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The Minds That We Will Need in the Future

By HOWARD GARDNER, Ph.D.

So much of our current discussion about education is about matters that could be deemed technical or political—Should we have charters or vouchers? Should NCLB be maintained, revised, or scuttled? How do we recruit and retain the strongest teaching candidates? Is home schooling good or bad? Against this background, it is salutary to step back every once in a while and ask a big question: What minds should we be cultivating in our young persons?

In my just published Five Minds for the Future (Harvard Business School Press, 2007), I argue that we can and should nurture five kinds of minds:

1. The disciplined mind. Students should learn the ways of thinking associated with major disciplines, in particular mathematics, science, history, and at least one art form. A disciplined mind does not simply know information; it approaches issues, puzzles, and products in expert ways.

2. The synthesizing mind. Nowadays everyone is inundated with information. How do we decide what to pay attention to, what to ignore; how do we organize critical material so that it is useful to us, and how do we communicate to others? The synthesizing mind has strategies for selecting and organizing materials effectively.

3. The creating mind. Almost everything that we do, from the earliest grades through the SATs, requires an abstract attitude. The ethical worker affords others the benefit of the doubt and seeks to make common cause, whenever feasible, with the ethical mind. While the capacity to respect arises early in life, an ethical stance requires an abstract attitude. The ethical worker asks: “What are my responsibilities as a worker, as a professional? The ethical citizen asks, “What do I owe my community, my region, the world at large?” An ethical mind acts according to principles even when such action may go against one’s own self-interest.

As I reflect on these minds, I discern both the temper of the time and the evolution of my own work. For many years, as a psychologist, I was interested principally in discipline and creativity. But the advent of the new digital media impressed on me the “synthesizing imperative.” As a scholar, I used to think that my responsibility ended when I finished my studies or my writings; but when I saw how my work could be abused, I realized that my responsibilities were much broader. And that is when I began to think seriously about the importance of respect and the need for an ethical stance, if we are to be good workers and good citizens.

The synthesis of these two components affords others the benefit of the doubt and seeks to make common cause, whenever feasible, with the ethical mind. While the capacity to respect arises early in life, an ethical stance requires an abstract attitude. The ethical worker asks: “What are my responsibilities as a worker, as a professional? The ethical citizen asks, “What do I owe my community, my region, the world at large?” An ethical mind acts according to principles even when such action may go against one’s own self-interest.

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Five Minds for the Future is an independent newspaper

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“poems”. Can you share some of the inspirations for your writing?

I’ve never thought of “inspiration” as applying to things I have experienced, so I’ll have to be silent in this case. I would never have written a poem without having read and heard many others from many times and (indeed, songs in other languages), so you’d like you could say that my inspiration has come from poetry itself.

What are some of the challenges you’ve faced? At what age did you start writing?

I started to write around the age of 13 as a freshener in high school, but the poems were pretty awful. I didn’t start writing really well until I was 24, after a couple of years at the original Iowa Writers’ Workshop. That would have been around 1952. I published my first poem in Poetry in 1954.

Can you share some of the inspirations for your writing?

Inspiration isn’t a word I use very often. Someone once said, “Writing is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration.” I believe that the funeral was a what “sources” my writing arises from. I’d reply “The ordinary work of daily life.” The possibility of a poem is always there, right in front of you. You may not see it open to it, or you may be too lazy to develop the image or the theme or the possibilities of language, but it’s there. Some of my best work is where I’m literally sweating—pruning roses on a hot day, chopping kindling, riding an overheated bus to a reading at some college or other.

What are some of the challenges you’ve faced? Mostly just staying alive. I was an orphan at 14 and starting the Great Depression. I was barely 18 and a discharged veteran of WW II, just drifting, when I strayed into college in 1949. I’ve survived some serious surgeries over the years. As far as literary challenges are concerned, just surviving a workshop class under John Berryman’s very critical eye was a major test.

Wallace Stevens and Hart Crane took me back to Whitman, for instance, and Milton showed me just why Spencer was so great and remarkable, but did so gently.

List some of your favorite books/poems.

There are too many to list, and “favorite” is too problematic if you care much about a great many poems, novels, works of history and philosophy as I do. If you’d narrow the field for me, I might be able to talk about which books or author I consider most important for me at what moment, or, say, my favorite 19th-century American poets (I’d then say Emerson, Whitman, Dickinson, Melville, but also the minor fin-de-siecle poet Trumbull Stickney.)

For those who might serve as an answer. It’s hard to choose among them. If forced to, I’d say Lowell, Berryman, and Spender were the most influential and in different ways. Lowell saw war as a war on a war, and in my teens before I faced it myself, and he encouraged me to go on writing.

Berryman was a scoundrel. He took no cheap language, clumsy syntax, and sentimentality. In short, he drove me to improve, to work harder, and to expect more of myself. I think of him often. Spender came into my life much later, in the early 1970’s. I’d already been publishing in the best literary magazines in the country by then—Poetry, The New Yorker, The Sewanee Review. From Stephen I learned what real literary greatness is, what decency is, and how to handle in a low-key way whatever literary success it may be your good fortune to achieve. How to go lightly, you might say.

List some of your favorite books/poems.

Fiction: Hemingway’s Collected Short Stories; F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby and Tender Is The Night; Saul Bellow’s The Adventures of Augie March, Herzog, Henderson The Rain King. Poetry: Robert Frost, Collected Poems; some of Ezra Pound’s Cantos; Elizabeth Bishop’s The Complete Poems; Robert Lowell’s Life Studies; John Berryman’s The Dream Songs; William Carlos Williams’s The Complete Poems; and on and on.

In Memoriam: Ronald Croft

This is a tribute to a great man, Ronald Croft, a church organist and beloved father of Dr. Rodney Croft, a surgeon in London. The funeral was a lovely service with great choral and organ music and a reading of Tennyson’s “The Crossing the Bar”. Sunset and evening star, And one clear call for me! And may there be no mourning of the bar, When I put out to sea, But such a tide as moving seems asleep, Too full for sound and foam, That when which drew from out the boundless deep Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell, And after that the dark! For the for’ard from out our bourn of Time and Place The flood may bear me far, I hope to see my Pilot face to face When I have crossed the bar.

According to Dr. Rodney Croft, Tennyson uses the metaphor of the sea as the estuary mouth as the frontier between life and death. He wishes to sail out on the flood tide when the bar does not mean as it does at low tide with the sea rushing against it. He hopes to see his Pilot face to face (i.e. God). Dr. Croft said, “It’s a great poem for just such an occasion, very allegorical and so meaningful. It’s the end of an era, but I am so grateful for my father’s life and the enormous impact it had upon me.”
Nutrition: Part 3


By Lisa K. Winkler

If you have termites, you call an exterminator. If you have a leak, you call a plumber. If you’re sick you call a doctor. So if you’re overweight or just want to eat healthy, whom do you call? A nutritionist. Lisa Cohn makes house calls. Like a “Ghost Buster,” she attacks fat. She goes through clients’ kitchens, from cupboard to cupboard, refrigerator to freezer, trash bag in hand, and throws out what people shouldn’t be eating.

Cohn, president of Park Avenue Nutrition & Spa, believes eating properly is a life skill, akin to learning how to set goals, manage finances, and get along with others. As nutrition and fitness have become national and state government priorities, more people are seeking professional advice from nutritionists, who assist in planning menus and creating diets, and like Cohn, show families what to throw out—and keep out of homes. “We need to be more forward thinking. Families need strategies to make measurable changes,” Cohn said in a telephone interview with Education Update.

“Some of first steps for managing eating habits begin at home and with pediatrician visits. Cohn believes that well baby visits and child physicals, should chart body mass similar to how Cohn believes that well baby visits and child physicals, should chart body mass similar to how physicals are done for adults. It’s not just baby fat. Or she’s very active; she’s growing fast.” These attitudes lead to overweight children who are more likely to develop early diabetes, high blood pressure, and asthma.

Once the kitchen has been fat-proofed, the next step, Cohn believes, is to make children responsible for their own decision making. “The parents’ role is to supply the right foods. The child’s is to taste and choose and make themselves happy,” said Cohn.

Providing fresh, unprocessed foods, with a lot of fruits and vegetables, can prevent food allergies. As consumers have become more aware of food allergies, as consumers have become more aware of food allergies, they’ve taken to alter school lunch and snack food. “Nutrition is an intuitive, natural thing,” Cohn said. “Go back to the basics; think about what food was like when the food wasn’t ornate, just simple and fresh.”

She credits emphasizing family meals and prepared food that is not from a box with a list of ingredients makes a difference in how kids think about eating. “My mother nourished the whole person. The food wasn’t ornate, just simple and fresh.”

In her first job, with the Ford Foundation, Cohn established health education programs around the country. “Nutrition is an intuitive, natural thing that should be part of daily life,” she said.0

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By Emily Sherwood, Ph.D.

For many years before his profession was made glamorous by such television shows as CSI and Law and Order, forensic pathologist Dr. Mark L. Taft has been routinely investigating sudden, suspicious and violent deaths in New York City and its environs. The crimes Taft investigates aren’t solved in an hour, though as they’re usually more complicated than TV might portray. In a fascinating in-person interview, Taft spoke to Education Update about how he works to uncover the truth in his unique medical profession.

“Death by fraternity hazing,” “The Santa Claus Syndrome: entrapment in chimneys,” and “Graveside deaths” are some of the more tantalizing titles among the several hundred articles he’s published, Taft will be the first to tell you that he starts with what he calls “an index of suspicion,” common to all forensic pathologists. “As a forensic pathologist, I’ve been trained to think ‘dirty.’ I take the approach that everybody I speak to is a murderer until otherwise proven and everyone has been murdered until otherwise proven... and I always work backward from the worst case scenario to a natural death where everybody can go their merry ways and bury Grandpa without any further ado,” he explains.

But that doesn’t mean his investigations are driven by preconceived notions or intuition. Quite the contrary. “It’s always better to do a complete autopsy than a partial autopsy; it’s always better to do a general toxicology screen than not do [one], because once you deviate from protocols and procedures that have evolved over the last thirty years, once you start taking shortcuts, it comes back to burn you,” states Taft emphatically. Every death investigation follows a prescribed six-stage protocol: case history; death scene findings; autopsy (including external exam of clothing, fibers hairs, etc, and internal, surgical exam that looks at organs, tissues, fluids and the like); laboratory examination of specimens (toxicology, serology, trace evidence, etc); bureaucratic/business preservation of the autopsy report; and signing the death certificate.

Taft could recount numerous investigations in which the crime scene suggested a false reality but where adherence to careful forensic protocol led him to an often unexpected truth. In one of Taft’s more unusual cases, a young man who had just broken up with his girlfriend was found dismembered on the Long Island Expressway. Upon arrival at the scene, first responders observed what looked to be a vicious murder. Yet following investigation, Taft and his colleagues ruled the death an intentional suicide, brought about by the victim’s purposefully leaning out of the passenger side of a compact car and hitting a stanzaen while driving. The case revealed six of eight criteria that typically indicate a suicide, including a lack of brake marks, a fixed roadside object, driver intoxication and a psychological history of depression. “You connect the dots,” Taft succinctly.

While Taft firmly believes that following the evidence will lead to the truth, he’ll also concede that sometimes there are limitations to science. “Even the bad guy can win out with a little luck and timing,” he adds, admitting that cases where “you find a pool of blood and bullet holes but someone has winked the body away” become circumstantial and require good detective work to find the perpetrator.

As a forensic pathologist, I’ve been trained to think ‘dirty.’

Even with the best pathology and detective work, though, not every case of homicide goes to trial. By law, Taft has an obligation to report deaths where there is suspected foul play to the prosecutor or the district attorney. But that’s where politics come into play: “Then they go through their motions to decide how much evidence they have, and—based on the police investigation—how good a case they have, and they will sometimes prosecute some cases more vigorously than others. Some cases are so-called winners and some cases are so-called losers, and there’s a lot of politics that go on in the district attorney’s office,” explains Taft.

With a twenty-year career under his belt (he’s now one of three people in New York State completely engaged in private practice, providing second opinions to medical examiner’s offices or working collegially to witness a first autopsy), Taft shows no signs of slowing down. In the words of his former mentor, Dr. Werner Spitz of Detroit who wrote the seminal textbook on forensic pathology, his most difficult case is “always the next one.” Each crime presents a unique challenge that keeps his work fresh: “I don’t see the mundane. I see the bizarre. There’s always a new twist,” he remarks. And he’s halfway through a book with the working title of Forensic Vignettes that will put some of his real life cases to paper for a more popularized audience. No doubt there will be a burgeoning market for Taft’s book, as people are dying to satiate their age-old curiosity about “who done it” and “how.”
By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

It’s a cold, sleet-driven Friday morning in March and Joe Delaney is late for work at his Manhattan office of the global accounting firm, Deloitte. But it’s not weather problems or subway snafus holding up Deloitte’s hard-working Eastern Regional Director of Alumni Relations: Delaney was busy volunteering his time to teach a 7 AM class at Norman Thomas High School, where he and his Deloitte colleagues are helping students prepare their school’s virtual business for an upcoming international fair. Delaney’s generous volunteer commitment is part of a NYC Department of Education-sponsored Virtual Enterprise (VE) program that takes place in public high schools citywide, in which students simulate a business that they run all year long with the guidance of a teacher and business partner. (An astonishing 70 Deloitte professionals teach or train teachers at Norman Thomas and three other VE programs in the city.) The virtual business that Norman Thomas has created is a firm much like Deloitte, fictionalized ACT Professionals (the acronym stands for Accounting, Consulting and Tax Professionals); Deloitte’s other virtual businesses are in the fields of printing, insurance, and travel.

“We work with the students from organization to business plan writing to business plan presentation to selling and marketing of services to the actual business fair,” explains Delaney. In preparation for an April 30-year-end, Delaney is helping his students to get their numbers together for their annual report: “Of course it’s crucial that we do very well at our international fair and sell our products and services,” he adds with an enthusiasm that makes it hard to discern whether he’s the student or the teacher. Virtual Enterprise represents but a small sliver of Deloitte’s community service “portfolio”, bringing new meaning to the term corporate social responsibility. Perhaps their most visible volunteer effort culminates on Impact Day, scheduled this year for June 8, when 20,000 Deloitte employees nationwide – a staggering 50 percent of their total workforce – will take a day off from work to participate in more than 500 hands-on community service projects, cleaning city parks, painting dilapidated buildings, and facilitating literacy programs in schools and libraries, among hundreds of other unpaid jobs. There’s more: Deloitte is one of the NYC sponsors of Youth About Business’ (YAB) New York Summer Business Camp, a two-week summer program for high school seniors located at Columbia University where students engage in a business competition by performing a mock merger and acquisition activity. “The students become the CEO, CFO, CIO, and COO,” explains Deloitte’s Northeast Region COO Joseph Fennessy. “Some of them will represent an actual company who is going to be acquired (the acquirer) and others will represent the company who is the acquirer. They will go through due diligence and other activities that are involved in one company acquiring another.” Deloitte also has embraced the mission of the nonprofit international Junior Achievement (JA) program, which seeks to educate young people to value free enterprise, understand business and economics, and develop workforce readiness. Deloitte’s own senior partner, Ainar Aijala, is the worldwide chair for Junior Achievement, and some 44 Deloitte employees volunteer their time to teach an introductory business curriculum about five times a year in the city high schools. In an interesting and effective student-mentor partnership, JA students often work side by side with Deloitte employees on Impact Day. Deloitte’s deep commitment to giving back seems wired into their corporate culture. “Our culture is one that supports lifelong learning and encourages people at all levels to share their knowledge and their experience,” explains Fennessy, who himself is a powerful role model by volunteering his personal time in his Nassau County community, with an impressive array of honors and awards reflecting his many local contributions. “It’s such a wonderful feeling for us to share our knowledge and skills with individuals who really don’t have much depth or breadth in the business world,” he adds sincerely. At the end of the day, Deloitte believes that their investment in the future of young people will pay off many times over, as new generations of workers “become impactful players in the business community,” in Fennessy’s words. The benefits may even be as overtly tangible as identifying and nurturing future clients and employees. “The war for talent is big,” notes Fennessy. “From a business perspective, engaging with young people who will ultimately work for us benefits and enriches the firm.” Deloitte offers a select number of internships to students beginning in their freshman year of college, as long as they are enrolled in an accounting program and maintain a high GPA. Twelve current Deloitte interns and 3 full-time Deloitte employees began as high school students in one of the many Deloitte mentorships programs. Interestingly, 14 of those 15 new employees speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Spanish and Polish…They reflect the great diversity of the NYC schools that we can tap into.” By mentoring aspiring young business students, Deloitte has clearly discovered a win-win solution with rich payoff for both the young people and the firm. Bottom line analysis would probably reveal, however, that the ultimate winner is society.

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SUMMER SOLSTICE APPROACHING

The summer solstice will occur on June 21, marking the beginning of summer and the start of a new season. As it draws near, parents and teachers can educate children about our planet’s seasons using Washington biologist Ron Hirschi’s new picture book, “Ocean Seasons.”

Interestingly, seasons change in the ocean as much as they do on land, and “Ocean Seasons” provides a unique, detailed look at the differences between undersea seasons. Readers will watch new plants and animals come to life in the spring and then see summer oceans glow with sparkly plankton. Next they will follow the autumn winds across the open water and join the humpback whales as they migrate to warmer waters for the winter. Then do it all again as the whales return to the northern waters in the spring.

In fun, fanciful form, Washington illustrator Kirsten Carlson and Sylvan Dell Publishing (SDP) team up with Hirschi to introduce the plants and animals that are joined by the mix of seasons, food webs and habitats beneath the waves. While set in the Pacific, similar changes also occur in the Atlantic.

Like every SDP book, “Ocean Seasons” contains a “For Creative Minds” educational section. The section includes a comparison of land and ocean seasons, ocean food web information and the section includes a comparison of land and ocean seasons, ocean food web information and an ocean food web card game. Dr. Thomas C. Eagle, fishery biologist for the National Marine Fisheries Service department of NOAA, and Rita Bell, education programs manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, have vetted the picture book for scientific accuracy.

An award-winning children’s book author, Hirschi has written over 50 children’s books and spends most of his days studying aquatic wildlife. Several of his titles have been named Best Science Trade Books of the Year, and he has also received the John Burroughs Nature Book Award. When Hirschi is not researching or writing, he enjoys taking young students into the water to explore and discover salmon, seals and other creatures by netting for fish, planting kelp forests and exploring tide pools. In fact, one such trip is what inspired “Ocean Seasons.”

“I was out on the Straits of Juan de Fuca with a home school class one October night,” explains Hirschi. “On this field trip, we were netting, observing and carefully releasing fish. The waves splashed around because it was incredibly windy, but the kids eagerly and tenderly examined their catches by lantern light. It came to me how much kids loved the ocean, no matter the season or the weather. I realized I would probably not have many of these nighttime opportunities again, and it is my hope that ‘Ocean Seasons’ might show other children the beauty of the sea and its creatures.”

Carlson, who also illustrated SDP’s “The Giraffe Who Was Afraid of Heights,” is fascinated with nature and animals. Her love of the natural world led her to choose a career in illustration after pursuing her master’s in marine science at California State University-Moss Landing Marine Laboratories and receiving her master’s in Scientific Illustration from the University of California-Santa Cruz.

“I believe that picture books are a wonderful way to connect children and families with nature,” adds Carlson. “And I enjoy combining science and art to create illustrations that inspire those connections.”

Middle School Reform Discussed at LIU’s School of Ed

Students in grades five through eight face challenges at critical points in their development. Prompted by persistent findings of high drop out rates and low test scores, the problems facing New York City middle schools, their contributing causes, and potential solutions were discussed recently at Long Island University’s Brooklyn Campus School of Education. Special attention was given to the unique challenges experienced by many poor and minority students in grades five through eight. Norm Frachter, director of the Community Involvement Program at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University and author of “Urban Schools, Public Will,” addressed participants, and cooperating principals responded with approaches to middle school reform. An audience of middle school principals and parents, along with Long Island University Brooklyn Campus faculty members, students, cooperating school principals, and two cohorts of aspiring principals attended. “New York City middle schools hold the least experienced teachers, and evidence the greatest class and race disparity,” observed Evelyn Castro, associate dean of the School of Education at the Brooklyn Campus, adding, “These years are marked by a precipitous decline in test scores, especially in the gateway subjects of math and science, which directly affects high school acceptance and drop out rates, and subsequently impacts higher education and career opportunities.” New York City’s steep high school drop out rate of more than 140,000 can be linked to the experience students have in middle school, when adolescents undergo rapid physical, emotional and cognitive changes. Students during this time require expert teaching and support to foster skills and confidence for the all-important high school application process. “As an institution that prepares educators to work in a major center of urban education, the Brooklyn Campus School of Education considered it an essential part of our mission to have hosted this presentation on middle school reform in New York City,” said Cecelia Traugh, dean of the School of Education.

“It is our goal to address this pressing problem with empowering solutions, which include informed involvement on behalf of parents, the development of interesting curriculum and supportive structures by teachers, and student appreciation of the importance of their middle school experience,” she explained.

For more information, call Evelyn Castro at (718) 488-1385, or Juan Rodriguez at (718) 488-1055.

Images of Women in Contemporary African Art

By MELVIN TAYLOR

The Sankaranka Gallery will host an exhibition, “Images of Women in Contemporary African Art”, from April 1 through May 20, 2007. The exhibition is a selection of works which show/depict the condition of women in Africa. The works show images of beauty, joy, pleasure, and sadness. They also show images of women as victims of rape, torture and other forms of sexual exploitation. These works leave the inescapable conclusion that African women live as much as they do on land, and “ocean seasons” provides a unique, detailed look at the differences between undersea seasons. Readers will watch new plants and animals come to life in the spring and then see summer oceans glow with sparkly plankton. Next they will follow the autumn winds across the open water and join the humpback whales as they migrate to warmer waters for the winter. Then do it all again as the whales return to the northern waters in the spring.

In fun, fanciful form, Washington illustrator Kirsten Carlson and Sylvan Dell Publishing (SDP) team up with Hirschi to introduce the plants and animals that are joined by the mix of seasons, food webs and habitats beneath the waves. While set in the Pacific, similar changes also occur in the Atlantic.

Like every SDP book, “Ocean Seasons” contains a “For Creative Minds” educational section. The section includes a comparison of land and ocean seasons, ocean food web information and the section includes a comparison of land and ocean seasons, ocean food web information and an ocean food web card game. Dr. Thomas C. Eagle, fishery biologist for the National Marine Fisheries Service department of NOAA, and Rita Bell, education programs manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, have vetted the picture book for scientific accuracy.

An award-winning children’s book author, Hirschi has written over 50 children’s books and spends most of his days studying aquatic wildlife. Several of his titles have been named Best Science Trade Books of the Year, and he has also received the John Burroughs Nature Book Award. When Hirschi is not researching or writing, he enjoys taking young students into the water to explore and discover salmon, seals and other creatures by netting for fish, planting kelp forests and exploring tide pools. In fact, one such trip is what inspired “Ocean Seasons.”

“I was out on the Straits of Juan de Fuca with a home school class one October night,” explains Hirschi. “On this field trip, we were netting, observing and carefully releasing fish. The waves splashed around because it was incredibly windy, but the kids eagerly and tenderly examined their catches by lantern light. It came to me how much kids loved the ocean, no matter the season or the weather. I realized I would probably not have many of these nighttime opportunities again, and it is my hope that ‘Ocean Seasons’ might show other children the beauty of the sea and its creatures.”

Carlson, who also illustrated SDP’s “The Giraffe Who Was Afraid of Heights,” is fascinated with nature and animals. Her love of the natural world led her to choose a career in illustration after pursuing her master’s in marine science at California State University-Moss Landing Marine Laboratories and receiving her master’s in Scientific Illustration from the University of California-Santa Cruz.

“I believe that picture books are a wonderful way to connect children and families with nature,” adds Carlson. “And I enjoy combining science and art to create illustrations that inspire those connections.”

Dream-Land
By SYDNEY KONOTIFRAKIS, AGE 10½

A world of dreams, a place of fantasy creatures of dragons Faeries, mermaids, pixies Unicorns, giants, ogres and more An eternity of souls To watch over

How does the hollow horn be heard, Through the skulls of evil and darkness Shall we ever know? Do shadows go to heaven, and listen to your shadows. Through the void of evil and darkness Shall we ever know?

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Public Schools: Headed in the Right Direction
By MAYOR BLOOMBERG

For the first time in a long time, our public schools are headed in the right direction. Test scores and graduation rates are up. The drop-out rate is the lowest it has been since we started keeping track of it back in the 1980s. And our African American and Latino students are making big strides in closing the achievement gap that has existed for too long between them and their classmates.

But we’ve still got a long way to go. Despite our progress, more than 40% of students take longer than four years to graduate from high school, and only one-fourth of African American and Latino students graduate with Regents diplomas. Unless we change that, too many youngsters are going to face futures as permanent second-class citizens in today’s competitive economy. We can’t let that happen—and that’s why I believe getting better results out of our schools is the Number One civil rights issue of our time.

To get those better results, we must eliminate the funding disparities that still hobble too many schools—and then hold principals and teachers accountable for higher student achievement. So before the next school year begins, we’re going to end a decades-old system of school funding that has rewarded some schools and treated others unfairly. I’m talking about funding gaps between comparable schools that top $2,000 per student, year after year. That’s not right, and we’re going to fix it—a flexible way to fix it and a way that protects important educational programs and services for every student.

The progress we’ve made in education so far teaches us that great principals make great schools. That’s why I believe getting better results out of our schools is the Number One civil rights issue of our time.

Taking a Leadership Role at School
By DR. CAROLE G. HANKIN WITH RANDI T. SACHS

We all know that it is important that schools and parents work together to fix the problems of the children in order to provide the best possible education. Parents who step up to a leadership role also work cooperatively with one another. The superintendent, the principal, and the teacher all have very clear, defined roles to fulfill. But what exactly is the role of the parent leader?

Parent leaders often walk a tightrope between the funding disparities that still hobble too many children and supporters of the school administration. However, if they keep the following in mind, they can reap the rewards of making a very positive impact on their children’s school experience. As a parent leader, you are helping to facilitate what all (or most) parents want. You know you are not there for your own personal agenda or to only help your own children with their individual needs. It’s important to be inclusive. Listen to the ideas and concerns of all parents. Be available to talk and listen and try to keep your judgments to yourself. Develop cooperative relations with school officials. Understand the chain of command, and advise other parents to follow that chain.

Winning Sports Films: Pride and Offside
By JAN AARON

Two movies about young people and sports – “Pride” and “Offside” – are reviewed this month. In “Pride,” a group of guys goes from ragtag to winners and in “Offside” a group of girls try to see their team become winners.

The central figure in “Pride” is a swim coach Jim Ellis (the terrific Terrence Howard) who has coached swim teams, mostly of blacks, for the Philadelphia Department of Recreation for more than 35 years. The script by Kevin Michael Smith, Michael Gozzard, J. Mills Goodloe, and Norman Vance Jr. is based on what fictional take on his early years when the Marcus Foster Recreational Center was neglected and nearly shut down. Also featured is co-founder of the Philadelphia Irish boat Mac in a fine turn as the Center’s lone employee who is hooked on TV soaps. Ellis isn’t a crusader when he first sets on eyes on the gamers- covered, rundown facility in 1973. He just needs a job. He has been denied employment at a white school by a racist coach (Tom Arnold). Initially, his job is temporary and involves helping to shut Marcus Foster down.

When the city removes the basketball hoops, the boys drift into the pool. Soon, Ellis, who swam competitively in college, is teaching them to make newcomers feel welcome, and help by introducing new parents to others with children in the same grade. You are sensitive to the fact that your school community includes individuals of all different backgrounds, political beliefs, and educational philosophies. Parent leaders can communicate regularly with the principal and agree on what the role of all parents associa-
tion will be throughout the school year. You can establish a cooperative relationship and one of mutual respect and you will truly be a success as a leader in your school community.

These unfortunate fans are young women, whose attempts to see the match in the stadium are stopped by the police who enforce strict Iranian rules forbidding mixture of the sexes. Trying to pass as boys, they are rounded up and placed into a pen outside the stadium. Their young soldier guards themselves seem confused and unhappy about guarding them. They’d rather watching the game, or, in one case, watching the cows on the farm family. The film uses the game to depict the awful way laws and social customs are restrictive and harshly enforced in Iran. At the same time, Mr. Panahi in fact was denied permission to shoot “Offside.” He went ahead under pretext of making another, less controversial film. The jubilant conclusion might be a celebration of his success.

The young actors playing the swimmers aren’t always come first in New York’s schools: our public schools are headed in the right direction. The progress we’ve made in education so far teaches us that great principals make great schools. That’s why I believe getting better results out of our schools is the Number One civil rights issue of our time.

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT’S SEAT

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FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT’S SEAT

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Ken Burns Speaks at the Oxonian Society (Part II)

By Dr. Pola Rosen and Liza Young

Ken Burns, legendary documentary film maker of American history, nominated for two academy awards, and several Emmy awards, and for whom the intriguing “Ken Burns” cinematic effect was named recently appeared at the Oxonian Society, participating in an engaging discussion with Joe Pascal, Oxonian Society President, regarding his earliest roots in documentary film-making, his passion for the civil war and challenges and triumphs in documentary film-making. Burns spoke without notes in a compelling, erudite, passionate, logical manner that conjured up the magical charm of Orpheus and his lute. In short, Burns is not only gifted, he’s brilliant.

Joe Pascal (JP): Until you came onto the scene, most documentaries were thought as a still-life drawing. Your documentaries seemed to increase the depth of understanding of the subject manner while entertaining the audience with beautiful language, images, and weaving it together into a dramatic story.

Ken Burns (KB): I work with a lot of amazing people who make my job as a kind of conductor, that much easier. The key to this is that if you just tell people what you know, use documentary as essayist tool, a didactic tool, an expository tool, you fail to use all of its brain, or all of its possibility. If you trust that it has an artistic life as well, you fail to use all of its brain, or all of its possibilities.

JP: How did the Ken Burns effect come about—which is so aptly named after you—where you take a viewer into a frame by focusing on one of the images in the picture.

KB: As the son of the amateur photographer, as a student of still photographers, I see the still photograph as the essential building block, the DNA...I like a film that uses a great deal of motion picture, but I like the still photograph as a kind of anchor that reminds you that motion pictures are in fact still photographs 24 times per second. It seemed to me that in so many documentary films there was sort of a terror; most people didn’t want to choose subjects until the advent of newsreels. And when they did have to use a still photograph they were so happy that they could get to motion pictures as if that was true, and they would exhibit pictures at arms length, almost apologetically, whereas it seemed to me that these pictures are often our closest representation of the reality we are trying to come to terms with.

From the very beginning of the Brooklyn Bridge film, we were going inside these photographs. The greatest compliment I’ve ever had was at the premiere, in a little function room at the Brooklyn Museum, of my film, back in 1982, where this woman said, “Where did you get the newsreels of the building of the Brooklyn Bridge?” And I said, “Ma’am, it was built between 1869 and 1883, there were no newsreels.” She said I’m happy that you had down the Ken Burns effect because it permitted you to put in all new Apple computers that following year, trying to perfect a thing which they felt would have 1,000 years to live I wouldn’t run out be something else, and it hasn’t been. I think if I was given 1,000 years to live I wouldn’t run out of topics of interest.

For more information visit oxoniansociety.org.
Memoirs of an Ex-Camper

By JUSTINE RIVERA

When I was nine years old, I went to a sleepaway camp for the first time. It was part of a program called the Fresh Air Fund; a lot of my mother’s friends had sent their kids to the camp so, of course, my mother decided to do it too. I remember being nervous and excited waiting with the other kids at the George Washington Bridge bus terminal. I had made friends before I even boarded the bus. I went to the Fresh Air Fund for a total of three times, the first time going to Hidden Valley, the second time in Friendly Town, and the last in Camp ABC (I had always thought the “ABC” part was meant to be educational for us, but I recently found out that it stands for Anita Bliss Coler). Each time I learned a lot of things and gained some great experiences.

I loved the first time I went. There were two pools: one was only open to the kids who knew how to swim; the other was a smaller pool for non-swimmers. Not knowing how to swim, I was always stuck in the smaller pool, and if I went to that same camp today I would most likely be forced to stay in the small pool again.

I remember the nature walks we had, and how we went to a small cabin-like building. There was a bunch of dead insects stored in some wooden boxes with glass windows. I was so excited to see a deer on one of our nature walks. It was so majestic the way it stood there staring at us, and then slowly walking away.

I remember signing up for the games activity, assuming it would include board games and things like that. I was annoyed when we ended up at a big grass field and we had to play sports. At first I hated the fact that I had to run and catch and be in the hot sun, but after a while I forgot all that and enjoyed myself. It was during one of the baseball breaks that I learned how to braid dandelions together from one of the counselors. I also learned from the same counselor that the dents in the backs of my shoulders were dimples. I was shocked at this new discovery of myself, let alone the discovery of the fact that you could have dimples in other places other than your cheeks.

Now that I look back, I remember my counselors with a fondness. There were three of them supervising the six of us in the cabin, and they were always so nice. They were like big sisters to us. I remember when one of them had put a French braid in my hair. It seems silly, but at nine years old, having a French braid in my hair made me feel pretty.

I also remember arts and crafts, and creative writing. In one of the activities in creative writing, we took our favorite things (animals, colors, places and more), and wrote a story that involved all of them.

The activity was different and at that time and age, who would’ve thought that writing could’ve been so much fun? I really liked the arts and crafts activity we did. I have always loved art in one way or another, and it wasn’t that much different when I was nine. I had never worked with wax and we used blocks of wax to carve in our favorite pictures and words. The one I made had a heart carved with the word I at the top and mom at the bottom: “I love Mom”. I remember when the boarding coach was to take us back to New York and later home, I was upset that I lost my wax carving.

When I think of the Fresh Air Fund I just think it was one of the greatest parts of my childhood and a great part of my growing up. I have a lot of great memories of those days. I still have the black and white photo I took of a dandelion surrounded by geese that fit the size (this was while I was in Camp ABC). Every time I take a trip out of the city by car, smelling the trees and the fresh air brings back memories of that time I was 9.

Justine Rivera is a student at the American Sign Language School in NYC and an intern at Education Update.

A Horace Mann Student Looks Back at Life on a Farm

By DAVID MAIMIN

It was the first summer of WWII in 1942 when all eligible 18-34 year olds had been called into military service. There was a shortage of farmhands to work on the farms. I and a group of New York City high school boys volunteered with a high school teacher to live on a farm in Maid River Valley, Vermont and work on surrounding farms to replace the young farmers in service.

Each morning local farmers would contact our teacher asking for workers. The farmers were poor and had to hike up to his job because the overloaded car could not make it up the hill.

Most of our work involved haying, which was different from today. Now, hay is cut by tractors, rolled into huge bundles and covered with plastic wrap. Then, the farmer cut the hay in the field with a horse-drawn cutter bar, let the hay dry, and raked it into windrows (long rows). We would then bundle the hay into manageable rolls, lift the bundled hay with a pitchfork, and heave it onto the hay wagon. In the barn a large fork in the ceiling was lowered to clamp onto a section of hay in the wagon. A horse would pull the clamped hay up by means of a rope and pulley. The fork would reach the ceiling, slide along a track over the haymow, or loft, and drop its load. The dirtiest job was standing in the hot, dusty haymow and spreading the hay evenly across the entire hayloft.

This procedure was repeated until the hay wagon was empty and was sent back to the field.

The summer of ’43 I was fortunate to be employed at a farm that paid $1.50 per day. The summer of ’44, when my pay was raised to $1.75 per day. About twenty years later I visited the farm—only the farm—Mom’s son and wife were still there. They proudly pointed out their indoor bathroom and phone. They told me that most of the young people had moved away, and they lost interest in farming. Today the ski industry and second homes have replaced the farms bringing some measure of prosperity to the region.

Fortunately, the state of Vermont has seen fit to protect the environment and preserve its natural beauty. When I return to the area, I can still see the fields where I worked and remember fondly one of the farmers for whom I worked.

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Having Dyslexia and ADD isn’t very different from having a disease such as diabetes. It’s just that my conditions are neurologically based. But it’s who I am and part of me.

In Their Own Words: MMC College Students Discuss Their Learning Disabilities

By JACQUELINE BONOMO, Ed.D.

In my almost ten years as full time learning specialist and Assistant Director of the program, I have felt the deep gratification of witnessing the graduation of students who, a generation or two ago, might not have even attempted college. When asked by parents of prospective applicants the importance of attending a university, they receive the answer: ‘that’s their ticket out.’

But what if the ticket is needed every time they buy a bus ride or even to use a public restroom? What if it’s just a tool for learning, a tool to assist, not to replace? And what if there is a piece of the puzzle that they never get, no matter how many times they try to understand, but that makes sense to everyone else?

I recently gave a talk to the Complex Needs Support Network in New York City. The group consists of parents, educators, specialists, and students who have a learning disability. This group is made up of students of all ages, from infancy to adulthood. The group has lobbied the state for inclusion in the educational system. I addressed the group about the challenges and successes I have had in my career as a learning specialist at MMC.

I told the group that my conditions are neurologically based. But I also stressed the need for a paradigm shift in attitudes and a recognition that inclusiveness can be enriching for all. “One who gives, gains,” he promised. “We don’t like to be confronted with our own frailties and mortality. That’s why we put disabled people away.”

I have had an internship at the Burberry Public Relations Department for three years, and am the President of the Communications Honors Society. I also completed my Communication degree with a Business minor within four years. B.T., Senior.

Throughout school, I had always been stronger in math than in reading and writing. Testing in my senior year revealed I had very solid potential in these areas, but needed some instruction. The Access Program has given me encouragement to get help in the areas that I need, while giving me confidence in those areas I can do on my own.

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By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

The effervescent, indefatigable idealist, Dr. Harold S. Koplewicz, founder and director of New York University’s Child Study Center, is once again moving quickly and efficiently with his top directors to expand psychiatric services and programs for children and their families in N.Y.C. This September, under the leadership of Lynda Geller, Ph.D., Clinical Director of the Asperger Institute; Xavier Castellanos, M.D., Director of Research; and Glenn Hirsch, M.D., Medical Director, the NYU Study Center will launch a research-based, full-day educational program and range of comprehensive scientifically validated and planned educational programs, clinical services, and state-of-the-art research.

The goal, as Dr. Koplewicz says, is to help parents identify their children with Asperger Syndrome. “Dr. Castellanos is enthusiastic about doing ‘groundbreaking’ research at the Institute. The timing of the Institute’s establishment could not be better. Interest in AS began to accelerate just a few years ago when the urgency of addressing the disorder in the adolescent population became apparent, Dr. Castellanos says. He leads the numerous national and international advisors—leaders in the field of neurology, psychiatry, brain imaging and early intervention strategies—who assisted Institute personnel in defining its mission and concentrations. His hope, he says, is to reduce the time it usually takes to make a difference to youngsters who already have spent too many years feeling ostracized or marginalized because of poor social and communications skills. The Lab will offer ample opportunity to conduct evidence-based research. Dr. Hirsch adds that while the educational program must limit the number of students participating in the inaugural year, an overarching goal is to develop and assess new specialized programs and services and to provide outreach consultation throughout the city and beyond. As the director of the clinical component, Dr. Lynda Geller speaks passionately about the need to make AS students accepted and comfortable. To that end, the educational program will apply home-schooling methods in a small group setting, a strategy she calls “cooperative home-schooling.” Students in the NYU program will receive individual and group academic tutoring from specially trained faculty and staff and also extensive counseling that will address their social needs. Because AS students (like AS adults) have difficulty relating to their peers, it is “critical for them to have an opportunity to find each other and develop supportive relationships,” Dr. Geller says. It is also important for their parents to find each other, so the Child Study Center will also focus on adult and family support groups. Many students with autism wind up in special education classes; AS students, by contrast, can often be found in the mainstream, where they suffer terribly from being teased and being “different.” The Institute would acknowledge their differences but also make them feel capable of finding their way in the real world. Although the cost of participating in the Institute is steep at this start-up point, Dr. Geller notes that there are ways public school adolescents might be able to participate.

For more information see: www.AboutOurKids.org www.aboutourkids.org or call (212) 679-3565.
City Tech to Combine Humanities & Technical Education

By SYRIL MAIMIN

An innovative program to combine the humanities with technical and professional training of students is being developed at Brooklyn’s NYC College of Technology/CLUNY (City Tech), New York City neighborhoods—their histories, ethnic compositions, architecture, and technological advances—are being studied by fifteen selected faculty members to better understand the interaction between technology and social change. The National Endowment for the Humanities-funded professional development initiative includes visits to five neighborhoods led by architectural historians, a year-long seminar where participants reflect on their experiences and study related texts, and development of enriched new courses and units of study that draw upon insights gained in the program using a “Humanities Across the Curriculum” model. The neighborhood tours are especially relevant for professors at City Tech where one of three students lives in communities being studied.

The five neighborhoods visited are Harlem in Manhattan, Flushing and Jackson Heights in Queens, and Sunset Park and East Flatbush/Crown Heights in Brooklyn. Shifting demographics and the special character of each community as well as the impact of bridges, subways, and various housing types are being looked at. The tour of Harlem, led by Francis Morrone, went from the grand Riverside Church, built in 1928-32 by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to “stand out on top of a hill” and serve the people of Harlem, to Morris-Jumel Mansion, today still maintained as the lovely country home with tree-shaded grounds that briefly served as George Washington’s headquarters in 1776. Harlem institutions and culture changed with shifting demographics. It took a boycott to force a popular local department store to hire blacks even as African-Americans became the dominant population in this initially white neighborhood. The Hotel Theresa, opened in 1913 for “white only” clientele, eventually became “the black hotel in New York City...the Waldorf Astoria of Harlem” when other hotels refused to accept black guests. The social center of Harlem, the Theresa closed in 1967 when blacks had become welcome in downtown hotels. The Apollo Theater, opened in 1932 as a burlesque house catering to white audiences, responded to the population shift by changing the types of acts and hiring black performers by the 1930’s. Technology turned 125th Street into the commercial and transportation hub of Harlem. The NY & Harlem Railroad (now Metro North) built a station at 125th and Park Avenue in the 1830’s. The elevated train had a stop at 125th St. and, at one time, ferry service was available at both ends of the street. The most complex feat of steel construction of its time, the Triboro Bridge, which is accessed from 125th St., was completed by Robert Moses in 1934. Harlem continues to see changes as a rapid pattern of gentrification unfolds. Whites and other ethnicities are returning to the neighborhood. Major national retail chains are locating in this previously underserved area.

Graduation Ceremony For 121 New Correction Officers

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Correction Commissioner Martin F. Horn today presided over a graduation ceremony for 121 new Probationary Correction Officers. Chief of Department Carolyn Thomas and Norman Seabrook, President of the Correction Officers Benevolent Association also joined the Mayor. The ceremony took place at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "With the continued decrease in crime, we are able to reduce both the overall size of our jails system, and our reliance on Rikers Island. We are continuing to work on making our jails system safer and, today’s class of 121 new boldest recruits are an integral part in the process," said Mayor Bloomberg. “Part of this plan includes also includes moving inmates closer to their home communities and to programs and services that can help them.” “With Mayor Bloomberg’s support, we have made our jails more secure and safer for the benefit of our inmates, our officers and the public. We are also leading the nation in efforts to make the system more progressive, providing more support and counseling than ever before to inmates about to be returned to the community," said Commissioner Horn. “I welcome this latest class of new correction officers into our jails and to the important and honorable work they do to protect all of us.” Among the graduates, 21 members currently have or have had a family member on the job and 14 have previously served in the military. The class valedictorian was Correction Officer Peter Cangro, and class salutatorian, Correction Officer Lai Wah Kwong. Each of the probationary Correction Officers completed a 15-week training curriculum at the New York City Training Academy in Middle Village, Queens, including training in security, use of force techniques, constitutional law, chemical agents, physical training, communication skills, investigation procedures, first aid and health. The graduates will be assigned to various facilities on Rikers Island.

A national drug corporation reports its new 125th St. store is its highest grossing location in the country. The Apollo is now owned by Time Warner. New housing is being built. Morrone noted that many well-known architects left their mark in Harlem. The King Model Houses, built in the 1890’s, were admired as the most beautiful group of houses in the city at the time. The River Houses, low-rise buildings, are considered the most noteworthy of public housing projects.

Jane Mushabec, who teaches literature at City Tech, praised the program, saying, “Our students in tech majors need to be alive to the world they live in.” She sees “many applications” for the project. Richard Hanley, an English professor and editor of the internet Journal of Urban Technology, was also enthusiastic, describing the ideal teacher as “a humanist who brings technology to the class, and a technologist who can bring humanities to the class.”

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— Gigi Dibello, Alumna

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By SYBIL MAIMIN

Landmark, a two-year college in Putney, Vermont, which prepares students with learning disorders for successful matriculation in four year schools of higher education, achieves its ambitious goals with the help of various tools, including cutting edge assistive technology. The words “Dragon,” “Kurzweil,” and “Inspiration” are familiar to Landmark students and to educators who have tapped into Landmark’s array of professional development opportunities. At Landmark, the latest technology infuses communication, teaching, and learning. The campus is “wireless” and library resources can be accessed online from residence halls and faculty offices. Students must have a notebook computer; required course books are all available digitally. The library, often the source of frustration to people with learning problems, is attractive and inviting and houses both print and digital resources. Information Technology staff offers training and support to both students and faculty in the use of sophisticated technology. All reinforce the notion that education for students with learning disorders should focus less on remediation and more on recognizing different learning styles and needs. Much current thinking maintains Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is not just a behavior problem but is a neurological disorder that affects learning; finding special strategies and using assistive tools can lead to previously elusive successes.

Ben Mitchell, Landmark director of admissions and fierce advocate for assistive technology, is dyslexic and hyperactive. He has personally experienced the frustrations and challenges presented by a society that, “since the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg over five hundred years ago, has been a written-language based culture.” The computer has revolutionized communications, yet, says Mitchell, students still encounter “medieval attitudes” that only reward “secretarial skills.” Unnecessarily, “lots of people in our society are marginalized because they can’t process words.” Assistive technology is any equipment or system that helps people with learning problems bypass or compensate for traditional expectations. Available to Landmark students is Kurzweil, a text to speech application that reads aloud from words on a screen, a great boon to auditory learners. On the other hand, Dragon NaturallySpeaking is a voice recognition system that types spoken words. Inspiration software helps people with learning problems bypass obstacles because they can’t process words.” Assistive technology based culture.” The computer has revolutionized communications, yet, says Mitchell, students still encounter “medieval attitudes” that only reward “secretarial skills.” Unnecessarily, “lots of people in our society are marginalized because they can’t process words.” Assistive technology is any equipment or system that helps people with learning problems bypass or compensate for traditional expectations. Available to Landmark students is Kurzweil, a text to speech application that reads aloud from words on a screen, a great boon to auditory learners. On the other hand, Dragon NaturallySpeaking is a voice recognition system that types spoken words. Inspiration software helps people with learning problems bypass obstacles because they can’t process words.”

Fordham University has been granted state approval to establish a doctoral program in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education (GRE) that will be tailored to lay ecclesiastical ministers and other church professionals. The program, which will have concentrations in pastoral ministry, pastoral counseling and spirituality and spiritual direction, is set to begin enrolling students for the fall semester—making Fordham the only Jesuit university in the country to confer the Doctor of Ministry degree. A doctoral degree in ministry is focused on applied theology. Instead of writing a dissertation, it is the case of a Ph.D. program in theology, students pursuing the doctorate in ministry will complete a doctoral project.

Lay ecclesiastical ministers within the Catholic Church can be men or women and the term does not refer to a specific position or title. Lay parish ministers can serve as anything from youth ministry leaders to directors of liturgy or pastoral music. According to a 2005 report by National Pastoral Life Center, the number of lay Catholic parish ministers working at least 20 hours per week in paid pastoral positions increased by some 40 percent from 1990 to 2005. There are now more than 30,000 lay ministers and, according to the report, two-thirds of all parishes have paid lay ministers working at least 20 hours per week.

Rev. Anthony Ciorra, Ph.D., dean of Fordham’s Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, said that the core curriculum for the program has already been developed, and the initial cohort that will begin in the fall will be limited to 10 to 12 students. After the first year, the program will likely be expanded to allow a larger number of students to enroll, and Father Ciorra said it’s possible that additional faculty members will be hired. A key aspect of the program will be its ecumenical nature, he said, and an effort will be made to reach out to potential students of all faiths who would benefit from enrolling in the doctoral program.

“I think that in addition to Catholics, people of many other faith traditions will be interested in this program,” Father Ciorra said. “The program will also deepen our relationship with the Church in the surrounding area. It takes the resources of the University and puts in the service of the Church.”

Founded in 1841, Fordham offers education to more than 15,600 students in its five undergraduate colleges and its six graduate and professional schools. It has residential campuses in the Bronx, Manhattan and Tarrytown, and the Louis J. Calder Center Biological Field Station in Armonk, N.Y.

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He’s amused by the perception that primar- 
ily slow-moving people of a certain age study 
Tai Chi, as though its emphasis on improving 
body strength, flexibility and energy apply only 
to those who on doctors’ orders are watching 
their blood pressure, bone density and waistline — all of which are positively affected by studying 
Tai Chi and related martial arts. Indeed, besides 
continuing his own eleven-year love affair with 
the discipline, John Van Wettering, an assistant 
professor of psychology at Hunter College, has 
been expanding his teaching of Tai Chi at the 
college, in conjunction with Master CK Chu’s New 
York center. As a faculty member at CUNY, Dr. 
Wettering is particularly impressed by the num- 
ber of men and women, from 17 to 80 and of all 
ethnicities, expressing interest in Tai Chi, given 
the “unfortunate” fact that recreational activity or 
physical education is no longer a requirement at 
most universities, and health science majors have 
all but disappeared. The irony does not escape 
him that less opportunity has been the response 
to growing need, as scientific studies argue for 
more efficient exercise of the kind that Tai Chi 
provides. This Saturday, April 28th – on World 
Tai Chi Day – Prof. Wettering hopes to help 
educate those who show up at Bryant Park or 
Central Park about the benefits – and joys – of 
Tai Chi. There will be free lessons, demos and lit-
erature. He’s thrilled that the event will be taking 
place at approximately the same time as people 
all over the world will be holding their own Tai 
Chi teach-ins.

Dr. Wettering, who earned a Ph.D. in Bio-

Psychology from The CUNY Graduate School 
and University Center, is quick to note how much 
Tai Chi relieves his own stress. When he’s not 
teaching, he is helping to manage programs at 
the Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center, a maxi-
mum security hospital for the criminally insane, 
on Wards Island. He recalls that he was initially 
attracted to study Tai Chi right after completing 
his doctoral work, and he came to see how effec-
tive it was in reducing tension. Wouldn’t any 
exercise claim as much? His answer is a sympa-
thetic No. So many gyms, with their bright lights, 
pounding music and fancy technology actually 
increase stress levels. He’s pleased that much 
of his involvement with Tai Chi is offered to 
the public for free. The nonprofit Tai Chi Chuan 
Center of New York, for example, a community 
outreach program with venues all over the city, 
attracts a growing number of seniors and retirees. 
As for working people who say they have no time 
– what’s burdensome about setting aside a brief 
period of time in your own home, with low lights 
and no distractions, in the early morning, when 
ergy surges really count? Such a routine would 
be of particular importance to college students, 
many of whom have to work as well as attend 
classes. No expensive fitness centers, no fancy 
equipment, no gimmicks, “just you, and you can’t 
get hurt,” a fact obviously appreciated by medi-
cal personnel who recommend Tai Chi as part of 
rehab and physical therapy.

So why aren’t more people involved? Could 
the term “Martial Art” be responsible? Yes, says 
Dr. Wettering, the discipline can involve swords 
and sticks (ironically, an attraction perhaps for 
the young), but the idea behind “martial” part is 
being non-aggressive: “you learn to fight so that 
treat others. Ideas are generated when all subject 
matter is considered worthy of study and cur-
ricula “expand over space and time.”

Conditions for a cosmopolitan outlook include 
givers about the short and long-term benefits 
for the classroom. Does Tai Chi work? Dr. 
Wettering laughs, noting that one new devotee, 
after just the first lesson, exclaimed, on leaving, 
that for the first time in a long time he “felt like 
a million dollars.”

Further information can be found by googling 
Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Nei Kung, the Tai Chi Chuan 
and character formation for peace will produce 
people who create this culture for the sake of 
the human future.” David T. Hansen is professor 
and director of the philosophy and education program 
at Teachers College.

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CNR
The Charlotte K. Frank Education Classroom at Hunter College

By MERIDETH HALPERN

Hunter alumna Dr. Charlotte K. Frank (McEd ’66) has contributed $100,000 to the College for the creation of a new model classroom equipped with the latest technology equipment for faculty and students. Named the Dr. Charlotte K. Frank Education Classroom, the room was dedicated at a ceremony on March 19th where Frank, a former New York State Regent and current Senior Vice President of McGraw Hill, was honored for her commitment to Hunter College. The unique classroom—located in Room 2103 of Hunter’s East Building—features 20 laptop computers, SmartBoards, videoconferencing, wireless Internet, iPods and numerous other up-to-date learning tools. Students have direct contact with a dedicated online student services representative, and via the “Contact Us” link, and have access to a menu with links to online admission and registration, and also to the wide assortment of information and directions that prepare individuals in our diverse communities for living and working in an increasingly international technological society. The HCC System is composed of six colleges serving students to communicate with the Student Services Representative, and the kind of services that will help them succeed in their status, they are presented a menu with links to online admission and registration, and also to the wide assortment of information and directions that students might want to consider how this can be verified.

The award is presented by Community College Futures Assembly of the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Florida in three categories: instructional, financial and governance. According to Millicent Landry, director of OSS, “HCC’s Online Student Services Web site allows students to do business with Houston Community College 24-7,”’’ said HCC Vice Chancellor for Student Success, Irene Porcarello. “It is a key component of HCC’s ongoing initiative to recruit first-time students and to provide the kind of services that will help them succeed and remain in college.”

The Online Student Services Web site allows students to communicate with the Student Services personnel in three ways: by e-mail, chat room, and via the “Contact Us” link, and have the “Contact Us” link, and have direct contact with a dedicated online student services advisor. They are guaranteed a reply to any question within 24 hours, if not sooner. All questions from any of the three lines of communication, and the answers from the online advisor, are posted, so that others can benefit from the information.

When visitors log onto the HCC Student Services Online Web site address at (www.edu-
dentservicesonline@hccs.edu ), they are asked to choose one of four portals: high school student, new student, returning student or adult education/continuing education student. When they choose their status, they are presented a menu with links to online admission and registration, and also to the wide assortment of information and directions that students in their status might need to know. These range from advising and financial aid to child care, VA benefits, English as a second language and disability services.

According to Millicent Landry, director of OSS, “HCC’s Online Student Services has doubled the number of visits from 30,000 a month to 60,000 a month, and the online advisors have assisted HCC in enrolling and registering 9,875 students in a two year period that began in August 2004. OSS has received more than 760,918 “hits” since inception of the program and logged 18,892,651 accesses to the Web site.”

HCC is an open-admission, public institution of higher learning offering associate degrees, certificates, academic preparation, workforce training and lifelong learning opportunities that prepare individuals in our diverse communities for living and working in an increasingly international technological society. The HCC System is composed of six colleges serving students to communicate with the Student Services Representative, and the kind of services that will help them succeed and remain in college.”

“Hunters play a large part in my career,” she says. “It taught me that you had to work hard to achieve, but you can gain great joy from your work.”

Fame in 1999. “Hunter has played a large part in my career,” she says. “It taught me that you had to work hard to achieve, but you can gain great joy from your work."

THE DEAN’S COLUMN

FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH!

By DR. ALFRED S. POSAMENTIER

The number 13 is usually associated with being an unlucky number. Buildings with more than thirteen stories typically will omit the number 13 from the floor numbering. This is immediately noticeable in the elevator, where there is sometimes no button for 13.

You might ask your students for other examples where the number 13 is associated with bad luck. They ought to stumble on the notion that when the 13th of a month turns up on a Friday, then it is particularly bad. This may derive from the belief that there were thirteen people present at the Last Supper, which resulted in the crucifixion on a Friday. Yes, this month, April 13, 2007 falls on a Friday!

Ask your students if they think that the 13th comes up on a Friday with equal regularity as on the other days of the week. They will be astonished that, lo and behold, the 13th comes up more frequently on Friday than on any other day of the week.

This fact was first published by B.H. Brown. He stated that the Gregorian calendar follows a pattern of leap years, repeating every 400 years.

The number of days in one four-year cycle is 3×365 + 366. So in 400 years there are 100×365 + 366 – 3 = 146,097 days. Note that the century year, unless divisible by 400, is not a leap year;

In 2000, 2004, 2008... are leap years.

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**“Solution to Problem E36.” American Mathematical Monthly, 1933, vol. 40, p. 607.**

Dr. Alfred S. Posamentier is Dean of the School of Education at City College of NY, author of over 40 books on math including Math Wonders: Tantalizing Tidbits for the Mind (Prometheus, 2003), and member of the NYS Standards Committee on Math.

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“There is a new generation of writers looking for the freedom to travel, to explore and set individual goals on their terms. Their classroom is the world and their motivation comes from within. These are the types of students who will find success with this model,” says Lucinda Garrott, BFA program director. “There is also a degree of maturity and seriousness needed to complete this program and as a result, students must have a minimum of two years of college or full college credits to apply.”

The first residency for the new BFA will be held in Vermont from October 8th—15th. Applications are now being accepted and can be completed online at www.touro.edu.

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Goddard College is a leader in low-residency education. Students from all over the United States come to the Goddard campus in Plainfield, Vermont to attend eight-day residencies and create plans for individualized learning experiences. When students return home, they remain in contact with their respective faculty adviser and work independently to complete a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, and Master of Arts or Master of Fine Arts degree. More information can be found at www.goddard.edu or 1-800-906-8312.

EDUCATION UPDATE - college directory
Logos Bookstore's Recommendations

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It is the month of April, this year the month for Passover and Easter. For children Toy Box Productions puts out a series called “Biography Stories for Kids.” Two selections we found appropriate are “Passover” and “Passover and Moses: Joshua: Victory Through God.” In both books, like the other titles in the series are introduced God’s animals. In “Joshua” Moses in the desert,Deborah, Betsie and Baze in the war, the Armenian duckling and Brazen the bear, who in conversation bring up the story of Moses and relate the whole tale. There are some songs to sing and rich full-page cartoon style illustrations as well as accompanying CD for the reader to follow the story and hear the songs sung. In “Joshua: Victory Through God,” Donkey Dan and Beulah Bear talk about Joshua and sing songs about Joshua and Jericho such as “The Story of Creation,” “The Walls of Jericho” and “Joshua and Jericho.” Becky and Beulah Bear talk about Joshua and Jericho, too. Children’s Story Time with Dvorah every Monday, April 9, 2007 at 7 P.M., The Sacred Heart Church, 10 West 34th St., Penthouse, New York, NY 10001; 212-268-8900. Visit our website: www.abcdnyc.net. Itinerant Teachers, Bilingual Certified. Teach reading recovery, Orton-Gillingham methodology for Dyslexic children offers a rigorous curriculum, Orton - gillingham methodology and hands on instruction. One- on-one remediation is also provided. For your own home tuition or home instruction, schedule a demonstration lesson. For information, please call 718-393-2412. Attend Spring into Reading with Books Galore! Library Card Required. $3.00 at the door. By SELVANE VASQUEZ. Picture book: Ages 4 through 6. Thank you Bear By Greg Foley (Viking, 32 pp., $15.99)

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PICTURE BOOKS: Ages 6 through 8

The Perfect Nest

By Catherine Friend. Illustrated by John Meadows (Candlewick, 32 pp., $16.99)

“Animal families are not the same as human families. They are not the same as human families. They have different ways of living together, and different ways of raising their young. Although the physical needs of young animals may be similar to ours, the emotional needs are quite different. Reading this book is a wonderful way to help children understand these differences.” — Dr. Alice Belgrave, Chair, Children’s Book Committee at Bank Street College Announces 2007 Awards

By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

"Books may well be the only true magic," author Alice Hoffman is quoted as saying. The Bank Street College of Education has long recognized such literary alchemy, ever since its Children’s Book Committee was founded 75 years ago to recognize the enchantment that colorful prose infuses in the lives of young people with its guiding library program and provides grants to the best books for children published each year. Bank Street College of Education President Augustus Kappner kicked off the Children’s Book Committee’s annual awards presentation last month, noting that “everyone in this room is committed to bringing good literature and writing to the lives of children.” In announcing this year’s book award winners – Sara Pennypacker’s Clementine, Christian Burch’s The Manny Files, and Russell Freedman’s Freedom Walkers – she noted that they were in rarefied company, with over 4000 books in contention for three prestigious awards. Two books garnered the 2007 Josette Frank award, given “to honor books of outstanding literary merit in which children or young people deal in a positive and realistic way with difficulties in their world and grow emotionally and morally.” Christian Burch and The Manny Files, Clementine author Sara Pennypacker began her acceptance speech by admitting that the antics of her own children (“I just stole everything my kids ever did or said and put them in order”) provided the inspiration for her protagonist Clementine, a precocious third grader. “We are all brought up in Bible stories to problem-solve lands her in a heap of good-natured trouble. Pennypacker infused her remarks with a caution to educators: teaching children’s educational mentors to recognize the positive attributes of what may appear to be unruly or hyperactive behavior: “It would be fabulous if, for every time kids were not within a certain structure [in their behavior]…they were not only given the message that they were a troublemaker, but they were also given true messages about how positive they are and how valued they are…For instance, kids like Clementine often are empathetic and creative and ingenious…If you just said that enough times kids are not only given the message that they were a troublemaker, but they were also given true messages about how positive they are and how valued they are…For instance, kids like Clementine often are empathetic and creative and ingenious…If you just said that enough times kids are not only given the message that they were a troublemaker, but they were also given true messages about how positive they are and how valued they are…For Augustus Kappner touched upon his role-playing by her committee’s youngest contributor, two of whom had attended the award ceremony and stood for a bow amidst the roar- ing applause of their adult peers. The Children’s Book Committee, represented by the soon-to-be-established Bank Street Center for Children’s Literature, whose mission will be to create, identify and advocate for the highest quality children’s literary endeavors throughout adolescence while ensuring its accessibility to children throughout America. With 50 pages of newly recommended books this year, young readers will have lots to dig into over the coming months. Even parents and educators whose kids are too old to believe in magic will thank Bank Street for the delicious alchemy it is teaching its children’s lives.

Dr. Alice Belgrave, Chair, Children’s Book Committee at Bank Street College Announces 2007 Awards

Dr. Alice Belgrave, Ph.D.
“Reach Out & Read” provides reading to children at Bellevue Hospital

By LISA K. WINKLER

Maybe Perri Klass’ love of books began as a young child, when her parents, both professors, read to her and brought her to libraries. Or maybe her passion for books, especially children’s books, took root when she had her own children and began reading to them and taking them to libraries. Maybe her commitment to integrating literacy with health care began as she traveled worldwide as an infectious disease specialist, seeing firsthand the importance of education and medicine.

Whatever the source, there’s no doubt that Perri Klass—a doctor, a prolific writer, a university professor, an advocate of early literacy, a wife and mother of three, values reading and books. Klass, author of many fiction and non-fiction books, copious newspaper and magazine articles covering topics about health, parenting, travel, and knitting, received the 2006 Women’s National Book Association Award. Her role as medical director of Reach Out and Read, a national organization that trains pediatricians to introduce books during office visits and sponsors reading programs at medical clinics, further allows Klass to champion reading.

“A child that grows up without infectious diseases is a good thing. But a child that grows up without language skills, without books, isn’t a pediatric success story,” said Klass in an interview with Education Update in a patient waiting area at New York City’s Bellevue Medical Center. Oblivious to distractions inherent in a hospital, about half a dozen children, of various ages and sizes, clustered around volunteer readers seated on two blue gym mats. A basketful of books—baby board books and picture books, provided the readers folder for their audience.

Founded more than 15 years ago, Reach Out and Read, now with 2,700 programs worldwide, instills in pediatricians and nurses the importance of linking health and literacy. The program features three components: reading in waiting rooms, discussing reading with patients, and giving children new books to keep. The goal, explained Klass, is that young children will receive 10 free books by age 5 when they enter kindergarten. Beginning with a child’s 6 month check-up and with each subsequent physical, the child receives a free book. Trained volunteer readers engage children by reading aloud while children wait for their appointments, and doctors and other health care professionals discuss with children and parents the importance of reading.

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Dr. Perri Klass: Doctor, Writer, Professor, Literacy Advocate

Having first trained professionals at Bellevue’s Reach Out and Read program 12 years ago, Klass moved back to New York in August as Professor of Journalism and Pediatrics at New York University. Overseeing the Bellevue clinic and introducing residents to ROR—is one of her priorities. “We want residents to feel so strongly that Reach Out and Read should be part of a primary care environment that they’ll insist upon it when they get jobs,” she said.

“Reach Out and Read” is “haphazardly” she says, stemming from an interview with one of the founders. She’s eager to see the program expand, especially for families where English isn’t the first language. While ROR mostly serves populations in public health clinics and hospitals, it can and should, says Klass, extend to private practices. “Just because people aren’t poor, we can assume they know the importance of reading. A lot of kids are growing up with less family contact, with less attention from parents. If everyone is looking at a different screen in the house, that’s not serving young children very well.”

Dr. Perri Klass

Diabetes in children is growing to epidemic levels. Having a child with diabetes creates several concerns: in addition to insulin injections, blood tests and medical exams, the diet presents a special challenge. The recent publication, You Can Eat That! Awesome Food for Kids with Diabetes by nutritionist Robyn Webb, M.S. published by Cleveland Clinic Press makes healthy meal planning easy.

Imagine the mindset of a parent when told her child has a diagnosis of diabetes. When the discussion turns to meals and snacks, you are especially concerned. Among the preconceived notions you may have is that your child will never be able to eat sweets again and will have to subsist on bland, steamed vegetables and chicken. Forget about going out for meals at restaurants. But after discussion with your physician and with a nutritionist and with this book, you will soon realize that sweets can be allowed in a certain amount and that your child can have many tasty foods and with knowledge you can eat in restaurants. In the past few years, recommendations and choices of food for diabetics, adults and children, have been liberalized and therefore allow for a

Nutrition for Children with Diabetes

By HERMAN ROSEN, MD

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ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES TAKE ACTION TO HELP OTHERS

By LIZA YOUNG

In a recent panel discussion entitled, “Opening the Gates of Community, Identifying Needs, Advocating for Access, and Becoming Inclusive,” moderated by Jeri Mendelsohn and Elise Hahn Felix, Co-Chairs of the UJA-Federation of New York’s Taskforce on People with Disabilities, panelists, with great insight and compassion, shared their views regarding challenges to inclusion, and the missions of the organizations they run to optimize life experiences for individuals with disabilities.

Panelist Sharon Shapiro, CEO of Yid HaChazakah-The Jewish Disability Empowerment Center, who herself is physically disabled and has a speech disability, related how she founded the organization twenty years ago to facilitate independent living for individuals with disabilities. Relating her perspectives as an individual with disabilities, she indicated that it’s the speech impediment, not being in a wheelchair, that has proven the most difficult barrier to surmount. But Shapiro, like the name of the organization she founded, is tough and bright. She copes with people reacting with distress to her speech by “catching their attention, and looking them straight in the eye.”

Michael John Carly, Executive Director of Global and Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership (GRASP)—an organization which focuses on educational outreach, advocacy, and negotiating between employers, religious leaders, and sometimes even significant others, for individuals diagnosed along the Autism Spectrum—shared his personal experience with Asperger’s Syndrome, having been diagnosed with it a week after his four year old son received the same diagnosis. For Carly, this diagnosis was freeing, suddenly opening up for him an understanding about his own life. It no longer was about confusion or blame, but an understanding of his differences due to a “difference in wiring.” Carly noted how instrumental and enlightening it is for individuals along the autism spectrum to meet and share their experiences. GRASP currently has growing regional support group members in New York and Long Island which are peer-run. As Carly expressed, “individuals with autism go through life trying to explain themselves to the world, but it’s much easier when you know there are people who run on the same juice as you.”

In sharing their advice on inclusion from a moral and policy-oriented perspective, Shapiro stated the importance of “opening up the child in each of us. Ask questions that children ask: ‘Why? How? When? When seeing someone who’s different, approach and get to know them.” From the point of view of policy, Shapiro indicated that organizational leadership should focus on expanding recruitment and outreach efforts for individuals with disabilities.

Carly would like to see individuals “getting involved,” especially with reference to the heavily debated academic and policy discussions surrounding autism, such as the cure debate, the vaccine debate, and how to allocate funding. “The more involved, the more educated we get, the sooner we’ll reach a resolution,” he stated. Resounding Shapiro’s thoughts on empowerment, Carly highlighted the importance of self-advocacy, with employers, and in life in general.

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For more details, contact Karen Fleiss, Psy.D., Co-Director of the Summer Program for Kids, at 516 355 7601 or karen.fleiss@med.nyu.edu

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SPECIAL EDUCATION

RE: Dr. George Alexides, Pioneer in Cochlear Transplants
To the Editor:
This is so wonderful. I plan to share it with a friend.

Luke Li
Yung Chung Road, Taihang

RE: National Society for the Gifted & Talented
Launched
To the Editor:
Excellent article. Suggesting that elitism is not a criterion is impressive.

Ree James
Laurinburg, North Carolina

RE: Dr. Temple Grandin
To the Editor:
Temple Grandin is living proof that there is hope and that you are doing your job for your population.

Mary Anne Ferrigno
New York, NY

RE: Education Behind Bars
To the Editor:
My spouse is incarcerated in Auburn Correctional Facility in NY. I was impressed with your article and your interest in “enhancing” opportunities for inmates.

Ralph Brown
Hamburg, NY

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APRIL 2007  •  EDUCATION UPDATE  •  SPECIAL EDUCATION

To the Editor:
This is so wonderful. I plan to share it with a friend.

Luke Li
Yung Chung Road, Taihang

To the Editor:
Thank you for advocating and helping the population. I never, ever been in trouble with the law. All of the officers I’ve ever met are part of the revolving door system. Once they’re out they go right back in. Keep them in jail or try all of them.

Tiffany
Fort Worth, TX

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Laurinburg, North Carolina

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Ralph Brown
Hamburg, NY

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