education has stepped up to the plate with a truly integrated CD-based software tutorial program, ReadPhonics. Probably the most significant element of the system is the 77 volume set of literary classes appearing in the software, including Sense and Sensibilities, Through the Looking Glass, and The Wind in the Willows. Divided into four levels, and segregated by grade, the books form the foundation of the entire course. After choosing one to read, based on interest, the student receives an extensive series of tests and quizzes measuring their mastery of vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing at the end of every chapter. Through repetition, and access to the ReadPhonics Word Puzzle, complete expertise can be developed and demonstrated with precision on the part of a home-based educator.

An interesting component is the inclusion of five essay topics in the essay topic question provided at these junctions. Actual literary themes are introduced in inquiries created by professors of English literature, and single paragraph response and then gradually expanding to full five paragraph essays. Having looked at the essay questions included with ReadPhonics’ Two Cities, I do have to remark that I felt they were rather challenging for the targeted age group, but not so much so that they’d be too difficult for the average homeschooling family. Visionwork’s software also makes trained analysts available to evaluate student essays available through an online program, as well as, for those that can take advantage of it, a premium phone-based tutoring service.

For a package that names itself after phonics, an unusual amount of attention is paid to vocabulary development. Most noticeably, the Challenge Words feature integrates an on-screen version of the American Heritage Dictionary, accessed through links the reader clicks on if they can’t understand a particular word. The software keeps a record of those items, and tests the student on them contextually. A “parent’s checkpoint feature” allows parents to follow the progress and numerous other points, from any computer connected to the Net.

In the mind’s of some parents, however, the program’s greatest strength may also be its weakness: the question presents itself, “Will children want to read the books included with the system?” I’m happy to relate an example with a current child. Given the broad extent and excellent selection of the included literature, a child inclined to read – or even one that hasn’t yet caught the bug – will certainly find something of interest. Unfortunately, there are many more features than I have room to cover. Home educators should log onto www.visionwork.com for further information and online ordering.

THE WRITESHOP INCREMENTAL WRITING PROGRAM:

Intended for students from grades seven through ten, this composition curriculum for junior high school students provides the flip side of the basic English Skills and Basic Grammar. Instead of concentrating on the fundamentals of grammar and punctuation, the WriteShop curricula deals carefully with the elements of narrative and expository writing.

Developed by two homeschooling moms over several years of teaching practice, the lessons begin with the essentials of description, and move on to narrative, style, persuasive writing, and essay formats. Between the two semester plans encompassing about two year of unit studies, parents can expect lesson topics to be anticipated, and a great deal of mutual participation on the part of a parent/teacher. Participation on the part of a parent/teacher is necessary as well. However, instruction is not required. Any organized process of revision, several rewrites, and a final evaluation over several days of instruction. While thorough and complete, WriteShop is not to be embarked on without a serious commitment on the part of both students and parents. Even instructors of time spent writing, editing and rewriting can be anticipated, and a great deal of mutual participation on the part of a parent/teacher is necessary as well. However, the homeschooling family willing to invest the time and effort, profound levels of improvement in all types of writing can be expected. Although WriteShop is more expensive than the average homeschooling curriculum, for any parent looking to vastly improve their child’s expertise in a skill set increasing in college placement aids in the job market, it’s probably the best available today. For more information, log onto www.writershop.com.

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FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT’S SEAT

Easing the Diploma Dilemma

By DR. CAROLE G. HANKIN
with RANDI T. SACHS

June is certainly a magical time of year. High school graduation brings excitement to many households. It can also be a time when parents and children clash about expectations. Call it the “diploma dilemma.”

Each graduation is a two-fold event of endings and beginnings. Students graduate school after reaching the top. As American Balloon, I can tell you they are all special.

Each child is dressed identically in cap and gown, and it’s hard even for parents to tell them apart. One by one they walk across the stage, receive their diploma, shake hands, and emerge with a grin. Every one of them is the same… until they call your child’s name.

Once you’ve identified your offspring and see them grasp that diploma, it’s the rare parent who doesn’t get a lump in the throat and a tear or two in the eye. It’s been a long time coming, even though it feels as though kindergarten was just yesterday. Your child is on top of the world. Their next step, though, is again at the bottom rung. Consider the high school graduate. This year, they’ve been at the top of their school, seniors, with all the perks that go with this elevated status. After the summer they’ll be freshmen again. They will probably have more freedom and more responsibility than they’ve ever had in their lives, yet their status as freshmen may put a little hesitation in their step until they’ve won back the confidence they felt as an all-knowing high school senior.

However, with that diploma in hand, there is an inescapable truth you must confronted. Ready or not, your child is now an “adult.” How do you expect your graduate to take his or her place as a new adult in your family? What changes does your graduate expect you to make?

To avoid this diploma dilemma we suggest you (all parents involved)

Q & A WITH DR. CHRISTINA COLON ABOUT SEEDS 2

CURRICULA: PLANT ADAPTATIONS

Teachers use the curriculum in the classroom as well as in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden. Classroom materials include a comprehensive teacher’s guide, reproducible worksheets, a set of hand-lenses, beans for planting and measuring real seeds and fruits from local plants to observe, and non-fiction books. The unit includes two class trips to the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden where students experience what they’ve been studying and practice their science skills in a natural setting. The unit includes a full-day teacher training session as well as a teacher pre-trip pass to the Garden. Teachers can earn six units of new teacher credits by participating in the spring, summer, or fall training session.

For whom is this unit appropriate?

All children in grades 2-3 will benefit from SEEDS 2; even teachers of older students also find it appropriate and useful. Teachers who have ESL students or who teach children with special learning challenges have found SEEDS extremely helpful because it uses so many different approaches to these concepts. The curriculum is flexible and can be adapted to accommodate many learning styles. # SEEDS 2: Plant Adaptations will launch Thursday, June 16th. A reception will be held in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Principals, administrators, science cluster teachers and 2nd and 3rd grade classroom teachers from the New York metropolitan area will be attending to learn about the new curriculum unit. To reserve a spot for the June 16th reception call 718.817.8175. To learn more about the SEEDS curriculum visit www.nybg.org/chil/ecag.html.

Dr. Christina Colon is the Curator of Curriculum Development and Evaluation at The New York Botanical Garden and creator of the SEEDS curricula.

FROM THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

MOVIE REVIEW

Enthrancing Dancing: Mad Hot Ballroom

PHILLY’S MUSICAL KIDS ROCK SCHOOL

By JAN AARON

Peppy and pleasing Mad Hot Ballroom is a documentary covering tweener ages in a New York Citywide ballroom contest and the devoted adults who guide them there. It provides insight into American Balloon Theatre’s (Abt’s) Dancing Classrooms, currently offering instruction in dance classes for over 60 of the city’s public schools. First time feature filmmaking team Marilyn Agro and Amy Sewell focus on three schools who profile the rich cultural diversity in New York’s classrooms.

The program is about the making of “little ladies and gentlemen” to quote the emotionally involved teacher Allison Shenika of PS 150 in Tribeca. But it’s more than that. It shows the surprising charm and grace that develops between 10 and 11-year-old boys and girls who amaze themselves while dancing ranges from merengue and rumba to foxtrot, tango, and swing.

Perpetually patient dance coach Alex Tchassov, guides the Tribeca group, one of them, totally caught up: Tara Devon Gallagher rehearses in front of her mirror at home. Teacher Yomaira Reynoso’s group at P.S. 115 in Washington Heights, coached by Rodney Lopez, has fewer...

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BRETT NOPEN-BRANDON

For this column, I thought I’d say a little bit from my usual concerns, namely the state of arts in education. Just a little bit, mind you. I want to talk about a favorite television program and, after all, being aware of the impact a powerful medium can have is part of my work. Besides, my concern today is certainly as universal as anything I might deal with in my professional life: it is the concern of a parent.

I enjoy television. I do not believe that absolutely nothing besides Masterpiece Theatre or Live from Lincoln Center is worth watching; training programs for young American actors. I chose it not simply for its high-brow merits, any more than we at Lincoln Center Institute choose our artistic repertory because it qualifies as “high art.” We choose it because it is an aesthetic experience of high quality. Television, too, has produced many works of great quality: they can be—dare I say it—art, and watching them can be an aesthetic experience. “By aesthetic experience” I mean, for example, an episode of ER that moves me because the script is strong, and the characters are convincing and appealing. In their joys and tragedies I can find reflections of the larger human condition, moments drawn from almost frighteningly recognizable episodes of our own lives. And just as I am watching the joys and tragedies that touch us daily on the evening news, I also have the ability to witness what I can only qualify as a gustatory pull at the heartstrings. Dr. Carter left ER last week after 11 years on the show. He gave a moving speech to his fellow emergency room doctors and nurses. Then he was gone. Forever. I hope to be able to bask in the afterglow of the season’s finale, with that happy-sad feeling one reserves only for shows that are too good to be true.

MUSIC, ART & DANCE

Executive Director of the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education

Bank Street College of Education is pleased to announce that it is simultaneously naming Blanche Saia Professor Emerita, and establishing in her honor an endowed fund, the Blanche Saia Scholarship Fund, to help students fund their graduate studies.

Ms. Saia began her career as the Director of the Temple Emanuel-Nursery School where she taught from 1953 to 1962. From there, she went on to become a member of the faculty at Bank Street College for twenty-nine years. From 1960 to 1989, she taught many courses, including the Study of the Individual Child; Behavior Disorders and Learning Disabilities; and Process and Techniques of Counseling, among others. While at Bank Street, Ms. Saia developed the popular programming for Headstart. She also served as the Coordinator of Educational and Psychological Services for the Early Childhood Center, and the Coordinator of Field Placement Services in the Counseling Department.

At the Teachers Training Institute for Teachers of Indian Children in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and was involved in a Bureau of Indian Affairs training program. In addition, Ms. Saia was a seminar instructor for the President’s Committee on Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency.

Concurrently Ms. Saia worked with the Early Childhood Programs of the Educational Alliance, and as a Mental Health Consultant. She also established a private practice serving families and couples in 1995. Ms. Saia was a delegate to the United Nations on behalf of the International Council of Psychologists, as well as a delegate to the International Conference on the Family in Halka in 1994 as part of the Danish delegation.

A graduate of Hunter College, with a master’s degree in early childhood education from Teachers College, Columbia University, Jim retired from the military in 1994 as a Lieutenant Colonel, and is working with the Army Junior ROTC. That way, if the teaching gig doesn’t work out, he can always make use of his old skills and start a taxi service. The tank is sure to come in handy in busy rush hour traffic.

Ann Cardinal is a freelance writer and co-author of the upcoming novel SisterChicas. She is also the National Mentoring Director for Union Institute & University. She lives in Vernon with her husband and 8-year-old son, Carlos.
**“DANCING THROUGH BARRIERS” AT DANCE THEATER OF HARLEM: AN INTERVIEW WITH KEITH SAUNDERS**

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

As its special contribution to the annual benefit for the Emergency Fund for Student Dance recently, which took place at The Ailey School on West 55th Street, students in the Dance Theatre of Harlem’s (DTH) unique artistic, educational and social outreach program, Dancing Through Barriers (DTB), once again were on their toes, performing pieces set to the music of Bach, Norah Jones and Philip Glass, and ardently faithful to DTH co-founder Arthur Mitchell’s mission to do in dance “what Jackie Robinson did in baseball”—namely, dispove the myth that blacks could not do classical ballet. In 1969 Mitchell, who studied with Balanchine became premier danseur with the New York City Ballet. Deeply moved by the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., he and the late internationally known ballet artist Karel Shook decided to establish a school in tribute to Dr. King that would inspire African-American youngsters to see dance as a way to generate pride and self-respect. The only part of the mission that has changed over the years is that DTH, still dedicated to people of color, reflects the full diversity of the city.

DTH ballet master Keith Saunders continues the tradition. A onetime principal dancer with DTH, he is currently faculty member, Saunders, who has recently taken over the directorship of DTH, looks on with intense interest as faculty member and resident choreographer Robert Garland leads youngsters in rehearsal: “One more time, gentlemen, some steps are funky there.” The boys comply with yet another “run” of “New Bach,” turning, jumping, leaping as one, as if matched by their “muscular memory,” but whose focus improves with each run. Indeed the challenge is great since Saunders has been changing the Glass piece daily. Both he and Garland note that the youngsters are not used to the Ailey space with its rubberized floor to accommodate barefoot dancing and are trying to figure out how to manage slides.

Saunders, who went to Harvard when he was 18, got interested in Afro-American and modern jazz dance, after taking just one course, and was eventually accepted at DTH, where he rose through the ranks. He is proud that starting late, he succeeded. He also points out that the timing was right. America in the 70s, largely due to Baryshnikov, was rediscovering ballet. Marry that development in the arts with Arthur Mitchell’s “fantasy” of building a “Noah’s Art” whereby each country in the world would sponsor two dancers as part of a world-wide celebration of neo-classical ballet, and DTH would find itself uniquely positioned to embody and export the founders’ dreams of a multietnic school and ensemble. Indeed, DTH became the first ballet company to be invited by the US Information Agency to perform in the Soviet Union and the first major performing arts troupe to visit South Africa.

DTB, the educational in-house division of DTH formerly incorporated into DTH in 1992, is a comprehensive and certified educational and community outreach initiative, with age-appropriate and tailor-made collaborations with departments of education, providing weekend and after school opportunities for youngsters 10-17 to study dance, and multi-weekend residencies to study under DTH faculty. Outreach activities are as imaginative as they are various and include lecture demonstrations on classical ballet, live action and videotaped performances of the DTB ensemble and staff that can be adapted for individual and classroom use, training sessions for dance teachers and academic faculty, a master class, introductory classes in movement for students, for their parents or guardians, athletic workshops, field trips and summer intensives, not to mention sessions in creative writing, discussions of basic anatomy, physical therapy, allied arts, nutrition, and stagecraft. That’s the curricular part. The heart of DTH and DTH can be heard beating miles away. When DTH was experiencing financial difficulties a year ago, Saunders recalls, alumni responded from every professional walk of life—dancers who had become lawyers, doctors, executives. They sent not just money but heartbreaking letters, testimony to what DTH meant in their lives in the broadest sense of education. Talk about being on point!

For information about DTH and DTB see www.dancetheatreofharlem.org.
Moving in the Right Direction

By MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

I've always believed that if we set high academic standards for our city's students, and surround them with the right support and encouragement, they will achieve more than we ever imagine. This is the guiding philosophy behind our ambitious efforts to reform our public school system. And recently, with the release of the New York State English Language Arts exam, we have even more proof that it's working.

The number of fourth graders in the city who are reading and writing at grade level has now reached a record high. Nearly 60 percent met or exceeded the State's standards—a 10 percentage point increase over last year. For the first time in 50 percent did so. We won't be satisfied 'til we are closer to 100 percent—but the fact that we had the biggest one-year gain in reading scores ever is very heartening.

Perhaps most encouraging is the progress made by segments of the student population that have struggled the most in the past. For instance, the five regions that showed the most improvement last year were the same five that made the biggest improvements this year. And for the first time since the State began administering the test in 1999, more than half of the fourth-grade Hispanic and African-American students taking it met or exceeded standards.

There are many factors behind the progress of our fourth graders' stunning improvement. One of the most significant is our decision, early last spring, to finally end "social promotion" in the third grade—the practice of automatically promoting to finally end "social promotion" in the third grade last year, it was a drastic but necessary change. It was imperative that we be honest about who was learning and who wasn't. These latest test scores remind us that we need to confront our problems, not cover them up. And when we do that, and focus our resources and our energy on our kids, great things can happen.

Father's Day

By MATILDA RAFFA CUOMO

Surprisingly, the United States is one of a few countries in the world that still sets aside one day of the year to honor fathers, and it took a woman, inspired by a Mother's Day sermon in 1909, to think of the idea. Sonora Stodd Dodd of Spokane, Washington had been raised by her father after her mother died while Sonora was still a young child. Her patience, wisdom, courage and understanding were her mission and solemn responsibility to ensure that her three children would not stay hungry. To express her gratitude and to give other children an opportunity to do so for their father, she sponsored the idea for Father's Day in June 1910, during the month of her Dad's birth.

In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge institutionalized the holiday by proclaiming the third Sunday in June as Father's Day, when red roses would be worn for a living father and white for one who is deceased.

One would have expected a formal recognition of the father's significant role long before Mother's Day of 1910. In primitive societies the father was lionized as the dominant family figure and the symbol of leadership. The Bible paid fathers the ultimate token of respect by picturing God Himself as the father after his mother died while Sonora was still a young child. Her patience, wisdom, courage and understanding were her mission and solemn responsibility to ensure that her three children would not stay hungry. To express her gratitude and to give other children an opportunity to do so for their father, she sponsored the idea for Father's Day in June 1910, during the month of her Dad's birth.

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One would have expected a formal recognition of the father's significant role long before Mother’s Day of 1910. In primitive societies the father was lionized as the dominant family figure and the symbol of leadership. The Bible paid fathers the ultimate token of respect by picturing God Himself as the father and, therefore, of society.

Sigmund Freud said, “I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father’s protection.” The brilliant educator and social psychologist, Dr. Kenneth D. Clark, in his superb work, “Dark Ghetto,” pointed out that there are times when a strong, loving father is there in their life on which to model their behavior often lapse into unstable and irresponsible behavior. Clark opined that one of the reasons for this is that young girls are looking for and can identify with her, a young girl’s yearning for acceptance and identity can lead her into numerous frivolous pursuits. Sigmund Freud suggested that everyone, including girls, possibly from the ranks of educators, the selection of a principal is usually based on subjective criteria rather than on defined leadership skills and character-istics; thus, we have a national crisis of school leadership in which, too often, a school leader’s skills do not match the requirements of the standards or the needs of a particular school or school system. Significant Partnerships School leaders are no longer expected to simply manage a staff of hundreds and an ever-changing budget of billions; what is needed is a set of skills that are appropriate for their school or its special needs. Most of a principal’s time is spent managing the school. Yet, they still need to be involved in the academic success, as demanded by the politicians, the media and the public.

Expected to be entrepreneurial in order to obtain necessary state funds, finding contacts for their students' success, principals must forge significant partnerships with community organizations and businesses that they have the skills appropriate for a boardroom as well as the classroom.

And if managing a staff of hundreds and an ever-changing budget of billions were not enough, they are required to manage school leadership teams, provide encouragement and guidance to parent associations, address student medical and health needs, cope with treasurers, students with special needs, students and parents who speak little or no English, maintain safety and security, implement dozens of monthly central office directives and regulations.
We moved into Auschwitz and hours later heard inspirational presentations by former Israeli Chief Rabbi Meir Lau, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Nobel Peace Prize winner Yitzhak Rabin. The next day, we went to Krakow. On the third day, we returned to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

We walked throughout the camp for hours seeing gas chambers, barracks and a crematorium. We continuously listened to survivor testimony. Over the next three days, our trip included a lengthy stop at the Majdokner extermination camp where the gas chamber, crematorium and barracks all stood. We went through each, hearing the stories of the camps and thinking about the people coming to the camp, going through selection and for the few who were alive, their thoughts about life after Auschwitz.

Among our other stops, we visited the recently opened Auschwitz Jewish Center, the Galicia Jewish Heritage Museum in Krakow, an old large Jewish cemetery in Warsaw and the Jewish Heritage Institute.

This trip was physically and emotionally challenging. Often I felt like I was on an "endless roller coaster." Although I have read many books about the Holocaust and recently heard many survivors’ testimony at our Holocaust Center, being in Poland at the sites brought out a much more intense feeling. Margaret and I spoke at length about our feelings at dinner after the two-day visit to Auschwitz feeling totally emotionally drained. I expressed my desire to further my involvement at the Nassau County Holocaust Center to help realize this vision and prevent anti-Semitism and racism from happening again.

My work ahead will be challenging, but this trip has provided tremendous stimulation. I have always been proud to be a first generation American whose Jewish parents escaped from Germany. This trip reinforced how special it is to be a second generation Holocaust survivor and the importance of teaching "the lessons of the Holocaust."# Howard and Margaret Maier are involved in many humane causes.

Cuomo and appreciate the patience and sacrifices of our program for at-risk children called Mentoring program from 1983 to 1995 and thereafter...

Minister Ariel Sharon and Nobel Peace Prize heard inspirational presentations by former Extermination Camps process that led to the theater's re-opening in 1997, the theater now hosts Disney's Tony Award winning musical,

The Beast educational program, which provides schools with special rates for groups of 15 or more for thing from a full production to an intimate candlelight dinner. For more information please call Amy Andrews

former NYS First Lady Matilda Cuomo is

Sonora Smart Dodd has left a meaningful

and the way to overcome it is to see people as individuals. She believes that there is the need to "get past the view of 'us/them' because "as long as there's a group excluded, society as a whole struggles to think of it as a whole social problem."

Mrs. Rubenstein has a holistic view of individuals, believing that "human beings, whether or not they are criminals, are always growing, changing and evolving—it's just the nature of being human."

The biggest challenge regarding the criminal justice system is lack of funding. But Rubenstein closely monitors the possibility of the return of Pell Grants. A national conference is planned with a focus on a more organized approach to criminal justice facilities. Rubenstein believes that with the return of Pell Grants, "educational programs will return and benefit society as a whole."

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In the role of School Supervisors and Administrators.

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