As Graeme Jackson is reported in The Times, the school instilled and the importance of creating a curriculm and approach that addressed the circumstances of its student body. And while some aspects of the technique clearly wouldn’t fly today—including corporal punishment—one is amazed at the progressive ideas that were utilized.

Three concepts in particular were as forward thinking as anything being proposed today. Consider that a century and a half ago the African Free School:

- Created a model of childhood that stressed the child’s potential and gave students responsibility. The school placed the burden on children to learn. Advanced students both instructed younger students and maintained discipline. Inviting students with responsibility helped turn them into leaders.
- Taught the basics, but also provided students the vocabulary and strategies they would need for “real life.” Students learned to read, write, calculate, draw and speak well. But they were also taught skills important to securing jobs—cartography and navigation—as well as skills essential entering the middle class.
- Encouraged good behavior and good grades by rewarding students. The school at times distributed tickets that could be saved and redeemed for prizes. At other times, students were given gifts directly.

The students are knowledgeable in Math and the arts. They served as leaders in a nascent community of free African-Americans. And they improved life for generations-to-follow by working to abolish slavery and achieve civil rights. The history and records of this groundbreaking school, newly recovered by the New-York Historical Society, offer a telling portrait. The materials underscore the focus and discipline of the school instilled and the importance of creating a curriculum and approach that addressed the circumstances of its student body. And while some aspects of the technique clearly wouldn’t fly today—including corporal punishment—one is amazed at the progressive ideas that were utilized.

We in WV, have a very active “Institutional Transition Program” and our University is a “newcomer” to the effort. We have developed a program for getting far more of our 9th graders to stay in school and to pursue post-secondary education as well as getting more of our adults into post-secondary education which will keep them from going to prison. The same programs apply to those in prison who lack the education they need to be productive citizens.

If New York City, in an era of slavery, poverty and deprivation that is hard to imagine today, was able to provide such a foundation in a public school for the remarkable Dr. Smith, who are we to doubt that we are capable of the feat today?

Louise Mirrer is president of the New York Historical Society.
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ACCOUNTABILITY IS THE KEY TO IMPROVING NEW YORK’S SCHOOL SYSTEM

By MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

I still remember the day I graduated from high school—even though it was longer ago than I’d like to admit. Graduating is one of the proudest days in anyone’s life—up there with starting your first job, getting married, becoming a parent—or winning a Gold medal. You really can’t overestimate the value of a high school diploma. It opens the doors to college, to better jobs, to higher wages, to a brighter future and that’s why a major focus of our public school reforms is helping more students graduate and move on to college or get a good job.

When we gained control of the public school system in 2002, graduation rates had been stagnant for more than a decade. But because we’ve raised standards and introduced accountability in our schools, graduation rates have climbed steadily every single year. The State Education Department recently released the numbers for 2007 and once again, the percentage of students who graduated within four years increased. The graduation rate for the class of 2007, including August graduates, was 55.8 percent.

While that rate is still much too low, it is climbing faster than it is in the rest of the state, including in other big cities like Syracuse and Buffalo. What’s more, a higher percentage of students are meeting the rigorous requirements needed to earn a Regents Diploma, which means they’re graduating better qualified than ever for successful college careers. More students are also getting diplomas by going to summer school after their senior year or by spending a fifth year in high school and we should applaud them for that, because it shows that they cared enough about their education to stick it out and finish all of their requirements.

But perhaps most uplifting, graduation rates for Black and Hispanic students are climbing at the fastest rates. That’s one more piece of evidence that the shameful and intolerable achievement gap that has separated students of different races and ethnicities is finally beginning to close. Of course, it goes without saying that, despite this encouraging progress, we’ve still got a long way to go. Too many children are not finishing high school. But it’s also just as clear that we are headed in the right direction and we can’t go back to the old days when the school system was mired in dysfunction and people simply shrugged at the fact that students weren’t learning.

Accountability, which starts with mayoral control, has been the key to our school system’s turnaround. It’s given us the ability to phase out social promotion, implement fair funding for all students, improve our testing system, institute a new, family-centered pre-kindergarten program, and pay for teachers, and other important measures.

The result is that crime in our schools is falling, test scores and graduation rates continue to rise, and students are heading off to higher education or the working world, armed with the confidence and skills they need to live out their dreams.

Science Educators Find Interactive Workshops at NY Botanical Garden

By JAMIE BOYER

Through The New York Botanical Garden’s Professional Development Program, science educators in the tri-state area are expanding their knowledge about plant biology and ecology through innovative, hands-on workshops and professional development seminars. The Professional Development workshops are designed to help science educators learn how to use the Botanical Garden as an extension of their classroom. Workshops are offered conveniently on Saturdays and/or during school breaks. Sessions include dynamic classes on how plants grow and an introduction to plant diversity in the forest.

When school is out for the summer, many teachers improve their teaching skills by participating in the Summer Institutes, week-long studies in nature and botanical sciences led by educators. Teachers learn how to make science fun through field-tested, hands-on activities. In the Seedlings Program, geared toward K-2nd grade educators, participants explore the Garden’s 50-acre Native Forest—the largest remnant of uncut forest in New York City—search for flowers, fruits, and seeds, and learn about gardening especially for children. Through the Saplings Program, geared toward 3rd-5th grade science educators, participants conduct experiments and identify trees in the Garden’s Native Forest and engage in forest ecology practices. All participants visit the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, America’s premier Victorian-style glasshouse, to explore the rain forest and the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden, a 1.5 acre garden created and maintained by children. After completing the Institutes, teachers receive salary increments or graduate credits from Lehman College.

According to one former Summer Institute participant, “This program is absolutely fantastic; a week filled with professional development seminars allow teachers to spend a half or full day learning about a variety of science topics including, Biomes of the World, Nature for Early Learners, and Introduction to the Wetlands. These programs are available for pre-arranged groups of educators (minimum of 12 participants) during the fall, winter, and spring.”

On Wednesday, September 24, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., The New York Botanical Garden will present a free Teacher Open House. This annual event is the perfect time to meet the Children’s Education staff and learn about the Garden’s professional development programs. Visitors will also have the opportunity to explore the Botanical Garden’s 250-acre landscape through a tram tour. For additional information, please call 718.817.8181 or visit www.nybg.org/edu.

Jamie Boyer is the Associate Director of Teacher Professional Development at The New York Botanical Garden.

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Randi Weingarten — AFT & UFT

Protecting the Classroom

by Randi Weingarten

As summer draws to what seems like a much too rapid end, parents, children and teachers across New York City are preparing for the challenges of the new school year with a renewed sense of optimism—and with good reason. The fact is we all have much to be excited about as we get set to build upon the momentum of progress we’ve worked so hard to achieve over the past year. Test scores and graduation rates are up—not as much as everyone would like, of course, but the progress is substantial and things are certainly headed in the right direction. Most parents surveyed by the public school system give their children’s teachers and schools high marks. In fact, 94 percent of parents approve of the job teachers are doing. The learning environment is safer, too, with school crime dropping 31 percent over the past academic year. And education continues to get a lot of attention in the news as both presidential candidates make it one of the core economic times.

But those of us who have had to fight these battles for so long know all too well that the biggest challenges lie ahead as the economy continues to show signs of strain. We know we must keep parents and the rest of the public aware of the threat to our schools.

That’s why the United Federation of Teachers, the union representing the city’s 100,000 public school educators, is currently running a radio advertising campaign for this back-to-school season. The spots are airing for a two-week period on most local stations. Our aim is to reassure parents and the public and let everyone know that while our educators are proud of the progress we achieved with their help and collaboration over the past year, we’ll be working even harder this year to improve upon that and give children the quality, well-rounded education they deserve.

And our efforts will not be limited to just the classroom. Educators, parents and other concerned groups and individuals must continue to work together in order to protect the classroom from budget cuts as tax revenues lag and costs rise. Barring a dramatic turnaround in the economy, the fight to save our schools from the type of deep and crippling cuts we saw during the fiscal crises of the Seventies continues to get a lot of attention from recent budget cuts. Although we successfully fought the more drastic budget reductions, we are still struggling to fill vacancies, offer new programs, and maintain those that are in place. Even in this deteriorating economy, it is essential that education remain a priority. Remember: Our kids do not get a second chance.

The beginning of another school year also presents the opportunity to explore new educational initiatives. I encourage you to try different approaches; if you find what you’re doing is not yielding the results you’d like to see, it’s time to switch gears. As Albert Einstein said, “We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”

I know that your community looks to you to provide direction and guidance when difficulties and conflicts emerge. I know I can count on each one of you to be caring and innovative when working collaboratively with others. We must never underestimate the importance of building relationships with staff and parents. With their support and your strong leadership, we can be assured that the city’s students will make significant progress this year.

Ernest Logan is President of Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.

Ernest Logan — CSA

Welcome Back

by Ernest Logan

September is always an exciting time for school supervisors and administrators. New students, new curriculum, new parents—the opportunities to improve our classrooms seem unlimited. I know the calendar says that the New Year begins in January, but we who work in schools know that the year really begins after Labor Day when the children arrive with pristine notebooks and sharpened pencils.

We must now focus on this school year; a year that will surely hold challenges but also triumphs. By working together, school leaders, teachers, and parents can focus on student achievement as well as work to narrow the achievement gap. We will try to improve the educational climate for all students, especially for those struggling to remain among their peers. As school leaders, we are dedicated to educating every child that walks through our doors.

This year, thankfully, we have not been faced with another major reorganization. However, we will still face obstacles, many of which have arisen from recent budget cuts. Although we successfully

...continued on page 19

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FROM THE NYU CHILD STUDY CENTER: ASK THE EXPERT

A Good Loser Can Be A Winner

By DR. GLENN S. HIRSCH

Stephanie, aged 4, stamps her feet in frustration when she loses a game of cards with her brother. Allan, aged 9, whines, blames the pitcher, and throws down his bat when he misses the ball. Suellen, aged 16, cries bitterly when she comes in second in a swim meet.

Four-year-old Stephanie is not yet able to verbalize her frustration about losing, and her behavior is not unusual for her age. What’s okay for a four-year-old, however, is not okay as children grow older. Allan and Suellen, although disappointed, can be expected to react in a more socially appropriate way.

What makes a kid a sore loser? No one likes to lose, but for some kids losing is a mortal blow to their self-esteem. Why? There are several reasons:

Individual temperament is one factor; each child is born with a particular temperamental style and some tend be easily upset, while others take things in their stride.

Some sore losers are overly concerned about what other people think of them, so when they lose their self-esteem plummets and they believe they’re not as good as others. Losing reinforces their belief that they can’t win, that others are better than they are. While it’s natural for kids to compare themselves to others, our culture sometimes overemphasizes competitiveness, and too many kids winning is the only way to prove you’re better than the others.

Models matter most of all. Many kids who are sore losers are copying the behavior they see in their parents, coaches or other adults who are important to them. Kids who are sore losers often have parents who are sore losers. Parents can become overly involved in their children’s activities and have unrealistic expectations for success. Some parents, unwittingly or intentionally, transmit the message that winning is all-important. How can parents help a “sore loser” be a winner?

• Acknowledge your child’s feelings. Let him know it’s okay to feel angry, disappointed, sad, etc., when he loses.
• Instill that kids play fair. Explain the rules of the game before beginning, and don’t let the child bend the rules.
• Don’t always let the child win. Let him experience losing.
• Praise your child for doing his best rather than focus on winning.

The teenage years are a time of emotional highs and lows. So how do you distinguish normal teenage mood swings and rebellion from actual depression? The September 2008 issue of the Harvard Mental Health Letter highlights some ways to tell.

Although depression can occur at any age, it affects teens more than younger children. Depressive symptoms may start appearing around age 13, and often peaks between 16 and 24. Yet depression often goes undiagnosed in young people, because symptoms seldom involve mood alone. One study concluded that fewer than half of adolescents who meet the criteria for depression receive any treatment.

Many schools have implemented screening programs to identify teens at risk as well as programs to prevent depression. These programs generally don’t on the number of games they win. Instead, they focus on sports and other events and discuss how players deal with losing and winning.

If your child wants to be on a team, look for a coach that emphasizes play and skill building rather than focusing on winning.

It’s been found that sore losers have more trouble than other children in making and sustaining friendships as they grow older, which highlights the importance of helping children develop realistic values about disappointment as well as success. #

Distinguishing A Bad Mood From Depression In Teenagers: Harvard U

By TRACY KRAMER SECKER

Our vacation week in the Hamptons could not have been more glorious. For the first time in a very long time, the weather was our best friend...sunny, clear blue skies with not a hint of humidity. For some reason, beach memories are extremely powerful for me. For those of you who have seen the movie Darius Goes West, you know that Charley’s wave-jumping time is limited. I get emotional when I reminisce about a trip to Florida several years ago, specifically when I described how much Charley and Syra fung around in the ocean. I’m not sure what it is about the sea...maybe it’s a reminder that whoever created DMD also has the power to create such astounding beauty. Or maybe it’s my childhood memories of Atlantic beach, jumping the waves with sisters and friends until dusk, and the dread that Charley’s wave-jumping time is limited. I think the sheer power and expanse of the ocean is humbling and awe-inspiring...makes me think about our place in the world, that we’re all pretty small in the grand scheme of things. At the same time, watching the waves crash in reminds me that our ability to achieve is limitless. We’ve sailed across the ocean, explored the bottom of the ocean, even flown over the ocean...surely we can beat Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

After dropping the kids with their grandparents and the puppy with a friend, Benji and I headed down to Philadelphia for the most comprehensive annual DMD conference in the world. We participated in two intense days of scientific presentations as well as “break-out sessions” covering day-to-day issues that DMD families have to face, such as physical therapy and social isolation.

The environment in this DMD conference four times. My first time, in 2005, I remember hearing anxious parents talk about how the scientists seem to say the same thing year after year. That scared me—talking with experienced DMD parents who felt like nothing was changing. Thank God I do not have that feeling now. This year’s conference was markedly different from past meetings. For starters, there was a much-gavelled announcement from researchers in the biotechnology industry discussing the different therapies they are developing. Two of the speakers discussed human clinical trials that are underway, and others presented their plans to begin trials in the near future. The excitement over PTC-124, the first DMD drug to enter human clinical trials, was palpable. The company that is developing this medicine just struck a licensing deal with Genzyme, a major biotechnology company in Cambridge, MA. Finally, the biotechnology industry is paying attention to DMD, and the money you have generously donated is being leveraged by big investments from well-known industry players.

In closing, I feel the urge to come full circle with the beach metaphor—nothing about how the waves have been building, and now they are starting to crash into shore. It’s in my mind somewhere, but as I learn more about this new blogging genre, I realize that it’s better to write more often and less perfectly than to wait three months to produce an elegant essay faced with well-crafted prose.

One thing I will continue to do, no matter what, is to end on a high note. So here it is: Charley is still wave-jumping. With a humongous smile on his face, he readied himself for the break, bending his knees in anticipation of the onslaught. Time and time again he cleared the incoming wave with a small but real two-footed jump. And when he got tired, he decided that it is just as fun to swim under the waves as it is to jump over them. It’s amazing that he can still jump, and just as amazing that he can adapt to what life sends his way without a hint of frustration or anger.

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Charley’s Fund: A Mother’s Take On Muscular Dystrophy

By TRACY KRAMER SECKER

From the NYU Child Study Center: Ask the Expert

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Legally blind high school graduates are off to college after receiving major scholarships from The Jewish Guild for the Blind. The GuildScholar Program is the largest of its kind in the country, selecting as many as 15 students for scholarships each academic year. These extraordinary awards are sponsored by such distinguished organizations as the Fu Foundation of Engineering and Applied Science, The Jewish Guild for the Blind, the National Federation of the Blind’s 2008 GuildScholar awards have been announced.

Additionally, recipients of The Jewish Guild for the Blind’s 2008 GuildScholar awards have been accepted to Binghamton University (SUNY), Gettysburg College, Stanford, Texas A&M, Mercer, Eastern Illinois, Colorado and Florida. In September 2006, The Jewish Guild for the Blind announced its new scholarship program for college-bound high school seniors who are legally blind. The GuildScholar Program awards each student a $15,000 scholarship to help assure that more blind students are able to enroll in college or university that might otherwise be out of their reach financially.

College Remedial Reading: Is it too late?

By LISA K. WINZLER

For every teacher, beginning the school year brings a mixture of trepidation and excitement. By August, each day brings me closer to the first day when I ask: Who are my students? What do they need? And can I deliver?

At New Jersey City University, an urban university in Jersey City, I’ll be teaching Reading for College, a non-credit, four semester hour course, required of students who fall below a benchmark determined by test scores, high school GPAs and such. Students are given two chances to pass and then must take Reading and Study Skills, before enrolling in college English. Meanwhile, they’re registered in courses in other disciplines.

Though I’m free to design the syllabus, I wonder—should I focus on strategies geared toward remedial classes? or should I attempt to instill a passion for reading that will empower them to become independent learners?

Would teaching strategies using their textbooks turn class into a glorified study hall?

Which leads me to question how students got here in the first place? Why were they so left behind throughout their schooling that to begin college they require remedial work? As an educator and a parent, I’ve seen how reading is a personal journey that varies for everyone. Support for reading from home and school is crucial to create lifelong readers.

Take my eldest son, for example. Now 23, as a child, he worried neighbors who saw him read while walking the dog, oblivious to traffic. My second son, now 21, brings everything he reads to life by creating movies in his head, complete with accents and soundtracks. My daughter, 17, opts for books on CD. Each is a reader, with different tastes and reading styles. What did we do to encourage this? Endless reading aloud and library visits, taking books to doctors’ offices and on vacation, and so on. It’s unlikely my remedial students have been so enriched.

Sharing reading provides a common language and cultural bond. A lunch with my running partner, her 12-year-old daughter and her friend illustrated the community created by reading. Assigned S.E. Hinton’s The Outsiders (1967) for summer reading, the girls mentioned how they love the first sentence, prompting us all to recite: “When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house, I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home.”

By contrast, an anecdote a colleague shared troubled me. A plumber, servicing his boiler, complained that his young son “asks too many questions and is a momma’s boy because he likes to be read to.” Can this child be expected to develop a love of reading? Is this child destined to remedial classes?

I’m eager to meet my students and become part of their reading journeys. Yet I worry too. Is college too late to bridge the gulfs between those who aren’t readers and those who are? To begin, I’ve amassed a list of “good reads” to share that I hope will inspire them to read more, read critically, read for fun, and read to succeed in college.

West 65th Street in Manhattan, is one of the nation’s foremost not-for-profit vision health care agencies. The Guild has been serving blind, visually impaired and multi-disabled children, adults and the elderly since 1914. For more information, visit www.jgb.org/
U of Oxford Launches New Centre For Ed Assessment

Recently the University of Oxford officially launched the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment. The centre was established by a grant from Pearson PLC. The collaboration brings together research expertise in the University’s highly acclaimed Department of Education with Pearson’s international expertise in educational assessment.

In an initial 10-year relationship Pearson is funding and supporting the new centre and a Pearson Professor of Educational Assessment. Gordon Stanley is the inaugural director of the centre and Pearson Professor of Educational Assessment, taking up the appointment in April 2008. Professor Stanley was President of the Board of Studies in New South Wales in Australia from 1998-2008. In 2007 he chaired the National Numeracy Review for the Council of Australian governments. He was also a member of the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board from 1998-2008 and an overseas member of the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (now HKCAAVQ).

As well as having a full-time director, the centre has post-doctorate scholars and DPhil students, and research staff associated with the research program as it evolves. It is located within the Oxford University Department of Education, where a number of academic staff have research interests in aspects of educational assessment, so many projects will involve them as collaborators or consultants. There will be a formal association with the Psychometric research group of the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Australia.

The launch of the centre will be marked with a round-table in Oxford, which will bring together researchers and assessment experts in the UK to look at the priorities for research in educational assessment. This will be followed by a workshop involving professionals from a number of countries to discuss emerging issues associated with assessment programs.

Gordon Stanley, Pearson Professor of Educational Assessment and Director of the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment, said: “We look forward to working collaboratively with other researchers and agencies on the challenges confronting education systems in the quest for global qualifications and standards. The research will look at new approaches to educational assessment to help improve the understanding of different types of learning processes and outcomes. It will examine the opportunities offered by recent advances in learning and assessment technologies, and the challenges presented by the increasing requirement for global qualifications and standards.”

Dr. John Hood, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, said: “As education becomes increasingly global, Oxford is pleased to be leading the way in launching a research centre that will help improve learning and assessment systems in the UK and around the world.”

Professor John Furlong, Director of the Department of Education, said: “This is a very important new development for Oxford and for education systems around the world. Assessment is a key part of learning at every level of the education system; it is vitally important to parents, teachers, governments, as well as to learners themselves. This new centre will help to ensure that our assessment systems in the UK and internationally are underpinned by the highest quality research.”

Oxford’s Department of Education has a leading reputation for its work in child learning, comparative and international education, professional education, teacher education, and e-learning. The staffing of the Department and its number of graduate students is expanding: last year it appointed five new professors, established five new lecture-ships and attracted funding for four post-doctoral positions. For more, go to www.edstud.ox.ac.uk.

Pearson’s international development work in the area of educational assessment and standards for general, vocational and professional learning is led by Professor Jim Tognolini, Director, Pearson Research and Assessment based in Sydney.

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My Granddaughter Learns to Read

By SID TRUBOWITZ

My granddaughter, Gabriela, not quite 2, has her own version of reading. She toddles over to the bookshelf holding her collection of stories and chooses one to examine. She turns the pages, arranges them right side up, eyes the different illustrations, and as she moves through the book babbles her baby talk sounds. Interspersed among her vocalizations, many of which I don’t find intelligible, is the occasional “moo, moo”, “arf, arf” or “meow” to represent the cow, dog, or cat she has identified.

Sometimes after she picks a story from her bookshelf, she comes to the couch where I’m seated, climbs up, moves close and together we look at a book. We recognize situations and characters we’ve seen before. I read “Boo, hoo. The baby is crying.” Gabriela brings her hands to her eyes to mimic sobs. “Sh, sh. The baby is sleeping.” We each raise a finger to the lips to reinforce the need for silence. We look at a baby’s bellybutton. “Where is Baby’s Bellybutton?”

For Gabriela books are more than words. They are the brilliant hues of the frogs, birds, flowers, and other creatures in Goodnight Sweet Butterflies. They are the stark white and black colors in Tana Hoban’s books, the different textures found on the snouts, tails, and heads of the animals illustrated in Curly’s friends, and the sounds coming from The Wheels on the Bus when we press the right spot on the cover.

On occasion a word does gain attention as when she pulls a tag at the bottom of a page and drawings of a polar bear, a snowman, and a piece of chalk emerge from under previously flaps. I point to the printed markings that appear in the middle of the page and say “white”. Then it’s on to the next page where things yellow are pictured and again I mouth the written word.

We go the children’s room at the local Barnes and Noble outlet and maneuver past the gathered carriages and strollers encountering books everywhere. A nanny shows a book to an infant perched in a carriage. A ten-year old boy seated on the top level of a raised platform reads to his younger sister. A young mother with a child glued to each side of her relates a story to two entranced listeners. Children of all ages lay sprawled on the carpet in different corners of the room with eyes only for the book in hand. Quiet, noses buried in books, everyone reading.

Gabriela wanders through the aisles checking out books. She looks at little books, big books, thick books, thin books, books that give off sounds, touchy-feely books, and even books made of rubber that you can take into a bathtub. She finds popup books, books devoted to color, others illustrating different shapes. In time, she selects one to read and her little hand pats the off sounds, touchy-feely books, and again. It gives her a sense of comfort to come across familiar characters. It also feels good to know how a story will develop and to have that sense of anticipation rewarded by seeing what you expect to see. A story is read many times and the experience of colors, sounds, pictures, and the warmth of a grownup’s body sitting alongside makes contact with books pleasurable.

We return home for lunch and it’s time for a diaper changing. A book softens the interruption to Gabriela’s constant exploration of her environ- ment. Instead of reacting to a pair of adult hands fussing and fumbling below by kicking her feet and twisting her body, it all becomes bearable when she has in her hand a tiny book like Mary Had a Little Lamb.

The day ends with a book. A parent reading a favorite story precedes going to bed. The lights are dimmed, the noises of the day retreat. The inchoate, fragmented bits of reality that invade sleep are cushioned by the control Gabriela has found in the regularity and certainty of what she has found in books. The transition into the world of sleep becomes less perilous.

When I leave Gabriela after babysitting, I have visions of a girl grownup who sits in a quiet corner in hand oblivious of everything but the story. I see myself as that little boy who loved the experience of colors, sounds, pictures, and the warmth of a grownup’s body sitting alongside makes contact with books pleasurable. When she has in her hand a tiny book like Mary Had a Little Lamb and her grandma and grandpa sing the text as she is being changed.

The day ends with a book. A parent reading a favorite story precedes going to bed. The lights are dimmed, the noises of the day retreat. The inchoate, fragmented bits of reality that invade sleep are cushioned by the control Gabriela has found in the regularity and certainty of what she has found in books. The transition into the world of sleep becomes less perilous.

When I leave Gabriela after babysitting, I have visions of a girl grownup who sits in a quiet corner in hand oblivious of everything but the story. I see myself as that little boy who loved the smell of libraries, who each night placed a book under his pillow to be retrieved first thing in the morning, and for whom Friday afternoon free reading was his favorite school time. In the years ahead it’ll be fun for Gabriela and me to talk about what we’ve been reading. Sid Trubowitz is a professor emeritus from Queens College, New York.
Hunter College: Humanitarian Trip to Honduras, Part I

BY JUSTINE RIVERA
WITH LAUREN WITTER

New York City is often known for its rude people and tough streets, but there is a group of people who may be changing this stereotype. Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY) recently sent New York State’s first Global Medical Brigade to provide free medical care to the underserved people of rural Honduras. With the humble group of 24 including one family doctor and one EMT, the Hunter College students helped over 400 people, by donating their time, medicine, clothes, money, and other goods to needy villagers throughout Honduras.

Honduras is a small Central American country that is filled with beauty, traversed by sprawling dirt roads, trees as far as the eye can see, in an ear-popping, high-altitude, mountainous region. Dirt roads, trees as far as the eye can see, in an ear-popping, high-altitude, mountainous region. Historically, the country is filled with a rich past but less than rich economy. Suffering from a harsh hurricane ten years ago, more than half of the country’s population still lives below the poverty line. Even those who can afford homes better than shanties still have trouble accessing clean water and electricity. Medical care is a major issue.

Prior to arriving at their living quarters, the 24 Brigaders prepared themselves for the worst. As one brigader Selby Chu, put it, “he was completely surprised to see our dwelling area. It was an expansive building, staffed with friendly cooks, housekeepers, and groundskeepers. Tables was an expansive building, staffed with friendly cooks, housekeepers, and groundskeepers. Tables lined up surrounded by couches and hammocks to relax on; I could’ve mistaken it for a resort. There couldn’t have been a better place to stay. Yet it also strengthened the stark contract between our lives and those we were helping.”

To Honduras gave the group a clearer visual of how serious the situation is and how badly they need help. It was no longer just something you read in a newspaper or learned in class but something that was clearly visible before their eyes. For some, coming to Honduras solidified their dreams of becoming a doctor, as well as inspiring them to be more determined in their future efforts to improve healthcare.

Working with the people there was such a wonderful experience. Everyone was so nice, and the children were such a delight to play with and speak to. The people of Honduras are just like everyone else; they want live their lives just as healthy as we do. The problem is that they have a much harder time accessing proper health care than we do and when they can, it’s normally too far from home, or out of their price range. They are then forced to live with minor afflictions that can escalate to a major illness such as Malaria or Guinevere. There is a high epidemic of respiratory problems due to low ventilation in the villagers’ homes.

Thanks to the hard work of Marissa Lombardo, President of the 2007-2008 Hunter College chapter of Global Medical Brigades, the group successfully conducted fundraisers and received a generous donation from Joseph Testa, Pharmacist of Woodhaven Pharmacy, and as well as a donation from Church on the Hill, with a special thanks to Reverend Justin Meyers for his support in gaining funds. With their help the group was able to reach their year-round goal of traveling to Honduras to help provide free medical care to those who needed it the most. Other New York based colleges are now following suit.

The Hunter College chapter plans on going again and the gears are already in motion for a bigger better brigade that will provide even more help.

Look for Part II next month.

Eric Nadelstern,
CEO, Empowerment Schools

On the second day of the Democratic National Convention, I can't help but feel that 54 years after Brown vs. Topeka, history is being made by nominating the first African-American Presidential candidate, and perhaps, our first black President. Let's repledge our efforts to do everything we can this year to close the educational achievement gap and ensure that this historic moment is not an anomaly.

Outstanding Educators of the Year 2008 Share Best Lessons & Techniques

ELLIE GREENBERG
Principal, P4K, Brooklyn, NY

School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) has given us a way to organize the school environment and create a positive school climate by providing proactive supports and interventions along a three-tiered continuum of strategies. By conducting a needs assessment, our team established a simple way for students, parents and staff to understand and remember what the school-wide expectations for behavior are for P4K. We call it “Be a SPORT”. “SPORT” represents Self-control, Prepared, Organized, Respectful and Try hard. We believe that all students, regardless of disability can achieve success in meeting the behavioral expectations in each of the SPORT areas given opportunities for practice and positive recognition of progress. P4K is a District 75 cluster school located throughout Brooklyn and consists of one main site and five (5) off-sites. Our students are pre-k through sixth grade with a variety of special needs including but not limited to: autism, severe emotional and behavior disorders, hearing impairments and deafness and varying degrees of cognitive and developmental delays. Most of our students have communication and social skills deficits and ALL of our students present challenging behaviors. We use puppets to teach the behavioral expectations in a fun, creative and memorable way. The SPORT KIDS puppets have helped to create a positive school climate and have served to unify our five sites into one school with common behavioral expectations; common language to discuss them and a way of teaching those skills and expectations to our very special students.
EASING THE PAIN OF DIABETES

To ease pain and numbness associated with diabetes, NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell physician-scientists are studying a drug previously used for depression to treat peripheral neuropathy. Diabetics often suffer from this condition because of high blood sugar levels that damage nerve cells. Those with peripheral neuropathy often endure chronic pain, cramping and sleepless nights that prevent them from living a normal lifestyle.

But now, scientists believe that a drug called reboxetine may alleviate their symptoms. The compound works by boosting the level of the neurotransmitter norepinephrine between nerve cells. But it also works by inhibiting the neurotransmitter's degradation within the nerve, where it is stored within the cell for later use.

Dr. Bassem Masri—a cardiologist and diabetes specialist at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell and Helen and Robert Appel Clinical Scholar and assistant professor of clinical medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College—is studying the drug's effectiveness in a Phase II trial in subjects who have been diagnosed with diabetes for at least one-year and who have peripheral neuropathy.

For more information: Please contact Ivanka Zaprianov at 212-746-2349.
LEAVE NO COMMUNITY COLLEGE BEHIND

By PRESIDENT ANTONIO PÉREZ, BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE, THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Community colleges are a vital part of our nation’s education system. They are the first stop for many students on their path to college, providing a pathway to higher education for those who may not have the opportunity to attend four-year institutions.

But economic uncertainty isn’t the only factor. Positive forces are also at work. More than ever before, community colleges are places where individuals can return to acquire and update the skills they need to function and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

This is a role to which community colleges in general—and BMCC in particular—have always been totally committed. Through BMCC’s Continuing Education and Workforce Development Division we enable individuals to upgrade their job skills, earn general equivalency diplomas and go on to college.

But whether or not they go on to pursue baccalaureate degrees, graduates know that they have taken an important first step toward making a valuable contribution to the economic growth and vitality of their communities. At a time when community colleges account for nearly half of the nation’s undergraduates, the prudent course is to increase funding—not cut it back. Nothing less than the economic future of our communities—and the world—is at stake.#

parents and families are the first and most important educators of children. Active engagement by parents and families is vital to improving academic achievement and overall school performance. These principles serve as the cornerstone of the New York State Board of Regents policy to improve student achievement and school performance through promoting parent and family partnerships. To implement this policy, the Board of Regents has committed to working to ensure that:

• parents and families are fully engaged in and contribute to the academic development of their child and to the school’s learning environment;• schools and districts inform parents of their rights and responsibilities;• schools and districts create opportunities for parents and families to support academic achievement and;• each school board develop and implement comprehensive parent partnerships.

For more than 90 years, BMCC researchers have reported a strong connection between parental involvement and academic gains. Parents who are actively involved in their children’s education create learning environments that encourage and stimulate children at home and reinforce their learning at school. When parents move “beyond the bake sale” to authentic engagement and shared decision-making, they help to transform schools into better learning communities.

This promises to be a challenging school year. Schools and districts, under tight fiscal pressures, are seeking innovative ways to maintain services. More than ever, schools should provide parents with information on what are the best research-based approaches for how parents can help their children learn. We must continue to seek collaborations with community and faith-based organizations; local and state agencies; businesses and universities; museums and libraries to build partnerships with families.

On behalf of the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department, I want to welcome you to another year of building connections between your homes and your schools.

GREETINGS FROM NYS ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER SHEILA EVANS-TRANUM

QUEENS COLLEGE, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

By PRESIDENT JAMES L. MYSKENS

Queens College may be located on 77 beautiful acres in Flushing, but our campus is everywhere. We have always attracted excellent students and faculty from around the globe—at present over 146 countries are represented on campus—and now we are working to send more of our students out into the world.

Our Education Abroad program offers students a chance to study cinema and business in Japan, the crusades in Israel, photography, food, and art in Florence, aboriginal culture in Australia—indeed, we help students study almost anything they want anywhere in the world they wish to do so.

And who knows how far students might go when they take advantage of the many opportunities to do research with our stellar faculty? Later this semester three of our students will be accompanying their professor to Antarctica. And this fall alone we have hired new faculty who have done outstanding research in Italy, Turkey, Ghana, New Zealand, and China.

Students who prefer traveling in time to traveling in space will enjoy our innovative Reacting to the Past pedagogy. In these classes, students role-play important historical figures—such as Socrates, Galileo, and Gandhi—to get a better understanding of the ideas that have shaped our world.

Of course, we do much more than just react to the past: we are always introducing new majors in fields that will be in demand in the future, such as business administration, neuroscience, graphic design, environmental geosciences, and translation. And if students have a great new business idea, they can bring that idea to our faculty in the Schutzman Center for Entrepreneurship, where they will receive advice from experts and maybe even the financing they need to get their idea out into the global marketplace.

If the journey students most dream of is living on their own during their college years, Queens College is the place to do it. We will be opening the Summit, our first residence hall, next fall. In keeping with our commitment to sustainability and a greener planet, the Summit is expected to receive Silver certification from the United States Green Building Council, an award given to structures that prevent waste and conserve energy.

A first-rate education is perhaps the greatest voyage any of us ever takes. And more and more of our city’s top students are now making that voyage with Queens College.

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THE COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

By PRESIDENT TOMÁS D. MORALES

This new academic year, we welcome to campus 27 new faculty members. They join a professoriate already widely recognized for its scholarship, research expertise and pedagogical skill.

Drawn by the quality of our faculty, our enrollment continues to surge. We are welcoming more new students to the College of Staten Island than at any time in our history. This enrollment increase of approximately 5 percent reflects admirably on the education provided at the College of Staten Island and strengthens our reputation as a center of academic excellence.

In response to suggestions from the College community, we are initiating a permanent shuttle service between the campus and the Staten Island Ferry. This free shuttle bus will reduce the number of motor vehicles coming to campus and speed the transit of students from their homes to the College.

This coming academic year will also see significant capital improvements on our campus. Staten Island’s elected officials, especially our New York State legislative delegation and City Council delegation, along with the Borough President, have secured more than $42 million in funds to advance a broad range of College of Staten Island projects.

Additionally, the College continues to advance toward the creation of residential living on campus. Residence halls will be transformative for the College, providing students, faculty and staff with the astonishing experience of a green and gentle campus set in the most dynamic city in the world.

While we are immensely thankful for our elected officials’ dedication to the college, we also know that we face the challenge of a troubled national economy. As I have over the past year, I will work closely with the College’s Budget Committee, CSI’s Student Government and CUNY to help the College of Staten Island navigate through this economic downturn. In the months ahead, I continue to support and invest in the academic mission of the College.

Working together, I am confident we will emerge stronger than ever.
The purpose of this communication is to inform you of actions recently taken by Governor David Paterson and The New York State Legislature and the impact on the CUNY operating budget. The actions included budget reductions for CUNY’s senior colleges totaling $50.6 million. There were no cuts in community college base aid or in the State’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). We have been mindful for some time of the likelihood of State expenditure limitations during this period of economic challenges. We are implementing strategies that minimize the impact of such limitations on the University’s core business—our academic programs and support services—while the University continues to flourish and grow.

Through contingency planning, we have been able to utilize one-time resources and alternative ways of financing equipment replacement or substantially offset nearly two-thirds of the new budgetary reductions. Thus, the impact on the CUNY senior colleges has been reduced to $18.6 million. This is being handled by restrictions on other than personal services (OTPS), a temporary vacancy control program on the replacement of non-professional administrative, and a reduction in University-wide lump sum appropriations (insulating college operating budgets). This overall approach has allowed CUNY to respond to the actions by the Governor and the Legislature in a responsible way while maintaining the momentum CUNY has achieved over the last decade.

Notwithstanding the current difficult economic times faced by the State and City, the University must continue to move forward. We are hiring full-time faculty, for replacement purposes and for new positions already provided for in each college’s financial plan, and staff who provide direct services to students, such as academic advisors and mental health counselors. We anticipate no reduction of direct student services or cancellation of course sections attributable to the implementation of the aforementioned reductions.

We have worked diligently over the past two years in support of the work of the New York State Commission on Higher Education, which explicitly called upon the State to begin investing in its two public higher education systems—CUNY and SUNY—so New York can more effectively compete in the national and international marketplace of colleges and careers. A major component of the Commission’s recommendations is the establishment of The New York State Compact for Public Higher Education, based on the CUNY model we proposed several years ago, and supported by CUNY’s Board of Trustees, the college presidents, the leadership of the University Faculty Senate, the CUNY Business Leadership Council, and many student government leaders. All CUNY campuses have implemented a “Compact” program for the past several years to effectively leverage public and private financing in support of campus priorities. We are working with State and City officials to obtain full budgetary recognition in the next Executive Budget of this innovative financial model.

I want to personally thank you for your support and for your dedication to CUNY. Our students are benefiting very much from the important work you do all year round. CUNY is strengthened by its ability to handle fiscal challenges with prudent management and an unaltered and unshakable commitment to providing the very best possible education to all those who come to the University to realize their educational dreams.

By CUNY CHANCELLOR MATTHEW GOULDSTEIN
Addressing the ‘Mis-education of Children’: The Urban Education Initiative at Bank Street

By KATY GURLEY

In a front page article in late August, The New York Times described the frantic search many school systems face in finding enough qualified teachers to fill classrooms for the opening day of school. A key factor in this crisis, which seems to be an annual event, is the high turnover of teachers, especially teachers working in schools serving under-resourced schools in America’s cities. In New York, many well-intentioned teachers in high-need schools move through a revolving door—in one year and out the next.

They are trained too quickly, then sent into challenging schools with little more than a pat on the back and no direction in how to work in traditionally underserved urban schools and communities. Discouraged, often enticed by prospects for a better job, they choose to leave, disrupting the continuity of education for children who may need it the most. The students left behind, educators agree, receive sub-par educations as a result of this revolving door.

But Bank Street College is working to change that. It has a proud history of offering solutions to what Jon Snyder, dean of the Graduate School, calls the “mis-education of children.”

The newest project to address the revolving door of well-meaning but often unprepared teachers and under-supported teachers in hard-to-staff schools is the Graduate School’s Urban Education Initiative.

The initiative, launched by a $2 million grant from the Philip and Lynn Straus Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Communal Fund, moved forward this past summer and early fall with the selection of a team of educators from the Graduate School. They are poised to design a set of learning opportunities geared to teacher candidates who have expressed the desire to teach in hard-to-staff schools. The planning process is “reality-based”—teachers, administrators, and parents and community activists from such schools will work as equal partners in the design process.

Another key element of the initiative is to establish and sustain a visiting scholars program, where experts in the multitude of disciplines needed to educate teachers well will visit Bank Street and help enrich the Graduate School’s capacity to better prepare and support teachers who want to teach in high-need schools—and to stay there.

“The majority of the gift will go to endow this visiting scholars program. The first visiting scholars will be the school-based educators on the design team. They will work with us to create our specially designed learning opportunities for candidates who enter with a desire to work in hard-to-staff, traditionally underserved schools and communities,” Dr. Snyder says.

“Affer we get these specialized learning opportunities up and running, each year higher ed and school-based scholars will be selected to help us stay current on issues in the field and help us to continually renew our offerings. They will also provide learning opportunities both for our candidates and for our faculty.”

The college is also seeking additional funds to work in partnership with local administrators and teachers in hard-to-staff schools to build a pipeline for placement and support of teacher candidates; document and research the work and its outcomes; and create incentives and support systems—including scholarships—for teacher candidates who pursue the urban pathway.

Polar Light: Greenland Photo & Drawing Exhibit at Look North Gallery

Wings World Quest is pleased to announce a collaboration between Look North Gallery and Al Gore’s The Climate Project—Polar Light: Greenland. Photographs are by Rena Bass Forman. Drawings are by Zaria Forman. Opening reception for the artists is on Saturday, September 6th, 2008 from 7-9:30pm. Climate change presentation at 8:30pm. Exhibition is on display through December 31, 2008.

Where: Look North Gallery (located on the waterfront in the historic Fairway Building) 275 Conover Street, Suite 4E Brooklyn, NY 11231
Details: Please visit www.looknorthy.com for more information, or contact info@looknorthy.com with any questions.

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SEPTEMBER 2008
an extended field of geometry—a course that this semester will be getting much more attention in the schools of New York State. To begin we should present the problem. In Figure 1 we can see the map of the city with the seven bridges highlighted.

In Figure 2, we will indicate the island by A, the left bank of the river by B, the right one by C, and the area between the two arms of the upper course by D. If we start at Holz and walk to Schmiede and then through Honig, through Hohe, through Köttel, through Grüne we will never cross Krämer. On the other hand if we start at Krämer and walk to Honig, through Hohe, through Köttel, through Schmiede, through Holz we will never travel through Grüne.

In 1735 the famous mathematician Leonhard Euler (1707-1783) proved mathematically that this walk could not be performed. Indicate to students that the ensuing discussion will tie in their earlier work with networks to the solution of the Königsberg Bridge Problem.

The famous Königsberg Bridges Problem is a lovely application of a topological problem with networks. It is very nice to observe how mathematics used properly can put a practical problem to rest. Before we embark on the problem we ought to become familiar with the basic concepts involved. Toward that end, have students try to trace with a pencil each of the following configurations without missing any part and without going over any part twice. Ask students to determine the number of arcs or line segments, which have an endpoint at each of the points: A, B, C, D, E. Reducing the bridges and islands to a network we can simplify the situation. The networks have an endpoint at a particular vertex, is called the degree of the vertex.

After trying to trace these networks without taking their pencils off the paper and without going over any line more than once, students should notice two direct outcomes. The networks can be traced (or traversed) if they have (1) all even degree vertices or (2) exactly two odd degree vertices. The following two statements establish this.*

1. There is an even number of odd degree vertices in a connected network.
2. A connected network can be traversed, only if it has at most two odd degree vertices.

Have students now draw both traversable and nontraversable networks (using these two theorems).

Network Figure 3 has five vertices. Vertices B, C, E are of even degree and vertices A and D are of odd degree. Since Figure 1 has exactly two odd degree vertices as well as three even degree vertices it is traversable. If we start at A then go down to D, across to E, back up to A, across to B, and down to D we have chosen a desired route.

Network Figure 4 has five vertices. Vertices C and D are all of odd degree. Consequently, since the network has more than two odd vertices, it is not traversable.

Network Figure 5 is traversable because it has two even vertices and exactly two odd degree vertices.

Network Figure 6 has five even degree vertices and can be traversed.

Network Figure 7 has four odd degree vertices and cannot be traversed.

The Königsberg Bridge Problem is the same problem as the one posed in Figure 7. Let’s take a look at Figures 2 and 7 and note the similarity. There are seven bridges in Figure 2 and there are seven lines in Figure 7. In Figure 7 each vertex is of odd degree. In Figure 6 if we start at D we have three choices, we could go to Hohe, Honig, or Holz. If in Figure 7 we start at D we have three line paths to choose from. In both figures if we are at C we have either three bridges we could go on or three lines. A similar situation exists for locations A and B in Figure 6 and vertices A and B in Figure 7. Emphasize that this network cannot be traversed.

By reducing the bridges and islands to a network problem we can easily solve it. This is a clever tactic to solve problems in mathematics. You might try to find a group of local bridges to create a similar challenge and see if the walk is traversable. This problem and its network application is an excellent introduction into the field of topology.*

* The proof of these two theorems can be found in A. S. Posamentier and J. Stepelman, *Teaching Secondary School Mathematics: Techniques and Enrichment Units* (Columbus, Ohio: Prentice Hall/ Pearson, 5th ed. 2006).
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL AND TOLERANCE CENTER OF NASSAU COUNTY

By BETH LILACH

Intolerance, bullying and hate crimes continue to escalate in America. The Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County combats these societal ills by utilizing the lessons of the Holocaust to encourage acceptance of, and respect for, diversity. We offer effective, interactive workshops on how to reduce bullying, intolerance and prejudice for students and adults. The most profound lessons about hatred and prejudice are learned when listening to a Holocaust Survivor or Liberator in person. Unfortunately, the number of eyewitnesses (survivors, liberators and rescuers) is declining. To augment the waning population of testifiers, we have begun to recruit 2nd Generation survivors to continue the legacy by presenting their parents’ histories through video, photos, and artifacts. We have a vibrant 2nd Generation group and will be traveling to Poland in May 2009. Interestingly, many people view the Holocaust as ancient history, yet Holocaust education holds ever greater relevance today because of the continuation of genocide, the deterioration of human rights, and the escalation of bias and bullying incidents among young people. Our Holocaust and Tolerance programs teach that indifference is just as dangerous as prejudice. The Holocaust did not occur overnight and, like any genocide, was preventable. Hatred and persecution were allowed to flourish because of apathy and lack of intervention. It is incumbent upon us to provide today’s youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to intervene effectively and safely when witnessing an injustice.

For teachers, we conduct cutting-edge, interdisciplinary Professional Development classes and offer Holocaust and Tolerance Curriculum Trunks which contain class sets of books, posters, DVDs, CDs, and age-appropriate lesson plans. We will be conducting teacher training workshops throughout 2008-2009 in Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties. We grant prizes in our Literary, Art, and Music Competitions, and sponsor a Student Hero for Tolerance award to students who have promoted tolerance in their school. We are also in the process of accreditation by NYC Board of Education which will allow us to extend into the Boroughs. In addition to our work with grades 5-12, we have helped develop, and will be co-facilitating Hofstra University’s new Genocide Scholars Program.

For employers, we offer a “Tolerance in the Workplace” program, piloted at North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System, which promotes understanding and appreciation for the multicultural environment of the modern workplace. Additionally, we are one of three organizations in the nation permitted to conduct the “Law Enforcement and Society: Lessons of the Holocaust” program created by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Anti-Defamation League; every

EDUCATION UPDATE

SUMMER JOBS

Nathan Marcus, 19, Hofstra University, Rising Sophomore

What are you doing this summer? I am interning at Marc Platt Productions.

How did you decide on this activity/job? I hope to enter into the film industry after college.

Brief description of what you’re doing. Mostly script reading of both possible new movies for the company to take on, and movies that are in the works already. And as always a little bit of gopher work (i.e. making sure printers have paper, re-stocking the fridge, going to the mail room).

Were you self-motivated or did someone suggest it? Self motivated; I’ve been obsessed with movies and cinematography for a long time and have made multiple independent movies.

What are you learning from your experiences this summer? Everything about the film industry: What goes into making a movie, from all the work that is put in before a movie even starts shooting (screen writing, casting, fundraising, etc.), to all the editing and publicizing that’s done after—it’s a very long process.

(Also unfortunately learning a lot about the bureaucracy of the industry and the hunger for money that drives Hollywood.)

What are your future goals? I know I want to work in the film industry. This summer I am interning at a production company to learn everything that it takes to put a movie together, but my real goal is to direct a movie.

To Principals and Teachers:

DO YOU HAVE A HOLOCAUST STUDIES PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL? ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING ONE? WRITE TO EDNEWS1@AOL.COM AND GIVE US YOUR NAME, SCHOOL NAME, AND EMAIL ADDRESS.

“Vermont College of Fine Arts’ MFA program has made me a better writer and a better teacher.”

“I became interested in writing for children as a result of the fine books I discovered as an elementary school teacher. I loved sharing these wonderful stories with my students and it was a natural progression for me to slip to the other side of storytelling. The moment I heard about VCFA’s Writing for Children and Young Adults MFA program, I knew it was for me. In addition to the knowledge and life-long friendships I’ve gained from my VCFA experience, I’ve seen remarkable growth in my ability to teach the craft of writing to my students.”


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WAGNER COLLEGE, STATE ISLAND, NY

New Teacher Academy

Given $10K for Scholarships

The UAU Capital Foundation, an arm of United Activities Unlimited, announced recently in a press conference at Wagner College that it has given a grant of $10,000 to provide scholarships for the New Teacher Academy, a partnership of Wagner College and Columbia University’s Teachers College. Twenty new teachers will be eligible to receive $500 each, covering half of the $1,000 tuition for the Academy, which starts next month.

The New Teachers Academy program is designed to improve new-teacher retention, develop teacher leadership and enhance teacher quality. Upon completion of the NTA program, participating teachers will receive 3 continuing education credits.

According to Maryrose Barranco Morris, director of the New Teacher Academy program at Teachers College, 20 percent of new teachers leave the profession after their first year; another 30 percent leave before the end of their fifth year.

“Wherever we have brought the NTA, 90 percent of new teachers stay beyond their first year to the second, third and fourth year,” Barranco said.

Louis DeLuca, CEO of United Activities Unlimited, parent organization of UAU Capital Foundation, said of the NTA grant, “In some circle, $10,000 might not seem like a lot of money, but it is to us. If everything goes well, there will be more next year.”

“Teachers’ academies—caring, supportive, professional learning communities—are the wave of the future,” said Stephen Preskill, chairman of Wagner College’s Education Department.

For more information about the New Teacher Academy, contact Carin Guarasci, NTA director, or Susan Rosenberg, associate coordinator of graduate programs, at 718-390-3464. #

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Today’s Peace Corps

By Jonathan Beuttler

For young adults, the choice to volunteer is becoming more and more a popular career choice. Some feel it will benefit their career opportunities, others feel obligated by society, and some feel it’s the best way to occupy their time while searching through the dwindling job market. Either way, there are multiple ways to volunteer; one of the most challenging is being a United States Peace Corps volunteer.

The organization John F. Kennedy implemented in 1960 has evolved into a much different and broader type of work than one he originally may have envisioned. While many Americans served in order to advance the agricultural industry of developing nations in the 1960s, the role of volunteers today focuses mainly on teaching English, community development and HIV/AIDS prevention.

The setting where most Peace Corps volunteers work has changed as well. The image of volunteers living in huts, heating their home by shoveling coal and transporting food and water a long way still exists, but is much less frequent. Volunteers serving in all areas of the world have been known to have showers, television and even wireless internet within their homes. In some cases, the drastic difference in living can occur within the same country.

Living and working in developing countries is never without risk. At any moment, otherwise seemingly stable countries can take a dramatic turn towards uncertainty and danger. The recent evacuation of Peace Corps volunteers from Kenya and Georgia both, while for different reasons, showed how quickly a seemingly stable country could prove dangerous for Americans to live and work.

However, other governments have worked towards allowing the Peace Corps program back into their country, working towards bettering relations and accepting aid to areas of society they deemed most in need. Liberia, once a closed society, has now opened its doors to the Peace Corps. By extension, we may one day see the Peace Corps operating in Iraq.

Due to the state of constant change the world is forever in, Peace Corps remains an important fragment of public relations between Americans and the rest of the world. New York City has become a haven for many Peace Corps volunteers to work and seek higher education due to the fellowships and scholarships offered in the city’s universities. We can expect this trend to continue as Peace Corps work becomes ever more relevant and necessary around the world.

Jonathan served in Peace Corps Ukraine’s Youth Development sector and now works for Harlem Children’s Society. He is also a contributor to the Ukrainian Heritage Foundation (www.ukrainianheritagefound.com).

Jonathan Beuttler

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to the editor:

My daughter is lucky enough to be attending Archer as a sixth grader this fall. Having been a Women’s Studies major from 1984—1988 at UC Santa Cruz, and then studying for a teaching credential in the late 80’s/early 90’s, when the gender and education studies behind Meehan’s data, were first being conducted, I know first hand that this information is true. Boy students call a lot more attention to themselves in the classroom than girls, and are chosen to answer questions and participate more often than female students who are politely and quietly raising their hands. It makes no difference whether or not the teacher is male or female. On another note, pathetically, Women’s Studies at UC Santa Cruz while I was a student, was not considered a suitable enough subject to major in, and if one wanted to be a “Women’s Studies” major one had to also major or minor in something else to make it legitimate. I wonder if it is still the same today.

Marni Diamond

SUNY NEW PALTZ, NY

The Incredible Maxine Greene

To the Editor:

I appreciate LCI so much. I was introduced to your work several years ago when the Dean of Education at SUNY New Paltz invited me and some of my co-faculty members for a daylong workshop at LCI.

Subsequently, I presented a workshop for your annual conference in 2007 on arts-based research, and for the last two summers have been teaching a graduate course that I wrote called Expressive Arts Leadership and Change. I use the LCI capacities when designing my first class of the course, which takes place at the Samuel Donkey Museum on the SUNY New Paltz campus. My students are always so awed by the process and are thirsty for more.

Thanks very much and best of luck with the amazing LCI programs.

Lucy Barbera

LONG BEACH, CA

No Child Left Behind: Says Who?

To the Editor:

I love the analogy of this article. I have completed many volunteer hours within the elementary and high school sectors. I have found that the NCLB is only a fly on a wall that needs to be killed. I have seen children moved on to the next grade unable to read, spell or write their own name. I have seen children placed in an advance class with the inability to read at a kindergarten level. It baffles me on the purpose of the NCLB. I have seen labels placed on students by teachers because they have the inability to sit down and remain calm during class. Some teachers do not take their students seriously enough to teach. We are at a stage where we are teaching ourselves and teachers are only providing direction. Teachers are not looking at the end result of a child’s education. Our prisons are full and teen pregnancies are on the rise, drug addicts are created and formed because of a stressful environment. Programs are created to help our children, but we only find them sitting on the sideline waiting for a helping hand. How do we keep our youth from joining crews or gangs that deface property? What measures are we taking to reach a child in trouble? Has the NCLB been a positive measure within our communities? Twenty or more years from now, we will see our reflection of the NCLB.

Shari Rainey

WOODSIDE, NY

An Interview with Vice Admiral Joseph D. Stewart, Merchant Marine Academy

To the Editor:

My name is David McCullough and I am 13. My goal in life is to become a Real Estate Agent, but I want to start my own business. My stepfather Joseph Fobbs owns his own real estate business. The name of his business is JBSloan. So I really would like to be accepted to Bayard Rustin educational complex.

David McCullough

NEW YORK, NY

Dream On

To the Editor:

I truly believe in this school. I am one of the students and Dr. Fordsheim has taken it very far. He has retired this year, and I do hope that the school will continue to surpass expectations.

Anonymous

NEW YORK, NY

The Bard College Prison Initiative

To the Editor:

How can my incarcerated son get into Bard College Degree Program? He is currently serving a 7-year sentence in Clinton Correctional Facility in NY. He has his GED and some college level credits and is very eager to further his education.

BarbSmith1001

NEW YORK, NY

Debunking the Stereotype of the Female Boxer

To the Editor:

Great article. I really enjoyed reading it.

Evangeline Dardouni

UNIONDALE, NY

Inclusion in NYC: Are We Making Progress?

To the Editor:

I’m doing a documentary for my film class at Hofstra University. Northern Parkway has an inclusion program and I have access to a few websites with accurate and updated stats or info could work? An interview would be awesome, but any help or information you can provide would be a great help!

Jefferson Moran-Morales

FT LAUDERDALE, FL

Compelling Campobello: FDR’s Summer Home

To the Editor:

Interesting enough to confirm that this is a “must” on my trip to Nova Scotia. I’ll be there. Thanks!

David Parker, PhD

MERRICK, NY

Forensic Pathologist Mark Taff Describes Real Life Crime Solving

To the Editor:

Fascinating—Mark—you are so accomplished and obviously doing what you love—But…How come the article doesn’t mention you were the president of our 9th grade class, 9-220?

Carol Querido Scibelli

BAY SHORE, NY

Center for Early Care & Education

To the Editor: I have been looking for this program. I found it at Hostos College but they canceled it last year. I was offered a job but I was told I had to do this program. I am very interested in taking this course. Please contact me as soon as possible.

Stacey Chapman

NEW YORK, NY

The World Was Ours: Mira Jedwabin Van Doren

To the Editor:

This is a great documentary. I found out you can get a copy at thevetworksproject.org!

Eva Flamholz

For more Letters to the Editor please visit us online at www.EducationUpdate.com.
By JULIE AND MEGAN HAJER

“I have met a lot of people who have said to me, ‘I always wanted to be a marine biologist’ or ‘a rock n’ roll singer’ followed by the caveat ‘but...’”

— Hans Walters

“I am happy to say I have never uttered the words ‘I always wanted to be...’”

— Tusing, the acne-scared school nerd, is touching Dame. She’s the mean girl of the group. Jake is a Varsity player who puts aside his social friends. “I’ll never go to school again,” she wails, clinging to a friend’s shoulder. There also is an intense scene between Mitch and his dad because rock singer and marine biologist jobs both move to California. Colin Clemens is the star of the schools basketball team—and in Indiana basketball is everything. He must not only please his dad but also his basketball scholarship. Megan Krizmanich, the student council president and daughter of a prominent surgeon, frets about her acceptance to New York State University. She’s the new girl of the school, and although she dislikes Tusing, the acned-scarred nerd, is touching and funny one-on-one, but painfully shy in a group. Mitch Reinhold, charming and attractive, is a Varsity player who puts aside his social status to pal around with Hannah. He tries to maintain his status quo while finding a new side to his personality.

One standout moment captures the Hannah’s devastation after breaking up with her boy friend. “I’ll never go to school again,” she wails, clinging to a friend’s shoulder. There also is an intense scene between Mitch and his dad because rock singer and marine biologist jobs both move to California. Colin Clemens is the star of the schools basketball team—and in Indiana basketball is everything. He must not only please his dad but also his basketball scholarship. Megan Krizmanich, the student council president and daughter of a prominent surgeon, frets about her acceptance to New York State University. She’s the new girl of the school, and although she dislikes Tusing, the acned-scarred nerd, is touching and funny one-on-one, but painfully shy in a group. Mitch Reinhold, charming and attractive, is a Varsity player who puts aside his social status to pal around with Hannah. He tries to maintain his status quo while finding a new side to his personality.

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Rockefeller University: Dr. Bonnie Kaiser’s HS Scholars Score!

By DR. POLA ROSEN

Rockefeller University has the unique distinction of serving as part high temple to science, having more Nobel laureates that any other university in the country, part free post-graduate education, and part botanic gardens surrounded by acres of green along the banks of the East River. Some of the buildings are old-world, ivy-covered brick and stone, others are steel and glass. Amidst this eclectic architectural backdrop, a select group of about 50 diverse high school seniors from around the United States gather each year to do research under the tutelage of lab heads, post-doctoral candidates, high school teachers all supervised by Dr. Bonnie Kaiser, head of the pre-college science program.

The culminating event takes place in two huge rooms with students displaying their work in poster sessions, discussing each aspect of their work with expertise. To prepare for this event, students learn to present a short paper in their lab each week followed by a poster session to small groups. Students learn scientific writing and critical reading of scientific papers.

Andrew Mui, a rising senior at Dover Sherborn High School in Boston loves biochemistry. Dr. Alice MacKinnon and her lab helped him study how ion channels function and tarantula venoms. Claire Eden from the Riverdale Country School enjoys AP Bio. Dr. Hugo Mouquet of the Nussenweig Lab helped her study HIV patients and molecular immunology. “There may even be a vaccine someday”, she notes optimistically.

Ksenia Timachova, a Stuyvesant High School student enjoys studying chemistry, biochemistry and genetics. Her research focused on the protein responsible for controlling antibodies in the human body and how it works. She is enthusiastic about continuing her research during the year. Heidi Slatkin, a teacher at the NYC Lab School has been teaching at Rockefeller University for 12 summers. During the year she teaches English and biology, transforming those skills into scientific reading and writing (known as the STRAW program) probably inspired by her father, a retired scientist at Brookhaven labs. “The most important requirement for students” Slatkin avers, is to “come prepared with curiosity.”

Luke De has been a biology teacher and mentor at the Pingry School in Short Hills, New Jersey for the past two years. He also mentors students doing independent research. Three students from Pingry are at Rockefeller U this summer, thanks to Luke, who waxes rhapsodic when describing the program. “Every student has a mentor in the lab; this is real science with total immersion that you can’t get in a regular school. Three to four students this summer will, guaranteed, be MD, PhDs and run their own labs, making great advancements in the world. Success is a combination of drive and talent. If you give these students any word or subject, in one week they will come up with everything!” Luke should recognize talent: he did research for several years at the Genome Research Institute in Cincinnati before going to Rockefeller.

While the lack of scientists and mathematicians in our country is often underscored, the great talent that surfaced at Rockefeller University at the culmination of the summer serves as a testament to the capabilities in the next generation! Kudos to Dr. Bonnie Kaiser for leading the charge.

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Who is Briton Hadden? *The Man Time Forgot.* A book of the same title by Isaiah Wilner presents an exciting account of the early days of *Time* Magazine and the personalities involved. For the first time, Weill Cornell scientists have discovered a way to identify and repair neurological cell malfunction at the microscopic level. Such knowledge may help in the development of drugs to treat disorders caused by malfunctions in communication between brain cells, such as schizophrenia, epilepsy, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. Their findings are published in the Journal of Neuroscience.

To communicate between cells, tiny transport vesicles package and ship neurotransmitter-chemicals to the end (terminals) of the cell and then across synapses, or gaps in-between neurons. Adjacent neurons then receive the signal. To do this, these transport-vesicles must be recycled quickly—especially during boosts in brain activity, such as schizophrenia, epilepsy, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.

According to the researchers, the explanation for this cellular feat is a simple matter of distance. "Think of the cell body as New York City and the axon [the long narrow stretch between the cell body and terminal end] as a highway leading to Boston," explains lead researcher, Dr. Tim Ryan, from the Department of Biochemistry at Weill Cornell Medical College. "It takes far too long for the vesicles to move from all the way in the cell body to another cell. These vesicles are made in New York and slowly transported to the terminal end, but some are made right in Boston for immediate use." Dr. Ryan hopes that by understanding the mechanics of the cellular trafficking machine, he and other scientists will ultimately be able to identify and repair numerous neurologic malfunctions.

HURRICANE KATRINA ANNIVERSARY

Hurricane Katrina occurred three years ago, but its effects are still felt, particularly by children. And, with more recent weather tragedies in mind, the Louisiana Children's Museum (www.lcm.org), and Think It Ink It Publishing (www.thinkitinkpublishing.com) have teamed up to help.

Think It Ink It Publishing collaborated with the Museum to produce an interactive book commemorating the third anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. The professionally illustrated, wordless picture book was unveiled during the Louisiana Children's Museum's commemorative two-day event, Days of Hope. The innovative book enables children to share their story and be published.

"We worked with the Museum, their child psychologist and a Louisiana illustrator to develop the idea and create a 20-page book using the direction of a house as a metaphor," said Dr. Alice Wilder, a founder of Think It Ink It Publishing and prominent children's television producer (Super Why!, Blues Clues). "Children can write about the house tree, the community coming together to rebuild it, or they can tap into their experiences with Katrina. The open-ended story books with blank lines so children can write their own story and express themselves.

For the Days of Hope effort, a special, custom-illustrated book was created by well-known Louisiana artist Katie Rafferty, who lived through Katrina herself. The story is set in a quintessential New Orleans neighborhood and depicts a community working together to rebuild a fallen tree house. The symbolism of the destruction of the Louisiana community is balanced by the message of hope expressed through the rebuilding effort. The illustrations depict everyone (even animals, such as a dog, squirrels and birds) working together.

There are two ways to 'Think It Ink It.' Using a creative-writing story kit, kids can express their feelings and become authors by writing directly into fully-illustrated, soft cover book. Or visit our website online, write their story, which will then be printed and sent back to them as a hardcover, complete with their author’s photo and bio.

Other Think It Ink It Publishing titles have their own sets of pictures and children are free to write whatever story sparks their imagination.

"We think of this project as a helpful tool for children who are trying to make sense of their memories and their present lives, and who will benefit from expressing their feelings, which can feel very therapeutic," said LCM staff psychologist Valerie Wajda-Johnston. "The stories we have seen so far have been heartwarming and display the extent to which children were affected by the tragedy and subsequent events in their lives like loss, relocation and family upheaval.”

"We were looking for a way to help children with resiliency in the face of tragedy," said Wilder. "Children who have participated in our pilot program have shown remarkable courage and skill. We've been able to witness how Hurricane Katrina moved them.”

Families wishing to write a "Hurricane Katrina" Think It Ink It Publishing story can do so by going online to: www.LCM.org. They can also visit: www.thinkitinkpublishing.com.

**Born To Be Wild**

*continued from page 20*

travels to South Carolina, near Myrtle Beach, where he attends to sand tiger sharks in the Atlantic Ocean. The data that the sharks collect while swimming is emailed by satellite back to Walters’ computer, a virtual “My Space” for sharks. Walters processes the scientific findings that he hopes will help protect the sharks and their marine habitat.

Even though being a rock star is awesome, Hans Walters has proven that science geeks can be cool. #

A Wildlife Conservation Society park, the New York Aquarium, opens every day of the year at 10am, and closing times vary seasonally. Admission is $13.00 for adults, $9.90 for children ages 3-12 and $10.00 for senior citizens (65 and older); children under 3 years of age are admitted free. Visitors are allowed free admission on Friday’s from 3pm to closing. The Aquarium is located on Surf Avenue at West 8th Street in Coney Island. For directions, information on public events and programs, and other Aquarium information, call 718-265-FISH or visit our website online www.thinkitinkpublishing.com. Now is the perfect time to visit and show support for the New York Aquarium, Brooklyn’s most heavedly attended attraction and a beloved part of the City of New York.

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Protection from Retaliation for Filing Employment Discrimination Claims

By MARTHA McCARTHY, Ph.D.

 Assertions that employees are the victims of retaliation for filing discrimination complaints are increasing. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recently reported that retaliation claims doubled from 11,000 to 22,000 in the last 15 years. Before or after discrimination suits are settled, aggrieved workers often contend that their employers gave them less desirable job assignments, unwarranted reprimands, and other unfavorable treatment. Without protection against retaliation for filing discrimination claims, workers may be reluctant to challenge unlawful employment practices.

In May 2008 the Supreme Court rendered two significant decisions in which it sided with workers who alleged retaliation for filing age and race discrimination claims. One case, CBDOCS West, Inc. v. Humphries, involved the Civil Rights Act of 1866 (codified as 42 U.S.C. Section 1981), which bars racial discrimination in making and enforcing contracts. This case was brought by a black associate manager at Cracker Barrel who alleged he was fired after complaining about a white supervisor engaging in race discrimination. The second case, Gomez-Perez v. Potter, involved the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), which has no explicit retaliation protection for federal employees, even though it specifically protects workers in the private sector from retaliation for filing discrimination claims. A U.S. postal worker in Puerto Rico alleged she was retaliated against for asserting age discrimination under the ADEA. The Supreme Court in separate decisions ruled that protection against retaliation, although not explicit, is imbedded in both provisions. In short, the Court concluded that the laws’ prohibition of discrimination also shields workers against retaliation for filing claims.

The Court relied heavily on its 1995 decision, Jackson v. Birmingham Board of Education, in which it held that retaliation is another form of intentional discrimination, so retaliation does not have to be explicitly prohibited by federal laws. Jackson involved a retaliation claim under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that bars sex discrimination in federal programs receiving federal funds and does not directly mention reprisals for retaliation. The Supreme Court ruled that Title IX protected a teacher/coach against retaliation for complaining about sex discrimination in his school’s athletic program.

Several other recent Supreme Court rulings have not been favorable toward employees in terms of protecting their expression that relates to job duties, allowing flexibility in filing pay discrimination claims, and using federal protections to challenge arbitrary actions that are directed toward specific individuals rather than members of a protected group. Thus, these two rulings shielding individuals from retaliation for filing discrimination claims were viewed with relief by many employees, including those working in school districts. It remains to be seen whether such protection against retaliation from their employers will encourage more workers to file employment discrimination claims.

Martha McCarthy is the Chancellor’s Professor and Chair, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Indiana University
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