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Looking for Scapegoats
By RANDI WEINGARTEN, PRESIDENT, UFT

During recent hearings before the City Council, I started to wonder what our school system Council Education Chair Eva Moskowitz and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein were talking about. If you believe them, our system is one where teachers have all the advantages: ideal working conditions, competitive pay, and strict work rules that make their lives easy. Meanwhile, teacher tenure, seniority rights and a defined pay schedule are responsible for all the evils in our schools.

But that’s certainly not the New York City public school system I know. If it were, teachers would be breaking down our doors to work here, and would leave only after long careers. Instead one in four of our new teachers leave within a year, 40 percent within five years. The fact is that nearly ten thousand New York City public school teachers head for the exits every year. Demoralized by oversized classes, shortages of equipment and supplies, and lack of administrative help in enforcing discipline, they leave for the suburbs, other careers, or retirement.

The fictions about the city’s schools may produce headlines, but the facts are what we have to consider when we try to make our schools better.

Tenure: Council Member Moskowitz and Chancellor Klein made much of the fiction that the contract shields incompetent teachers. Fact: In a member survey a few years ago, more than 80 percent of our members said they did not want to teach beside incompetent teachers, though they did insist that people have a process by which they could defend themselves.

This union and the Legislature have streamlined and expedited the teacher disciplinary process three times in as many contracts. What the chancellor says takes years; last year under the new rules took on average, 65.5 days.

Seniority-based assignments: The chancellor promotes the fiction that seniority keeps the most experienced teachers from the schools where he believes they are most needed and forces new teachers into the most difficult settings. Fact: Last year, principals hired nearly 9,000 new teachers to fill vacancies, and seniority transfers filled about 600, less than 10% of the total. (Keep in mind that many of these 600 can simply retire. That’s what happens to a number of our educational evaluators who were mistrusted by the system this year and chose to retire rather than take inappropriate assignments.)

Fact: Many middle-class districts got more new teachers this fall than hard-to-staff areas. Fact: Thanks to incentives we worked out with the previous administration, hundreds of experienced teachers have been attracted to and have remained in the otherwise hard-to-staff schools in our Extended Time program.

Single pay schedule: The chancellor says he wants to be able to pay more to teachers in shortage areas and in harder-to-staff schools, but the union won’t let him. Fact: In 2000 the union included in its contract proposals additional pay for teachers who earned certification in specified shortage areas. We have been open to other similar proposals.

Keeping good teachers: Our last contract raised starting salaries and the system made great strides in recruiting qualified teachers. The problem now is retention. Because if we can’t keep the qualified teachers who are hired, building a cadre of experienced, well-prepared teachers becomes like trying to fill a bucket that has a hole in its bottom. It’s costly and counterproductive to hire thousands of well-qualified people every year, invest millions of dollars in incentives, orientation and professional development—only to see so many of them leave. Worse, it’s bad for kids.

The Bloomberg/Klein administration has already experienced a number of failures in its short tenure: poor planning led to serious overcrowding in many schools; thousands of new teachers went unpaid and without medical benefits for weeks and even months; lack of teacher training in the system’s new reading and math curricula have made it very difficult for kids to grasp this difficult material; music and art programs have been deleted; and teachers and parents are bristling at supervisors’ attempts to micromanage everything from the placement of desks to the number of staples on bulletin boards.

Confronted by the chaos they have created and faced with their own failure to bring positive change to our schools, the Bloomberg/Klein administration has decided to scapegoat teachers by focusing on the fictions of the New York City system rather than its real needs: a qualified teacher in every classroom; the books, supplies, resources and disciplined atmosphere that make instruction possible; and a relationship with teachers that supports rather than demonizes them.

SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS
EDUCATION UPDATE • DECEMBER 2003

IT’S “TIME” FOR A BACK-TO-SCHOOL ADVENTURE

Teachers, welcome back! Liberty Science Center has many new things to offer your students this year, including a glimpse into the future of the Center! Your students can be the first to interact with prototype exhibits and, of course, our latest featured films and exhibitions.

In the IMAX® Dome Theater:

Volcanoes of the Deep Sea

East Coast Premiere!

(September 23, 2003 - September 2004)

Journey into a “final frontier” right here on Earth! Dive with scientists from Rutgers University as they search for secrets of the deep ocean floor. Volcanoes of the Deep Sea immerses students in a strange world where bizarre creatures live in boiling water gushing from hydrothermal vents and weird landscapes are dominated by huge rifts, and striped, pillow-shaped rocks the size of a VW Beetle. What students learn in the deep ocean will shape their views of life here on Earth, and about where they might find life elsewhere in the cosmos!

Pulse: A STOMP Odyssey - Extended Run!

(Through January 30, 2004)

Take a rhythmic voyage of discovery around the world of percussion. From the Kodo Drummers of Japan to the Timbalada Drummers of Brazil, the creators and performers of STOMP guide students through a captivating musical atlas of the world.

Goals: In a member survey a few years ago, more than 80 percent of our members said they did not want to teach beside incompetent teachers, though they did insist that people have a process by which they could defend themselves.

Current Exhibition:

Playing With Time

(September 26, 2003 - January 4, 2004)

In this fast-paced world, controlling time seems like an impossible dream, but you can do just that as you explore Playing with Time. Students can speed or slow down, find out where they might find life elsewhere in the cosmos, shape their views of life here on Earth, and about where they might find life elsewhere in the cosmos!

Coming Soon to the IMAX® Dome Theater:

The Magic of Flight

(November 1, 2003 - January 30, 2004)

In celebration of the centennial of flight, we are pleased to show the fascinating story of the history of modern aviation. The Magic of Flight takes students on a technological thrill ride and lets them soar with the world-famous Blue Angels as the pilots defy the laws of gravity.
Global Education in Our Schools

By STUART DUNN

Recently, Dr. John Brademas, former Congressman and President Emeritus of NYU, addressed The Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center. His lecture marked the centennial of the birth of Ralph Bunche whom he called, "...a brilliant international statesman and a significant figure in the history of the United States."

While his remarks about the role of Ralph Bunche in the early days of the UN were significant, as was his review of his own role in the US Congress for 22 years, of particular interest here are his more recent activities in extending the global reach of NYU and the role of educators in world affairs. Following his career in Congress, he served as President of NYU. During his Presidency he established numerous centers for international study, brought thousands of foreign students to study at NYU, and fostered centers of study in Florence, Madrid, Prague, London and Paris. More NYU students studied abroad last year, nearly 2000, than from any other institution in the country.

After a long and successful career he continues to travel, meet with world leaders and speak in the causes of democracy, peace and international cooperation. He is currently, “proposing to establish, in consultation with our Department of State, a Center for Public Diplomacy and Dialogue, for the purpose of building bridges to the Arab and Muslim World. "Our plan," he said, "is to forge a university-based center that will serve both as a public policy think tank and sponsor of a program of international fellowships and exchanges to encourage dialogue and engagement between individuals rather than states."

He is simultaneously working to establish a center for discussing the decision making for the security of the United States. "University," he asserted, "because of their wealth of knowledge across academic disciplines, are uniquely equipped to contribute to the debate on these great issues."

[This issue of Education Update illustrates the importance of global studies and the cultural interchange of ideas. At PS 77 in Brooklyn, students celebrated the International Year of Freshwater, showing efforts from Zimbabwe to Holland. A 26-year-old student exchange program between Israel and the US is quoted by participants as being “great.” And at UN-USA, global studies curricula have been initiated in public schools across the land. The movement to encourage international understanding and peace has begun in our elementary schools. ED.]
Sametz, her first time to the states has been “the
time of my life.”

Sametz was chosen by her principal, the
Israel Embassy and the American Embassy to
represent her school for the two-week exchange
in the US. She says she would recommend
this program to everyone in Israel. “All of
the students in Israel should come just to have
this experience to see that there is another life
outside of Israel,” says Sametz. She spent part
of her time with Clarissa Moore, a 15-year-old
from Dayton, Ohio. Moore says she learned
a lot from living with Sametz. “I had to learn
about the food she liked, she can’t have meat
dairy [together],” Moore said speaking
about the kosher laws. “But she’s like me, she’s
15, she likes music, we both like children. They
are teens just having fun; they go to the movies,
they go shopping, they go skating.”

Oren Moisa, a 16-year-old from Netanya,
says he learned about living with a large fam-
ily. Moisa was hosted by Jerius Gamble, who
lives with his six siblings, two parents, one
grandmother and a dog. Moisa, the middle of
two children, said “It was a big pleasure to be
in a big family.” Moisa said they talked about
Israel and the US differences until 3 AM every
morning. He showed them the traditional male
headdress called a yarmulke and the snacks,
the money of Israel. “I learned a lot from this
program and I saw there is a lot of good differ-
ences between the US and Israel,” said Moisa.

“It makes me want to be more involved with
what’s going on,” said Gamble. “I feel like I
should be part of the gap that brings the two
bridges together.” Bridging the gap between
international education and sense of self is
exactly why executive vice president of AIFL,
Ilana Artman, said this program is so phenom-
enal. “I remember when I started the program
and I was meeting with a person in the State
Department and I said “here’s a program that
is directed at kids from every socioeconomic
status that gives them a boost in their confi-
dence, that makes them believe they can do
something” said Artman. “We take kids with
leadership qualities. You give them a possibil-
y to grow and to feel special.”

Plans are in the works to expand the program
into Russia in 2004. Artman also hopes to take
the students to Israel in 2004 since the last three
years has forced them to modify the program
because of the situation in Israel.

In addition to spending time with their host
families, the group was in Washington DC
for four days participating in workshops on
the American and Israeli perspective on terri-
orism. They also spoke about the Holocaust and
Holocaust survivor addressed the group.

Peter Yarrow, of the folk singing group, Peter,
Paul and Mary performed at the luncheon.
Encouraging others to sing along, Yarrow says
he uses music to “help make the world a better,
more peaceful place.” Says Yarrow, “in God’s
eyes, we’re all the same.”

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When you let your students discover the wonder and joy of Disney on Broadway, we’ll make the experience unforgettable! This school year give your students a day to remember by taking advantage of Disney’s educational program, which provides schools with special rates for groups of 15 or more for Beauty and the Beast, Aida, and
The Lion King.

In addition, because we know you want to provide the necessary adult supervision, Disney gives educators one free ticket for every 15 purchased at all three shows. Flexible policies allow teachers to pay in full 2-3 months before the performance. Disney partners schools to dedicate an entire day to the theater and to enhance the group’s experience by taking a historical tour of the New Amsterdam Theater the morning prior to the performance. Both in 1907, the New Amsterdam has long been the crown jewel of Broadway’s theaters. After a two-year restoration process that led to the theater’s re-opening in 1997, the theater now hosts Disney on Broadway shows, musicals, The Lion King, The New Amsterdam Theater is the perfect venue for events ranging from 15 to 1500 people. The theater and its two historic rooms, the Ziegfeld Room and the New Amsterdam Room, can accommodate everything from a full production to an intimate candlelight dinner. For more information please call Amy Andrews at 212-282-2907.

We will help teachers arrive to the theater prepared. For every show, Disney has developed study guides that help teachers develop projects, discussion and activities. And, for those students who always have a question after most Wednedays, members of the cast, orchestra or crew are available to appear for special Q & A sessions with students.

Students can also enjoy discounts on Disney on Broadway souvenirs merchandise, as each member of your group will receive a merchandise coupon for great savings at the theater. Teachers can also arrange special lunch savings at McDonald’s Times Square location, with seating for over 2000, specialties in school groups customized for any budget. Finally, groups save in Gray Line New York bus charters, as special Disney promotional rates are available.

For more information or to book call 212-703-1040 or 1-800-439-9000, fax 212-703-1085. email BVTDcroup@disney.com

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The Private Sector Helps CCNY to help the Public Schools

By ALFRED S. POSAMENTIER, Ph.D.

It is by now no secret that we have a national crisis in the teaching of mathematics in our urban schools. What is news is that the private sector is coming to the rescue! In June 1998 New York State got a wake-up call. Over two-thirds of the students taking the graduation-required Math A Regents examination failed. The resulting political storm led to a Commissioner’s panel (of which I was a member) that rescaled the test, and thereby reduced the damage. The message was clear: We have an emergency situation in front of us and we must act immediately.

The crisis is that our math teachers are insufficiently prepared to teach our students. There is probably no better illustration of this than in New York City, where the latest estimates show that about 30 percent of the math teachers have less than four years teaching experience. Couple this with the long-standing placement dilemma that results in our least experienced teachers being assigned to our weakest schools and you have a problem of almost insurmountable proportions.

Much of this is the product of a severe shortage of mathematics teachers. Incentives for entering the math teaching profession, such as job security during the Great Depression and draft deferments for men in the 1960s, no longer exist. To add to the problem, information technology, an attractive new industry that did not exist in the past, siphons off talented individuals who might otherwise have turned to teaching.

The question is what can be done to improve mathematics instruction in the schools today? The New York City Department of Education has been devising innovative methods for bolstering the teaching force. One such method, mathematics acceleration, has already attracted fewer math teachers than expected.

The program was then broadened with a math immersion program that took marginally math-prepared individuals, supplemented their mathemetics training, and provided them with the pedagogical support needed to become certified. Even this did not enable the City to fill all of its secondary school math positions. In an effort to fill the rest, the State Education Department granted the City waivers, allowing it to hire uncertified mathematics teachers to fill vacancies, in what was described as an already severe problem of teacher quality.

Certainly financial incentives such as signing bonuses for new math-prepared teachers, or offering math teachers higher salaries are available options. The problem with these is that they are unlikely to be embraced by teacher unions and therefore probably unreasonably. Another option for improving our math teaching force is to recruit teachers from other countries that have a surplus of such teachers.

In 1998, we, at the City College of New York—School of Education, initiated a program that brings math and science teachers from Austria, where there is a surplus. For the most part these teachers have performed admirably, but they only stay for a few years and then return home, having acquired the advantage of being able to teach their subject there in English—a tremendous asset in Europe. Using such teachers is not a solution to the problem; it is merely a temporary abatement.

The challenge of improving the current teaching force—training large numbers of teachers—at times seems insurmountable. If, however, professional development could take place at each school, the problem could be solved. The teachers’ immediate supervisors (in New York City they are assistant principals) are selected largely for their administrative abilities, and not necessarily their teaching skills. If we could provide the support these administrators need to make them instructional experts, they could then take on the responsibility for improving the mathematics instruction in their schools by working with each of their teachers. In this way, through a multiplier effect, we could efficiently improve the competence of in-house teachers.

The public sector alone does not have sufficient resources to solve this problem in a comprehensive way. To realize this concept I turned to the private sector for help, with proposals to two very concerned individuals to develop a program to improve the instructional leadership skills of the secondary school assistant principals in charge of mathematics. The proposals were favorably received, resulting in two grants totaling $5.7 million from CCNY alumnus, Stanley H. Kaplan ($2 million), and the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation ($3.7 million). The grant from Mr. Kaplan will train many middle school supervisors of mathematicians, while the grant from the Petrie Foundation will train all the high school math assistant principals. Their leadership and vision in helping to reverse the continuing decline in the teaching and learning of mathematics should provide a shining example to others in the private sector.

With equal insight and enthusiasm, Chancellor Joel I. Klein and the New York City Department of Education are partnering with the City College of New York to implement this new training. It is imperative for the for-profit world to realize its responsibility in making our young people mathematically literate, especially in light of the demands of the technological age.

Alfred S. Posamentier is Dean, School of Education, The City College—CCNY.

How Do We Address The Reading Crisis In America?

By DR. BILL BLOKKER & MITCHELL LEVINE

According to a recent report of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), there are over 33 million K-12 students reading at least two grades below level—over two-thirds of all K-12 students in the United States. Given the research currently available in reading, brain-based instruction, instructional leadership, and the change process, there’s absolutely no excuse for at least 90 percent of these students not reading on grade level.

The Literacy First Comprehensive Reading Reform Process, a comprehensive three-year reform process, was developed using exactly this scientifically based research. Two separate three-year studies consistently demonstrated that the Literacy First process does close the reading gap of all subgroups including minority, special education and second language students; in fact, 85 percent of all program students in grades K-12 are performing on grade level in phonological awareness and phonics as well.

These results have been accomplished through a two-pronged approach: Eight days of intensive professional development for teachers and administrators, and at least 22 days of on-site consultation to ensure the effective implementation of the professional development in each classroom with each student to ensure students learn the reading basics as identified by No Child Left Behind standards.

After one year of implementation at Sebring Middle School, for example, students showed 1.5 to 3.5 years’ growth on the state criterion referenced reading assessment. Anne Lindsay, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, reports that this amazing growth is directly attributed to the Literacy First Process. An independent study done by the Southwestern Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) focused exactly on Literacy First schools in Oklahoma found they outperformed demographically matched schools on nationally normed assessments. In addition, the Literacy First schools also exceeded the state average score.

The NAEP data indicates there is a reading crisis in America. At present, many schools and districts are attempting a piecemeal approach. We must take a comprehensive approach that focuses on the application of the research in reading, instruction, leadership and the change process. For more information, call 1-888-303-3029 or visit www.literacyfirst.com.

Aron School: A School for Children with Special Learning Needs

Aron School, located at 309 East 49th Street in Manhattan, opened in September 2003. The school educates children who have been identified with potential learning, challenges including language delays, learning disabilities and sensory integration issues. Aron School provides an enriched educational environment for children not ready for mainstream education by integrating a traditional school curriculum with an individualized skill building program that builds upon strengths while remediating areas of weakness. Their approach is multi-sensory and multi-disciplinary. Classes are small, with an excellent student to teacher ratio. Qualified specialists provide supplementary speech and language services, and occupational therapy. The brand new facility features IV-classrooms, gymnasium, art studio, computer lab, library and a separate OT/Sensory gym.

The school is committed to a partnership of staff, parents and professionals, dedicated to the common goal of enabling each child to become a successful learner.

Aron School is committed to prepare each child to graduate to a less restrictive educational setting, where he or she can succeed. These goals are accomplished by focusing on the development of the whole child, encouraging cognitive, social, emotional and artistic growth.

The director, Debra Schepard, Ed.D, M.A, SAS, SDIA has been in the field of special education for over 25 years. She was the director of the Sunshine Developmental School for the last seven years.

Aron School is staffed with a variety of talented professionals whose backgrounds include both special and general education schools.

The curriculum complies with New York State Department of Education standards and also includes specialized programs such as Orton-Gillingham reading, Stern math, and Handwriting without Tears. Each child has an individualized academic program that focuses on his or her learning strengths.

For more information, an application or to schedule a tour of the school, call (212) 867-9594.
Careers: Lewis Frumkes, Director, Writing Center, Marymount Manhattan College

By DOROTHY DAVIS

Lewis Burke Frumkes, who right after graduation worked on Wall Street, is now the Director of The Writing Center at Marymount Manhattan College. He is the author of How to Raise Your IQ by Eating Gifted Children: Manhattan Cocktail and Other Irreverent Observations on Life, Taxes and Meter Maids and five other books. His work has appeared in Harper’s, The New York Times, Punch and Reader’s Digest and is widely anthologized. He has a radio program on which he interviews high profile people in the arts and sciences, primarily writers. It is broadcast on Sundays at 8:00 PM on WPAT-AM (930 on the dial). We spoke to him one recent evening in his office, which was comfortably cluttered with books, manuscripts, photographs and memorabilia. Declining his kind offer of some Hershey’s chocolates we got right down to the interview:

Q: What was your career goal at college graduation?
A: “I always wanted to teach,” said Frumkes, who majored in English and Philosophy in college, “and I always wanted to make a lot of money. Unfortunately these goals were not compatible. So I compromised.”

Q: Will majoring in English help a person become a successful writer?
A: “You don’t have to be an English major to be a writer,” he said, “but it certainly helps. The advantage in being an English major is that you can introduce yourself to some of the greatest writers writing in the English language, some of whom may inspire you and lead you down exciting paths. And if you love what you do and feel passionate about what you do success will follow. You need three things to become a successful author: 1. A modicum of talent, 2. Some marketing skills, 3. Perseverance.”

Q: How can being an English major prepare us for our modern world?
A: “There is a lot to be gained from being an English major to someone who loves language. No language on the face of the planet today is as rich as the English language. Language takes on a special life of its own for someone sensitive to it. It transcends just communication and becomes music. As an English major you are being introduced to the music of life. You can learn to amuse, entertain and educate yourself all by yourself if necessary. Ray Bradbury, one of our greatest writers, is an autodidact. This will make you a more interesting human being. So it is not just a dead major in an ivory tower, but a vital and important study of life in the world around you.

Q: Is English a popular major for students in 2003, with the increased importance of mathematics and technology in our society?
A: “English is more popular than it used to be. It has sort of evolved for some people into communications courses, a relatively new field. They start in English and then see that they want to get into communications. People study communications for a variety of reasons, not least of which is that they want to get into Radio or TV. There is also media ecology, the study of media itself, how it operates, and the physical underpinnings of media. It may also include writing for theater or business writing. It can lead to careers in cyberspace, the Internet, electronic media.

“New technology is opening up whole new vistas for English majors. With digital publishing we can keep in memory every book ever written, including every book you and I write. Before these may have been shredded; now they will be part of the collective human memory. With the Internet there are whole new universes for exploration. One is limited only by one’s imagination.

“Writing is part of English and very few things are as important as learning to write well. Many people feel powerless in our society, but if you can put 750 to 800 words together in some cohesive and intelligent fashion you can publish an essay with your views in The New York Times or any number of newspapers around the country and influence millions of people, perhaps change the course of events and history. You have only one vote as a citizen, but with your words you can transform the world around you. It’s a very powerful tool.”

See article on English majors on page 15.

The African Nutcracker: A Harvest Sojourn

The African Nutcracker: A Harvest Sojourn is an interpretation of The Nutcracker using a traditional African Djeli (storyteller) to tell the story of two young children embarking on a journey of self-discovery of their African cultural heritage.

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What do music educators do? The sweet tenor voice hardly betrays the insistent author of Music Matters, Dr. David Elliott’s 1995 declaration of “paraxial philosophy,” which he believes must inform music education if it is to have “value.” Most music educators, he said, are academics, train their students to make a living. There are exceptions, he allows, and he doesn’t mean to dismiss real-world needs. Indeed, his own students, who graduate with bachelor’s masters and doctorates, “all get jobs,” whether they’re in education, music therapy, composing film scores, playing jazz, tutoring techniques. After all, he points out, educators must be entrepreneurial advocates.

Education at New York University, where he has a life, “they will never achieve a ‘multidimensional appreciation’ of music that will serve them well, not to mention the world.”

David Elliott is a music educator with a passion and an agenda. At the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University, where he has been Director of Music Education for the last year, after teaching and performing all over the world, including being Professor and Chair of Music Education at the University of Toronto for 25 years, he pursues his belief that music educators must be entrepreneurial advocates of social action. His views and the fervor with which he advances them have won him praise from devoted followers who call him discerning, constructive and original, but those same views have also elicited sharp criticism from those who dismiss his ideas as either old hat or mistaken. Though Dr. Elliott confidently speaks of Music Matters as “rocking the boat” and “challenging received wisdom,” he confesses he was “astonished” at the negative response. Listening to him articulate his deeply held views, however, suggests that style may be more the problem than substance.

Dr. Elliott equates old ways of teaching music with European concepts and traditional pedagogy, whereby students are basically passive recipients of lectures, incubated with theory and rarely given a chance to cross the stage to experiment and perform (“praxis” means exercise or practice), and then rarely on instruments from other cultures and countries. He speaks of music as community and cites his lower-middle-class Irish family in Toronto, where he grew up, as his great influence and inspiration. Everyone in his home played music, especially his father, a self-taught jazz pianist and composer. Though he himself was making music at four, conducting at eight, and went on to study composition, he believes that “everybody can do music.” Any music.

He is his own best example, a multitalented musician who has written scores for movies and commercials and composed compositions for various groups and children’s choirs, though his preference has always been jazz.

He is delighted to be at a major university helping to develop a “unique” program in music education, fostering the “nature and values” he considers paramount—performing, improvising, composing, arranging, conducting, exposing students to a diversity of genres and cultural traditions—all of which strengthen creative abilities and listening skills. The NYU program of 75 undergraduates, 33 Masters candidates and 8 doctoral students, double the number just two years ago, certainly keeps him busy, but he’s also absorbed in writing an undergraduate text, Becoming a Music Educator, which will have a website showing “action-based video clips,” and he’s gathering essays for a book (Paraxial Music Education) from 17 professionals around the world that will answer his critics and advance the paraxial word.

This year is clearly marked as one where union contracts and relationships have been challenged and ignored. The new Department of Education wiped out entire CSA license areas. It turned positions on their heads; some of us were even forced to apply for what appeared to be the jobs we already held, jobs that had simply been renamed. The new DOE also changed the nature of CSA members’ responsibilities without disclosing the nature of the new work up front or additional supportive resources. Naturally, this has resulted in many angry professionals.

The new regime at DOE has made unprecedented demands on CSA members’ time well beyond contractual obligations. Our members have been summoned to retreats, retrained, seen their schools retroled and been redeployed.

These many changes made without any input from us, secretly and behind closed doors, have resulted in a sense of oppression and exhaustion. It will be years before we know if the present culture of stress and human misery created by these overwhelming changes will actually result in a better education system. I certainly hope so.

While some of these changes are certainly within the right of the mayor and chancellor, a number were made without regard for state law or our contract. CSA has responded with an unprecedented number of legal actions to enforce our contract and the law. At the same time, we seek to resolve many of the issues outside of these formal procedures. We always remain hopeful that the creative pressures and the structure will change for the better as we are hopeful that the avenues of communication will widen and become safe pathways to bridge the current divide between intention and impact.
UN/USA: KEEPING STUDENTS ACTIVE IN GLOBAL ISSUES

By MICHELLE ACCORSO

Currently implemented in five cities across the United States, including New York, Houston, Tampa, Los Angeles and Chicago, Model U.N./Global Classrooms is continuing full-force in its efforts to bring this innovative role-playing program to a diverse array of students. Although known worldwide, Model U.N. has never been widely executed in urban public schools. That is, not until Global Classrooms was introduced. In 2000, the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) began Global Classrooms to introduce public school students to the work of the U.N. and pressing international issues.

The Global Classrooms National Advisory Board, which includes Ambassador Bill Luers, and Dr. Lucia Rodriguez, tries to ensure that as many students as possible receive global education.

Interested in International Adoption?

Infants and toddlers are available singles and couples.

Programs include children from China, Korea, Russia, Cambodia, the Ukraine and others. For more information call Lisa Doyle at 212-570-3793 days. It’s never too late to build a family.

PS 77 Learns About International Year of Freshwater

By TOM KERTES

This was truly a case of “Everything you wanted to know about water but were afraid to ask.”

To commemorate The International Year of Freshwater, the students of Brooklyn’s P.S. 77 imitated the auditorium with a plethora of imaginative projects. The walls reflected a true East-meets-West worldview: a project dealing with Holland celebrated the nation’s use of bicycles—this refreshing non-pollutant and unpopulated water—of people, the walls and the air clean. In Zimbabwe, water protects the nation’s crops from drought. Italy’s industry is uniquely interesting uses for water. The projects dealt with everything from water pollution (and the resulting environmental dangers), the importance of saving water, the protection of oceans, water quality, the different uses of water, water as a source of life, water standards on different continents, etc.

These projects were made even more special when you consider that the students of P.S. 77 are autistic. “They’ve been working on this exhibition for months,” principal Ivy Sterling said. “I can’t tell you how proud I am of my kids.”

The apex of the celebration was a special United Nations Assembly, which culminated in a lengthy program that featured everyone from professional artists (opera tenor Abraham Singer who sang with fluidity and assurance) to home-grown talent (Irish step-dancer Justine Kinsky is the daughter of a P.S. 77 teacher), to P.S. 77 students who danced to “What a Wonderful World,” then sang everything from “The Flower Of China” (in Chinese), to “Hero” to “Getting to Know You” to a rendition of “We Are The World,” Blues singer-percussionist Mimi Wells of Semiramide, who assistant principal Elizabeth DeFrenelle met at B.B. King’s club, summed up the afternoon with his soulful performance. “Water is everywhere,” he said. “And wherever there’s water, there’s life.”

It’s safe to say that The International Year of Freshwater will not be officially launched until Dec. 12, got off to a rousing head-start at P.S. 77.8

UNA-USA is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that supports the work of the United Nations and encourages active participation in the most important social and economic issues facing the world. As one of the leading centers of policy research on the U.N. and global issues, UNA-USA offers Americans the opportunity to connect with issues confronted by the U.N.—from global health and human rights to the spread of democracy, equitable development and international justice. Through its work, UNA-USA educates Americans about the work of the United Nations and encourages public support for strong U.S. leadership in the United Nations.

Preparing for the fifth annual UNA-USA Model U.N., Conference, the advisory board met on a recent Wednesday afternoon to discuss plans and strategies in order to achieve a successful and knowledge-filled event. In evaluating the Model U.N./Global Classrooms Program, the advisory board is able to provide the utmost service to its students and enable them to learn hands-on how to help the U.N. help the world. As a ninth grade P.S. 77 public school student put it, “I enjoyed learning about the U.N. and meeting other students with the same interests as me. The Conference Secretariat makes you think that you are a real delegate, and this gives you a lot of confidence.”

The Rossini Festival in Pesaro

By IRVING SPITZ

An operatic extravaganza on the Adriatic coast

The Rossini Festival is a great vocal artist in his prime and delivered a sumptuous performance. His purity of voice and vocal athleticism was a marvel. Whether playing the part of the count, a fake hermit, old woman or passionate lover, his commanding presence dominated the performance, holding everyone, both in the audience and on stage in thrall.

However this was not a one-man show and he was ably supported by an excellent cast, notably Giovanni De Nettis, who sang with fluidity and assurance. Also impressive was bass-baritone Bruno Praticó in the role of the count’s friend. The Countessa Adele, soprano Stefania Bonfedielli, was a little unsteady early on but rapidly settled into the role. Semiramide is a convoluted story of the Babylonian Queen Semiramide, who together with Prince Assur, assassinated the king. Assur in turn expects to win her hand. At the same time, Semiramide’s son disappears. These events occurred before the current series.

The theme of the opera is the grand opera, the army commander Arcase returns and Semiramide is emasculated with him. Arcase, turns out to be the son of Semiramide but only the high priest Once is aware of this. At the climax of the opera, the three principals meet in the tomb of the murdered king. Arcase tries to kill Assur but Semiramide intervenes and is mortally wounded. (In a fencing competition.)

This opera requires a soprano and contralto capable of doing justice to the demanding roles of Semiramide and Arcase. This production was superb. Laura Scala, Daniela Renucci, who as Arcase delivered all the goods. Her voice was large and rich with a marvelous range of color.

There was some beautiful singing in the duets with Darina Takova, who took the title role. Marco Spotti as the high priest Oro, was impressive with his sonorous bass, Bass Ildar Abdrazakov successfully portrayed the villainous character of Assur.

William Orlandi’s imaginative multipurpose set featured a large terrestrial globe and mirrors, evoking the aura of the space age (not unlike a Star Trek movie), a meeting in the UN Security Council, a gambling saloon or venue for a fencing competition.

A revival of Rossini’s rarely performed Adina was a real revelation. As was his usual practice, Rossini resorted to much self-borrowing from forgotten operas of his youth for the score. Set in a harem in Baghdad, the plot is reminiscent of Mozart’s Abduction from the Seraglio. Commissioned by a wealthy Portuguese, this one act opera received only two performances prior to a revival in 1963.

The current production was first staged in Pesaro in 1999. In this revival, all singers complemented each other well, in particular soprano Joyce Di Donata in the role of Adina who floated her high notes beautifully. Equally impressive was tenor Raul Gimenez as her lover. Giovanni Carluccio provided handsome-carved ornate settings.

To be continued next month
Adolphe Sax & the Saxophone

By MR. RODNEY J. CROFT

Adolphe Sax, born in November 1814 in Dinant on the river Meuse in Belgium, became a prolific inventor whose inventions included the saxophone, patented in Paris in 1846. It is one of the most instantly recognizable of all musical instruments and has for many years been inextricably linked to the jazz genre. The history of Sax and the origin of his invention provide an interesting story.

Adolphe's father, Charles Sax, at the age of fifteen, became an apprentice cabinetmaker in Brussels, and at this time he played a serpent (a now obsolete large wooden S-shaped bass wind instrument) in a local musical society. A serpent was an expensive instrument so Charles Sax made his own; a skill he would return to.

The advent of the machine age brought about a surge in the Belgian textile industry and Charles Sax took a job in a factory making cotton-spinning machines. Following Wellington’s defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 the Belgian economy and the textile industry slumped, leading to the closure of factories and the loss of Charles Sax’s job.

Charles Sax then returned to his previously honed skills and began to make musical instruments including serpentins, flutes, and subsequent ly bassoons, clarinets and brass instruments. He even began making string instruments including pianos, violins, harps and guitars.

His son Adolphe therefore grew and developed in this environment of musical instrument manufacture. He began to be increasingly involved in his father’s business and developed both as a craftsman and as a player of the flute and clarinet. He attended the Royal School of Singing in Brussels where he developed his playing abilities to a very high proficiency, particularly on the clarinet.

There are various theories as to why and how the saxophone originated. One belief is that Sax discerned a tonal gap in the Symphony Orchestra between the cellos and the brass section. It is possible to appreciate the success of bridging this gap when hearing the tenor saxophone solo line in Ravel’s Bolero. Or perhaps it was Sax’s efforts to find a bridge between the woodwind and bridge in a Military band. Another theory surrounds a search for a brass instrument with stronger volume dynamics than the wooden clarinet family. Whichever of all the theories is correct one thing seems certain; Sax was searching for a previously undiscovered sound either in timbre and or volume dynamics. No doubt he experimented with a number of different ideas but it is thought he finally combined an ophicleide (a euphonium-like sound instrument) with a bass clarinet mouthpiece. The ophicleide, from the Greek “serpent and key,” was invented in 1817. It superseded the serpent, and Sax had access to ophicleides in his father’s workshop. The ophicleide was basically a bass keyved bugle and was a conical brass instrument with the brass cupped mouthpiece and replaced it with the single reed mouthpiece of a bass clarinet thereby creating a conical bore brass instrument with a single reed. The saxophone was born!

The first saxophone was a bass and subsequent models followed—eight models were patented in 1846. Now the following are available: sopranno and soprano (both usually straight but can also be curved), alto, tenor, baritone and bass. In 1857 Sax was appointed instructor of the saxophone at the Paris Conservatory.

Sax also made major changes to the keys and articulation of the bass clarinet mouthpiece. However, he suffered multiple lawsuits from rivals who tried to steal his patents and towards the end of his life was in abject poverty. Chabrier, Massenet and Saint-Saëns petitioned the Fine Arts Minister to come to his aid. He died in Paris in February 1894.

Adolphe Sax will always be remembered for his wonderful invention—the Saxophone. So, but for the Battle of Waterloo—where would Jazz be?Rodney Croft is a Consultant General and Vascular Surgeon in London, England. He is also a professional saxophonist.

Mathematics and Computer Sciences.

Deadline is February 2nd. Contact Bonnie Kaiser, Ph.D., Rockefeller University; 1230 York Avenue—Box 53, New York, NY 10021, Tel: (212) 327-7431, Fax: (212) 327-7539, Email: bonnie@rockvax.rockefeller.edu, or visit www.rockefeller.edu/outreach.
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CCNY Receives Record Grant from Petrie Foundation to Boost Math Education

By ADAM W. SUGERMAN

The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation has donated nearly $3.7 million to The City College of New York for the advancement of mathematics education. It is the largest foundation grant ever received by the College in its 156-year history, said Rachelle Butler, Vice President for Development and Institutional Advancement at CCNY.

The grant will be used by the City College School of Education to train all of the math assistant principals in New York City public high schools, who will then concentrate on the instructional program in their respective schools. In this way, each math teacher will have the benefit of instructional support from a trained supervisor.

This model uses a multiplier effect to reach all the math teachers in the City of New York, which would otherwise not be possible. Alfred S. Posamentier, Dean of the CCNY School of Education and an international leader in the field of mathematics education, developed the concept for the program and will serve as its director at The City College of New York.

CCNY Receives Record Grant from Petrie Foundation to Boost Math Education

Chancellor Joel Klein of the New York City Department of Education, who will provide the release time for the training of assistant principals, said, “I am delighted with the continued support of the private sector for our school system and want to thank the Petrie Foundation for this generous contribution. We look forward to working with City College to assure that this program is effectively implemented.”

CCNY President Gregory H. Williams said the Petrie Foundation’s generosity has helped maintain the College at the forefront of mathematics education in New York.

“Clearly, we have reached a crisis point in the way math is taught, not only in New York but around the nation,” added President Williams. “Any real reform must include not only math teachers, but also those who are responsible for instructional leadership. This allows us to address that crucial area in the most comprehensive fashion.”

Recently, CCNY received a $2.0 million donation from Stanley H. Kaplan to train the assistant principals in New York City public middle schools who supervise mathematics instruction in their respective schools. Mr. Kaplan, a 1939 graduate of City College, is the founder of the Kaplan test preparation program and provides funding assistance in the biomed, medical research program at City College.

The funding from the Petrie Foundation grant and Mr. Kaplan’s gift together fund a comprehensive, $5.7 million program that will enable CCNY to assume a prominent role in the training of all public school officials who supervise math teachers. The $3.7 million grant is the latest Petrie Foundation support to benefit CCNY. The Foundation also funds the Petrie Scholars Program for outstanding students in CCNY’s Honors Programs.

The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation is a private, independent grant making foundation that began active operation in 2002. The Foundation’s mission arises from the belief that education is the key to realizing an individual’s potential and his or her ability to become an active, productive and engaged participant in a democratic society. Therefore, the Foundation’s primary focus is on education.
So You Want To Be An English Major?

By SARAH N. LYNCH

For senior Regina Udler, an English-computer science double major at Barnard College, it all began with Dr. Seuss. Udler, a lover of Shakespeare, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Charles Dickens, said that reading Seuss books inspired her to pursue English as a major in college.

“I always liked to read,” Udler said. “When I came from Russia, I learned English by reading Dr. Seuss books and I really fell in love with the rhyme. I was an only child and it was a way to escape.”

“I think when I was little I liked to write poetry,” Ridley said. “I came into college knowing that I wanted to major in English. When I was younger I enjoyed reading, mostly poetry from the Romantic period and in Jamaica (where she’s from), they said it wasn’t poetry unless it rhymed. So then I didn’t know if I wanted to be a writer, but I liked writing and that was my reason for looking into schools with a strong English department.”

According to Anne Prescott, an English professor and Renaissance literature specialist at Barnard College, learning how to write is one of the most important skills a student will learn by majoring in English.

“(English majors learn) how to write and [they gain] the intellectual flexibility that comes from reading a variety of texts with different attitudes towards life and from different cultures, past as well as present,” Prescott said.

“An English major encourages the imagination, and the imagination is useful in virtually every part of life, even in the sciences.” Contrary to popular belief, teaching is not the only career path for an English major. In fact, English is an extremely versatile major.

“That’s an illusion,” Prescott said. “What can you do with an English major? The obvious answer is teach, but the secret is an English major can be used as the basis for so much else. There are some clear examples: law school, where knowing how to use language can help you get the criminal off or put the bad guys away.”

“Modern Americans like to think that something will be useful, and an English major is useful, but we shouldn’t forget that reading a variety of texts is a great pleasure.” To see one of the career pathways for an English major turn to page 8.

Martha Nussbaum Presents Rudin Lecture at Marymount Manhattan College

Marymount Manhattan College (MMC) recently hosted the Jack & Lewis Rudin Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program, featuring Dr. Martha Nussbaum, in the Theresa Lang Theatre at the College, located at 221 East 71st Street. With support from the Rudin Family Foundation, this annual program brings renowned scholars from across the globe to MMC to discuss crucial issues that affect our community. Dr. Nussbaum’s lecture, “Liberal Education and Global Responsibility,” addressed issues related to ethics, education, and urban living in the 21st Century.

Dr. Martha Nussbaum is the Ernst Freud Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago. She is an award-winning author, professor and speaker whose work focuses on philosophy, liberal arts, law, ethics, and feminism. Dr. Nussbaum is known for connecting Greek and Roman philosophy and literature to the ethical and moral dilemmas that face our modern society. Dr. Nussbaum was a research advisor for the United Nations University in Helsinki, and she will be a Visiting Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. Her lecture at MMC reflected the College’s commitment to academic excellence, community outreach and its distinctive undergraduate program in liberal arts.

Marymount Manhattan College is an urban, independent undergraduate liberal arts college. The mission of the College is to educate a socially and economically diverse population by fostering intellectual achievement and personal growth and by providing opportunities for career development. Central to these efforts is the particular attention given to the individual student. Marymount Manhattan College also seeks to be a resource and learning center for the metropolitan community.

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The campus includes a licensed children’s specialty hospital that provides medical and residential services for medically involved children. The hospital specializes in services to children who are recovering from surgery and traumatic injuries, as well as those with chronic conditions, and developmental disabilities. The hospital offers short-term post-acute rehabilitation services and respite care.

On our lovely campus we have modern student residences and apartments for more independent living, a media center, an aquatics center featuring therapy and lap pools, and the Family Resource Center. A lodge is available for visiting parents.

Some of the medical conditions the School can provide for include, but are not limited to: autism, brain injury, cerebral palsy, medically fragile conditions, seizure disorders, and neurological impairments, including visual, hearing, and speech and language impairments.

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The School is licensed by the State of New Hampshire and other New England states, New York, and New Jersey, accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and NS and Medicaid approved.

The Community Living Services Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

For more information, call 603-542-1328 Website: www.crotchedmountain.org or email admissions@crotchedmountain.org

Communication: The Human Connection

A 2-year-old international Center for The Disabled (ICD) on 24th Street in Manhattan opened a state-of-the-art Speech Language, Learning, and Hearing Center. Known for almost a century of superior rehabilitative intervention with adults, ICD added a commitment to children and their development to its mission. In the two years since opening the response to this new program from parents, educators, and other professionals has been overwhelming!

 Approximately two years ago the International Center for The Disabled (ICD) on 24th street and First Avenue opened a state-of-the-art Speech Language, Learning, and Hearing Center. Known for almost a century of superior rehabilitative intervention with adults, ICD added a commitment to children and their development to its mission. In the two years since opening the response to this new program from parents, educators, and other professionals has been overwhelming!

The Center, formerly (30 years) at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Manhattan, specializes in the evaluation and treatment of children and adults with various types of communication difficulties. For children these problems may include delayed development, lack of clarity, stuttering and/or difficulties in school. For adults, the speech/language disturbance might be secondary to a neurological issue, or following surgery, an accident or an illness.

Knowing that these communication problems may result in or exacerbate some emotional concerns, clinical psychologists are on staff should they be needed. For children, there are school psychologists available to perform intelligence testing and Learning Disability (LD) evaluation. Should it be found to be learning disabled, there are LD therapists available for individual interventions. Each and every consumer gets a hearing test initially in order to rule out any possibility that it is ones hearing that is causing the problems. The staff at the Center consists of New York State licensed professionals in the areas of Speech-Language, Audiology, Learning Disabilities and Psychology (both Behavioral and Cognitive). The evaluations are comprehensive and employ both standardized and non-standardized procedures for each assessment. Bilingual (English/Spanish) staff is available in each of these professional areas.

To set up an appointment, for further information or for a free brochure call (212) 585-6280 or (212) 585-6230.

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**LETTER FROM A PARENT**

I have to tell people that our journey to The Sterling School began the day the District’s Director of Special Education told me that I should just get used to the fact that my son would never really learn to read. At the time of this conversation my son was in the fourth grade and his reading ability was approximately on the first grade level. This despite the fact that he had been identified at an early age, classified as learning disabled and had received early intervention and was in special education classrooms since kindergarten.

At an early age we noticed our son’s language development was not progressing as our first child had. We brought our concerns to our pediatrician who recommended an evaluation for early intervention. He was diagnosed as having an Expressive Language Delay, and intervention began. So that I could be more proactive I tried to learn all I could. I was often thwarted by a lack of information or the highly technical lingo. Not only did I have to educate myself about my son’s condition, but also I had to deal with my feelings of grief for no longer having the “perfect” child. I also had to come to terms with my own educational shortcomings, as did my husband.

We had no choice but to rely on the professionals and their suggestions, because they were the “experts.” As time passed, we saw “Bob’s” speech improve greatly. His report cards were good yet each spring the district’s standardized educational testing (Woodcock Johnson, etc.) showed minimal growth in reading despite the intensive program that he was receiving in school. If our child was so smart why wasn’t he progressing? Why was he having so much trouble learning to read? Frustration and anger are great motivators. I tried to find out as much as possible about the tools and methods being used to teach my son reading. I asked the school for more intense or different program. Administrators and teachers alike told me that the programs employed by the district worked. It was implied that if my child was not learning, there was something “wrong with the child” or it “would just take more time for it to click.” My child was running out of time, he no longer had any confidence that he could learn.

We couldn’t wait for things to “click.” Finally, I turned to the web, finding the site for the International Dyslexia Association. I learned about dyslexia, and that a person who is dyslexic can learn to read. I learned that in order to succeed a child would need to be taught by a highly trained professional using Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory methodology. I learned that instruction needs to be done within a small group or on a one-to-one level. What became clear was that our suburban neighborhood elementary school was not an appropriate place for my child to learn. My husband and I then came to the realization that if we wanted our son to learn to read we were going to have to send him to a specialized school. All the schools were either in New York City, or boarding schools. We applied and were denied admission to three of these schools. We were heartbroken. Our child was “too dyslexic” for these schools. Frustrated beyond belief, I came across the telephone number for The Sterling School and spoke with Ruth Arberman, the director. Immediately I was impressed with Ruth’s understanding of my son’s situation and our journey.

During our conversation, I was impressed by Ruth’s background, training, knowledge, and philosophy of working with dyslexic children. I gave Ruth all the reasons why her school would not want my son as a student, and she gave me all the reasons why it might be the right fit. We applied and I went into Brooklyn to attend an Open House.

When I arrived at The Sterling School, I was immediately impressed with the school’s size, the highly personalized instruction and the quality and training of all the staff. In September, after much soul searching, Bob began at Sterling, despite the transportation issues, the adjustment problems and the legal aspects. It’s a new world. Bob is happy. He is beginning to read independently, is more confident, and is doing his homework more independently. What a change in only three months?

For more information contact The Sterling School at 718-625-3502 or on the web at www.sterlingschool.com.
Children at the McCarton School

“Diagnosticists are sometimes very hesitant to use the ‘A’ word, (autism) with parents because of the stereotypes,” says McCarton. “So they will say your child has PDD or your child has PDDNOS when in actuality, the child is autistic. People think that PDDNOS is better than getting a diagnosis of autistic disorder because there is more hope for their children.”

McCarton states that autism is not a hopeless diagnosis. “You can bring about enormous change in these children. You must have qualified therapists but you can change the children,” she says encouragingly.

The McCarton School, which educates 18 students a year ranging from three to eight years of age, focuses on speech and language therapy, occupational and sensory therapy, and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy. “The technique of ABA therapy is breaking a task down to the least common denominator,” says McCarton. She adds, “one of the most important factors of ABA therapy is focusing on the positive. ‘You don’t comment on negative.’”

By JOCELYN K. EGEYES

Sitting in Dr. Cecelia McCarton’s office there is no doubt that her passion is children. Kermit the Frog and a teddy bear sit side by side on a bookshelf while dozens of other toys line her office. But it’s a special kind of child that warms the heart of this pediatrician, it’s “children who are different” says McCarton, her blue eyes passionately sparkling as she speaks of “her” children.

“Our inability to connect with these children should motivate us to figure out what is inside these children and help them,” McCarton refers to children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Trained as a medical doctor and an academic at Albert Einstein for 25 years, McCarton says, “The years at Einstein were wonderful, but it was time for me to move on. I wanted to go back to being a doctor.”

Nowadays, McCarton not only sees children, but also runs The McCarton School for children with ASD, on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

“Our interdisciplinary program is truly unique,” says McCarton. “No one is king of the hill, everyone is equal.”

Autism, a developmental disorder, is also called a spectrum disorder because children are affected in different ways and in different degrees. A child with ASD usually has expressive and receptive language disorder, limited social interaction skills with peers, and a restricted range of interests. These children are either diagnosed at birth, or as in 1/3 of the cases, diagnosed around 15 months. In addition, some children present only some signs of autism and are diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDDNOS).

The McCarton School is one of three schools in New York City, which focuses on ABA therapy. There is a one-to-one ratio of teachers to students at the school. McCarton says ABA therapy requires a lot of work on the part of the therapist and child. She adds, “There has been criticism of this therapy because some say it feels ‘robotic’ and ‘mechanical’ but unless you teach a child to sit at a table and look at you, you will never get a child to learn.” Equally important is ensuring that responses will generalize to other environments and situations. For example, a child may be taught to look at you at a table but not in the playground.

In addition, McCarton says every child may require different types of therapy and research will help determine how to work with each individual.

“I believe that money must be allocated into learning what the best therapeutic interventions are for these children, because we have to teach and educate them on an individual basis. While basic research is important, many children may not benefit from it immediately. While research is being conducted daily, it is still unclear exactly what causes autism which affects boys 4 times greater than girls in increasing numbers each year. “It used to be 2 to 4 in 10,000 now it’s 1 in 250. That is more than any other childhood disease that we have,” says McCarton.

“The belief among the medical community is that this is a genetic disorder and that it probably takes about 6 or 7 separate genes to get the full blown picture of autism, autistic spectrum disorder or PDD. Some children may have a predisposition that has been environmentally triggered,” she added. There are about eight centers in the United States working to track the genetic relevance to children with autism. “People are passionate in their beliefs about what the triggering event might be. It’s all speculative and we don’t know. It’s unfortunate because it’s impossible to treat an illness whose cause is unknown.”

So far, McCarton is treating the students and the proof comes from the 30-35 per cent who are mainstreamed after being in her program for three years. “My hope is that the children are going to move out of here.”

Each year there are 127 applicants to the McCarton School and only six available spots. Tuition for one year is $65,000 yet McCarton says it costs $132,000 to educate each student. With no money coming in from the state, McCarton says money from a scholarship fund helps with the expenses but the parents also lend a hand. “They fundraise, network and do anything in their power to raise money.”

Parents are also encouraged to be involved. Each therapy room is equipped with a double-sided mirror where parents can visit and observe unobtrusively at any time. Furthermore, everything is taped so if parents miss a session, they can still see their child’s progress. “The more you know, the better off your child is,” says McCarton.

McCarton says the goal is to have 24 children enrolled and then move into a bigger school. Each day, she is encouraged by how far the children have come.

“Sometimes kids can’t recover but I know the kids are in much better shape than when they entered,” says McCarton. “They have come a long way; they have learned and will continue to learn.”

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Good Parenting is Important for Every Child—But It’s Critical When Your Kid Has ADHD

There are many elements that go into the art of Good Parenting but there are two key words for parents of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and related problems. Structure and Consistency.

Why?

Structure is a way of organizing. It’s a way to understand time and space, rules and behavioral expectations. Structure provides a child with a clear understanding of where they should be in relation to all of the above. For a child who can’t always control their actions, structure is critical in providing security and comfort. (Please don’t confuse structure, which provides a solid framework, with rigidness or an inability to change.)

One aspect of Structure is to have a fairly set schedule, and to keep your child’s life in this way of appropriating calendar, charts and doorks (analog, clocks, which show the passage of time, are more adequate digital, which shows numbers without context). Since the child is adult - and with ADHD often has difficulty with both transitions and task turning (changing from one task to another and beginning a new activity), knowing what it expects elevates confusion and minimizes reorganization – just point to the scheduled item and have no need to get into a discussion. The question is now: what needs to be done, but more how to do it? Schedules give a reasonable understanding of the sequence of the day. For a child with ADHD, the moment is everything. If they have to do homework, the time for watching TV doesn’t exist. Agilic schedule helps them to understand sequences and time management.

What About Consistency? Consistency is necessary for both the child’s security and the parent’s sanity. All children will test with ADHD as masters of pushing the buttons. To avoid power struggles and minimize temper tantrums, a consistent approach to behavior management is critical. This includes sticking to the rules you’ve set in your home. If there’s no jumping on the bed, there isn’t acceptance of its wearing dirty clothes. If there’s no whining, there isn’t permission to nag. If it isn’t of major concern, allow the child just one throw, which gives them a feeling of some “power” or control. After that final throw, if they still continue to throw it, immediately take it away, saying: “Since you decided to continue throwing it. (If it isn’t of major concern, allow the child just one throw, which gives them a feeling of some “power” or control.)

And as we watch parents struggle with a multitude of issues, about children who don’t enjoy the games that they’re assigned with, about young children with intense obsessions, stresses, to more intense versions of the usual experiences, that many quirky children have so-called “splitter skills,” like a tremendously musical talent, the ability to work with animals, that can be a positive in dealing with their peer group.

They don’t sugarcoat the topic, either. “Family life with a quirky child is more fraught with tension, more difficult and subject to all kinds of stresses, to more intense versions of the usual stresses,” write Klass and Costello.

The authors address issues like how to negotiate the playground with a quirky child; find play dates that work; handle family gatherings—and the relatives—when one’s child doesn’t quite conform; find understanding and support among other parents, both with and without an individualized education plan, as well as homework, after-school activities like sports or religious training, and figure out the strategies to successfully move forward.

continued on page 21

The Vanguard School

The Vanguard School of Lake Wales, Florida, is a coeducational boarding school and was founded in 1966 to serve the needs of students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and attention deficit disorder. Located is the heart of the Sunshine State, the school has a “Scars” campus, for the city of Lake Wales, and is ideally situated for access to the beaches and cultural and educational centers of central Florida. Students from over 20 states and 20 foreign countries have access to three dormitories, three classroom buildings, full gym, aquatic center, physical fitness center, library/media center and cafeteria. The mission of the Vanguard School is to provide a challenging and nurturing program in a setting which enables students to develop to the fullest academically, socially and personally.

The school provides a safe and secure but appropriately demanding and structured environment in which students who have been successful in regular school programs are able to learn and achieve. Classes in the Junior School program (through grade 8) have no more than 8 students, allowing the support of remediation and the enhancement of skills. A team teaching format is used for all academic classes, which enables teachers and specialists to continually evaluate student progress. Students who have been unsuccessful in regular school programs are able to learn and achieve. Classes in the Upper School program (grades 9-12) have a maximum of 12 students, allowing the support of remediation and the enhancement of skills. A team teaching format is used for all academic classes, which enables teachers and specialists to continually evaluate student progress.

The Vanguard School and its academic programs are fully accredited by both the Florida Council of Independent Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Visit our website at www.vanguardschool.org or call the Administration Office at (863) 676-6091.

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Book Review
continued from page 20
through pre-school, elementary, middle and high school.
They also describe what various therapies and interventions do—like occupational and physical therapy, speech and language therapy, play therapy—and how children may benefit from such programs. They also reassure parents that it’s okay to step off the diagnostic/intervention treadmill, if a parent feels his child would be better off relaxing after school instead of being carted off to yet another appointment with yet another specialist.

This is definitely a book that would be of tremendous value to any family that lives with a quirky child—and an important addition to a school psychologist’s professional library shelves.

Finally, write Klass and Costello, it’s important to remember that “the world needs its quirky children, its quirky adults, its quirky minds and its quirky sensibilities; for all the challenges they face, quirky people enlarge and enhance life for us all.”

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DECEMBER 2003 • EDUCATION UPDATE • SPECIAL EDUCATION
By MR. RODNEY CROFT

The day after Christmas in the United Kingdom is known as “Boxing Day.” Many of our present Christmas traditions date from Victorian times. In those days people in service had to work on Christmas day but were given the next day off to visit their families and loved ones. As they left the stately homes on December 26th, it became a tradition to give each servant a box containing a gift. Hence Boxing Day.

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“Bright Lights, Big City”
By MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

All over town this fall, it’s lights…camera…and action! In mid-October, 30 feature films and prime time television programs in production in New York City. In fact, earlier this month, the Mayor’s Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting issued a single-day record of 152 permits to film movies, television shows, commercials, documentaries, fashion shoots and other productions in the Big Apple. One of the nation’s current top-grossing films, Elizabethtown, was shot in New York City. And for the first six months of this year, feature film production in New York was up nearly a third compared to the same period last year; television production was up by more than half.

All of that is great news for New York—for a lot of reasons. The movies and television shows that are made here reach audiences around the world, and are constant reminders of what an exciting and dynamic city New York is. That’s great free advertising. Film and television production is also a major part of our city’s economy, employing some 100,000 people and generating $5 billion of economic activity each year. And that’s money that gets spent in stores, lambeyards and other neighborhood businesses throughout the city.

Good as those numbers are, we’re working to make them even better. Under Commissioner Katherine Oliver, the Mayor’s Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting has streamlined the process of obtaining film permits, making it faster and easier to get production started. She’s also inspired a spirit of teamwork among producers, unions and City government. Upgrades to the city’s permitting system at the Brooklyn Navy Yard have led to $28 million in private investment to create state-of-the-art film production facilities there. That will produce thousands of new jobs in our city—and will the planned expansions of the Silvercup and Kaufman-Astoria film studios in Queens. In addition, last month, our Administration named film and recording superstar Jennifer Lopez and others to a Latino Media and Entertainment Commission; their job will be to help make New York the capital of the fast-growing Latin media and entertainment business.

Movie and television production are a big part of what gives New York its special excitement. They have long and legendary histories here—and our Administration is making sure that they keep shining in the future.

Before closing, I want to remind everyone who’s listening that recently morning’s rush hour, the single-occupancy-vehicle restrictions that have been in place for the last two years on crossings to Lower Manhattan will be lifted. Those crossings are the Williamsburg, Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges and the Holland and Brooklyn-Battery Tunnels. The restrictions were enacted to reduce traffic in Lower Manhattan and permit recovery and reconstruction following 9/11; lifting the restrictions is more proof that Lower Manhattan is coming back strong.

Give the Gift of Reading: Reading Reform Begins at Home
By MATILDA RAFFA CUOMO AND SUSAN J. MOESKER

In many given New York City classrooms, when children sit at desks with textbooks, how many of them actually understand the words printed in the appropriate language?According to Beth Fertig’s recent series, “Reading, Writing and Reform” on WNYC radio, only about 40 percent of elementary and middle school students are meeting state standards.

The existence of a crisis is obvious; the question remains, what can be done? Recognizing that reading is the basis of all learning, the New York City Department of Education, under the leadership of Chancellor Joel Klein, has implemented a new curriculum intended to boost reading scores for the 2003/04 school year. If children cannot read, they will not be able to master any academic subject matter.

The good news is that research indicates that 90 to 95% of all children can learn to read at grade level with appropriate intervention. A caring adult—a parent, grandparent or mentor—can impact a child’s reading skills by spending fifteen minutes per day reading to a child. It is also important to remember that as adults, we are role models; children must see us reading to want to become readers themselves.

It is never too early to start—the Einstein tapes for babies, a video series, full of classical music and colorful graphics and designs, are pre-reading stimulation aids for preschoolers.

Unfortunately, too many parents cannot afford resources such as these that would otherwise be available and helpful. According to Sandy Feinberg, the Director of the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach, NY, any books read aloud and displayed to young children have the same effect as the Einstein tapes.

The New York City Public Libraries are a rich resource, which families and children should visit. Many families who cannot afford to buy books are unaware that books and videos can be taken home for a designated time and then returned to their local library branch once they sign up for a library card.

To promote reading and proficiency in the English language, Mentoring USA’s trained mentors help children in our initiative English as a Second Language (ESL) Mentoring Program. When English is not spoken in the home, reading is of paramount importance to reinforce the subjects learned at school. Our Mentoring USA mentors, through the use of curriculum materials, improve reading comprehension. It is beneficial for ESLs (English Language Learners) to hear English pronounced by native speakers.

The Mentoring USA program is an affiliate of HELP USA, the nation’s largest provider of mentoring to children in need. Mentoring USA provides mentors to children in HELP USA’s shelter facilities in New York City, including locations in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Westchester County.

Mentoring USA also reinforces reading through the “ethnic heroes” library component of our BRAVE (Blas-Related Anti-Violence Education) Juliana Cultural Diversity initiative. Each youth receives free books from Mentoring USA that are read and discussed during weekly mentoring sessions. Our trained mentors receive activity books in training, which contain curriculum that refers back to the books that the pairs have read together. The intention of BRAVE Juliana is to promote global peace through understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Reading books is a great way to travel all over the world without ever leaving New York City!

As the holiday season approaches, consider the gift of books for that special child in your life. The holiday season is an excellent time to plunge into the BRAVE Juliana Diversity Booklist, as it features books about holidays celebrated in different cultures throughout the world. This can be a springboard to discussion about, and acceptance of, the differences between youth and their mentors, who may well practice different religions and celebrate different holidays. Consider giving a child a bookstore gift certificate, to engage the young person in the process of becoming an active, discriminating consumer of literature. In most cases, a good reader is also a good student with good grades. We adults have a responsibility to help each child succeed to read. It is a great gift to give a child the joy of reading.

Matilda Raffa Cuomo is the former First Lady of the City of New York, Co-Founder of Mentoring USA and Chair, National Committee for Advanced Placement Italian Language Course & Examination. Susan J. Moesker is the Director of Programs at Mentoring USA.

“Implementing” the CFE Decision
By ASSEMBLYMAN STEVEN SANDERS

When the State’s highest court, the Court of Appeals, issued its landmark ruling in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case last June, the Legislature and Governor were directed—to ensure New York City has adequate resources to provide children with a sound, basic education—to “implement” a new State school aid formula by July 2004.

We as the budget hunters believed that “implement” must mean that a first down payment is made, that substantial new additional resources are appropriated to impact the New York City public schools by September 2004. “Implement” does not mean merely that a plan has been agreed to by the Legislature and the Governor to go into effect two, three or five years later, with no substantial new resources provided in the next budget in time for next fall’s school year. A new statewide aid formula, we believe, along with appropriations at an ample level in the next budget, is not negotiable. Rather, it is required, so that what the Court mandated is in fact in place, or operational, by the Court’s firm deadline of July 30, 2004.

While it is true that the CFE decision specifically relates to school financing and State aid only to the New York City public schools, the Assembly believes that in the interests of fairness, equity, and doing what is correct for students in similarly under-funded districts across the State, that the Legislature and Governor must come up with a new and realistic funding formula for each of the over 700 school districts statewide—rather than addressing the constitutionally inadequate level of funding to New York City schools alone.

To that end, as Chairperson of the Assembly Education Committee I have been conducting hearings around the state since October to get public input about how much money is needed and where it should be invested. By mid-December, we will have concluded seven public hearings—in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Watertown and Suffolk.

Additionally, a number of costing-out studies—professional analyses across the state, district by district, to determine what level of funding each district needs to provide what the Court delineated as components of a modern sound, basic education—will be completed within a month.

The Assembly is determined that when we adopt the budget for the next fiscal year it will include a down payment, or first substantial increase in State aid for New York City schools and other districts, to satisfy the findings of the Court and be in place with the school year beginning next September.

We are, I caution, suspicious about Governor Pataki’s sincerity in meeting the July deadline. The Governor, who wasted two precious and irreplaceable years of children’s educational lives in an ill-advised appeal of the lower court CFE ruling, has appointed a commission on school funding that is charged with reporting back to him in March, by which time it will be too late under State law for the Governor even to amend his own education budget proposal.

Consequently, we in the Assembly majority will be looking closely in January at precisely how much money the Governor includes in his executive budget for New York City public schools.

The courts have had the last word and our children have waited way too long. Governor, it is time to take action. We are ready to work with you.

Assemblyman Steven Sanders is Chairman of the Education Committee. You can contact him by mail at 201 East 16th Street, New York, NY 10003, by e-mail at sanders@assembly.state.ny.us or by phone at (212) 979-9696.
What You Need To Know About Managing Credit Cards

By PATRICIA FLAHERTY MCNEILL, M.B.A., FINANCIAL ADVISOR

Teens are ringing up too much debt too fast, with all the related problems—impulse buying, overspent budgets, and bad credit. What’s the solution?

When today’s teens go away to college, they carry two instruments that prior generations lacked: personal computers and credit cards! According to Nellie Mae, the national student-loan financing corporation, undergraduate students have at least one credit card, and the average balance owed is $2,327. Adding to the challenge are savvy marketers and advertisers who spend billions of dollars each year trying to convince us that we “must have” more than we can afford.

What’s wrong with this picture? It suggests teens are ringing up too much debt too fast, with all the related problems—impulse buying, overspent budgets, and bad credit. What’s the solution?

For teens, as for adults, there’s no elixir that will cure all their ills. One problem caused by credit cards is the key to good practice: credit card holders need to know the solution! The key to practice good credit behavior now to prevent problems later. Here are three specific steps you can take:

1. Understand that credit is a major responsibility. It’s tempting to apply for credit just to get a discount on purchases, or to get a gift, but beware! There are consequences many teens overlook. For example, each application “trips” an inquiry on your credit report. An inquiry explicitly confirms that your credit history was reviewed in response to an application. Creditors always check on recent inquiries. Too many inquiries and it looks like you’re desperate for credit. That makes you a potential poor risk, which could negatively affect your chances to obtain credit. And inquiries stay on your credit report for two years!

2. Choose credit cards that charge a low monthly interest rate. When possible, pay more than the minimum amount due. A $1,000 credit card balance can take many years to pay off if you only make minimum required payments! If you need to “roll over” a balance, make sure that you create a plan to pay it off in a short period of time.

3. Pay bills on time. Making timely payments is critical to maintaining a good credit history and credit rating.

Rutgers University Teaches RESPECT to Students

By STEVEN DRANOFF, P.H.D. & WANDA DOBRICH, Ph.D.

American colleges are struggling with a challenge to educate students not only academically, but also to build character in a climate of social upheaval. With shrinking resources, escalating costs and perhaps even unreasonable academic demands, the character education movement has been stymied on all fronts. The most at risk, but paradoxically undervalued population, are students in middle and high school.

We are psychologists and researchers at Rutgers University. Over the past ten years we have designed and tested a model for the prevention of bullying, sexual harassment and violence for adolescents. Our program is called RESPECT and is for all students—not only those who are targeted as victims and perpetrators. Using a method we call Preparedness Training, we teach students that they “miss” because of normal development. From our research we have identified “normative distortions” teenagers have of their peer group—the source of much of the peer aggression. We have designed a curriculum to correct these misperceptions by grade, so that teenagers are better equipped to protect themselves.

The underpinnings of this research-based program grow out of the theories of Piaget and Erikson. The changes we have discovered in social perception are driven by the maturation constraints of normal cognitive and emotional development. RESPECT uses a pre- and post-test design that allows us to quantify shifts in student perception that scaffold development, leading to enhanced empathy, nature’s antidote for aggression.

As we look in hindsight at the bigger picture, Prevention, we realize we have forgotten to take development into account. RESPECT is a “primer”; it fills in the gaps that adolescents are missing in the wake of normal maturation so that they can then use the strategies we teach in traditional intervention programs.

RESPECT training has caught on like a brush fire in major districts across the country, including New York City, Yonkers, Clifton, Montclair, West Orange, Newark, Berkeley Heights, Edison, Monmouth County Vocational, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles and San Diego. Participating middle and high schools span the affluent suburban to “persistently dangerous” schools.

RESPECT has been found to be effective with a wide range of students including special education, ESL, seriously emotionally disturbed and other special needs groups, and, of course, with the general education population.

Dr. Steven Dranoff & Wanda Dobrich are psychologists, researchers, educators and authors, each with over 25 years of experience working with adolescents, families, schools and other organizations. They are producers of RESPECT, and have been responsible for bringing the program into major school districts across the nation. They are also on the faculty of the Graduate School of Applied Professional Psychology at Rutgers University.

McGreevey to Highlight Reforms that Support Great Teachers

Recognizing that providing our children with the skills to compete in the 21st century economy means supporting great teachers and high teacher quality, Governor James E. McGreevey will demonstrate the progress his administration’s teaching reforms, when he spoke recently at the groundbreaking ceremony for Montclair State’s Center for Teacher Preparation and Learning Technology.

During his campaign, McGreevey visited Montclair State and promised to give teachers the tools they need to reach the highest levels of their profession. He discussed the impact of his reforms, two years later, like establishing uniform standards and providing incentives for teachers to obtain National Certification.

$1.8 Million for Blended Learning in NJ College

By SEBASTIAN VASTA, ED.D.

A five-year grant from the United States Department of Education is allowing New Jersey’s largest community college to accelerate its goal of infusing technology into the instructional process while maximizing existing on-campus classroom space.

The $1.8 million grant that Camden County College received from the federal Title III Strengthening Institutional Program will seed the creation of 70 blended learning model (BLM) courses. The BLM fuses in-person instruction with online instruction, making each BLM course part traditional and part distance in nature.

As a result of the grant, Camden County College’s professional development program will include workshops on topics that deal directly with instruction. These include the impact that different student learning styles have on teaching, the importance of connecting assessment to student learning outcomes and the implementation of strategies that transform the college into student-centered venues. Other faculty activities will include one-on-one sessions in which faculty familiarize themselves with the college’s online platform, WebStudy, and the many unique instructional features that WebStudy provides.

Furthermore, the grant will fund initiatives to better orient students to the technology used in BLM courses as well as to better monitor student progress as they engage the technology on a regular basis. The goal is to provide the most intellectually rewarding and successful experience possible to an already eager group of students. After all, some students like that distance learning is easy to incorporate into their busy schedules but really miss the interaction of the remaining classroom.

EDUCATION UPDATE

is now being distributed to 100 schools in New Jersey. If you would like your school to be included, please email us at ednews1@aol.com
FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT’S SEAT:

Letting Little Hands Reach Out

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

I’m in the very best stage of parenting: It’s called grandparenting. My three children have given me seven grandchildren all under the age of seven, and most are under the age of three. They live in various parts of the country and quite often they all come to visit at once. It’s always an adventure.

Of course I’m always interested in their intellectual development, and I find it fascinating to watch them as they encounter new things and then decide what they are for. Since they are my grandchildren, I have the luxury of indulging them. But the best gift I can give them is to just say “yes” when they make a new discovery.

Having several toddlers and infants over at once makes the message of the need for preventive “child-proofing” sound loud and clear. When it’s four, five, six, or seven pairs of small hands reaching and pulling at anything they see, it’s obvious that there is no room for ambiguity. We’ve got to keep those children safe and happy and provide them with an environment from which they can learn.

A child’s curiosity is what drives them to learn. Parents need to encourage them to explore and find answers on their own from the time they are crawling and grasping things and on throughout their lives. It may be easier to just keep everything out of reach, but it is not the best thing for them. With the holidays all but here, I suggest that anyone who has children at home or will be visited by small children do some immediate observation and see what needs to be put away. Then I recommend you take one step further. Look around for what you can put within the children’s reach and furnish your home with safe “treasures” that they can discover. Instead of having to tell them “no,” when they reach for an object, you can relax and say, “Yes, you may play with that.” This is especially true for children who are beyond the grab and destroy stage, three or four years old and older.

Do you have a collection of photos from your travels? Leave it where your child can discover it on its own or her, and then cuddle up and share some of your favorite stories about the places you’ve been. Have you kept any toys from when you were young? Your child may be intrigued with a toy that doesn’t actually use batteries or have to be plugged in, and isn’t some kind of alien monster.

With my oldest granddaughter (she’s seven) I can say “yes” to a lot of different things. If it’s just her and me, we can have dessert before (and after) dinner. We can stay up as late as we want, or escape from the babies and have a grown-up experience. It’s really not that important what we do, just as long as she leads the way.

To find these special play products for children, these products combine learning and fun plus they are unique and interesting. They will provide hours of fun during the holidays. One product that can be used in many different ways to provide children with new playtime experiences.

Scramble Square Puzzles: Little brain teasers and puzzles to play, but hard to solve. Puzzle has nine 4” x 4” pieces with excellent original artwork for everyone’s entertainment. Easy to carry, beautifully produced and perfect for home or to take on travel. Fascinating facts, trivia questions, hidden answers included.


Unbelievably Soft Baby: Baby doll has full limbs, talking ability and many details. Ages three and up. $44.95, goldbergerdoll.com.

Teaching Cash Register: Playing store will be fun and educational. Learn real-life money and math concepts, coin and currency while interacting with new talking toy. LCD screen shows real-life transactions with easy-to-read numbers, talking scanner rings up object, with sound effects such as “Special of the day,” and “Big Bargain.” Coin slot identifies and tallies real and plastic play coins, plus scale and four built-in games such as Coin Quiz and Money Math. Use plastic coupon to receive random price reductions or pay with a play credit card. Requires three “C” batteries. Ages three and up. $9.95. Learning Resources 888-222-3909 www.learningresources.com.


LandAir R/C: Extraordinary radio-controlled vehicle patrols land and sky. Motorized flying aircraft can be launched and fly anywhere. Handset controls maneuver land cruiser to drive through various terrain. Push another button to launch aircraft into the air, control it to soar in sky or make sudden dives. Available in two different versions for racing based on R/C frequency and color. Ages 9 and up. $100.00, MGA Entertainment 800-222-4685 www.mgae.com.

Supermag: Magnetic construction system provides solid structures yet can be pulled apart easily. Consists of steel balls and plastic-coated magnetic, polarized rods. Connect rods and magnetic tips to create endless potential for imaginative play. Construct flat, large, and 3D structures, cubes, spheres to create endless structures and geometrical shapes. Build bridge, motorcycle, building, pyramid, and even robot-like forms. Ages 9 and up. $100.00, Learning Resources 800-465-6342 www.megabloks.com.

CMOM’s Executive Director.

Families can Do-Sa-Do together with square dancing lessons for beginners, 2:00pm and 3:00pm: Children five years and older can participate in workshops focusing on positive conflict resolution in the museum’s creativity lab. The workshops will be run by the Educators for Social Responsibility, Metropolitan Area—a non-profit organization with expertise in working with teachers, youth and parents to solve conflicts non-violently through communication skills. CMOM is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is $7 for children and adults and $4 for seniors.

Children’s Museum Events

The Children’s Museum of Manhattan (CMOM) and The History Channel have teamed up to bring the story of the Alamo to life. “Remember the Alamo, A World Premiere Documentary,” airs on The History Channel on Saturday, December 16th and CMOM has devoted Saturday, December 13th and Sunday, December 14th to commemorating this historic time in history.

“The collaboration between CMOM and The History Channel reinforces the Museum’s interdisciplinary approach to learning—weaving together history, literacy, science, math, and art in public programs,” said Andrew Ackerman, CMOM’s Executive Director.

“Remember the Alamo documentary challenges the myths that grew out of that battle and gets to the heart of the real story,” adds Judy Klein Frimer, Director of Brand Enhancement at The History Channel. “Learning history-balanced from all viewpoints—is of importance to parents and families.”

At CMOM, children and their families will participate in activities and programs based on the documentary’s themes that will immerse visitors in the Alamo era through song, dance, role-playing, day and play. These programs and performances taking place on Saturday, December 13th and Sunday, December 14th are sure to excite, entertain and educate the whole family. Highlights from CMOM’s “The Alamo—Fact, Fiction and Fun weekend include: 11:00am–1:00pm: The lively sounds of Mariachi musicians performing in the museum lobby, 1:30pm Bi-lingual sing along, 2:00pm and 3:00pm: Circle Left, Circle Right—and

Holiday Fun at NY Botanical Garden:

Gingerbread Adventures & Holiday Train Show

Twinkling lights, towering evergreens, a miniaure New York made from plants glowing in the history of the Conservatory and 10 topiary bunnies with mittens and scarves baking gingerbread are just a peek at the Holiday Family Fun at the Garden. Children and their families delight at the Garden’s Holiday Train Show, Gingerbread Adventures in the Adventure Garden, and the delightful Holiday Train Show in the Conservatory. Participate in the hands-on learning about the holiday treat gingerbread in the Adventure Garden. Students discover the plant parts in gingerbread and decorate a ginger snap cookie. In the Conservatory, observe using hand lenses. They make field notebooks and fill it with plant parts and notes. Make spicy sachets, ornaments, and decorate ginger snap cookies. Come experience Gingerbread Adventures and learn about the recipe for the perfect gingerbread—as well as special Holiday memories.

NEP! This year in the Discovery Center, children learn more about the history, facts, and the plant’s origins. Illustrated panels chart the story of how the various part ingredients are processed to become the special, spicy recipe ingredients.

Also NEW this year, visitors to the Adventure Garden’s Multipurpose room will see a gingerbread cookie decorating and buzzer counties of the Garden’s Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, the nation’s largest Victorian glasshouse that opened to the public in 1902, and is a New York City Landmark! Children of all ages will marvel at the baked replication soaring approximately two feet high and three feet wide. It is made from a classic gingerbread recipe with lots of spices, including seasoned gingerbread, cinnamon, nutmeg, cinnamon, and molasses—topped off with gumdrops and seasonal candy. The upper West Side Soutine Bakery, named after Zagar’s as one of New York’s top bakeries, painstakingly details the Gingerbread House.

Travels of a Plant Scientist in the Bendheim Herbarium—Going on now through April 2004 Holiday Treats and Treats in the Adventure Garden—Now through Sunday, January 9, 2004

For a doubly exciting program, K–5th grade students enjoy Gingerbread Adventures in the Adventure Garden and the delightful Holiday Train Show in the Conservatory. Participate in the hands-on learning about the holiday treat gingerbread in the Adventure Garden. Students discover the plant parts in gingerbread and decorate a ginger snap cookie. In the Conservatory, observe using hand lenses. They make field notebooks and fill it with plant parts and notes. Make spicy sachets, ornaments, and decorate ginger snap cookies. Come experience Gingerbread Adventures and learn about the recipe for the perfect gingerbread—as well as special Holiday memories.

Eddith and Henry Everet

As Edith and Henry Everet Children’s Adventure Garden has been made possible by the leadership generosity of and

Promenade to the theatre on the 3rd floor! Families can Do-Sa-Do together with square dancing lessons for beginners, 2:00pm and 3:00pm: Children five years and older can participate in workshops focusing on positive conflict resolution in the museum’s creativity lab. The workshops will be run by the Educators for Social Responsibility, Metropolitan Area—a non-profit organization with expertise in working with teachers, youth and parents to solve conflicts non-violently through communication skills. CMOM is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is $7 for children and adults and $4 for seniors.

For details on all of CMOM’s events, activities exhibits and special performances, visit www.cmom.org or call 212.721.1223.

Travel back in time at the Dahesh Museum of Art

With the American Magic-Lantern Theater’s Victorian Christmas Show!

Saturday, December 15, 2:50

Free to kids under 12!

For more information, visit www.dahesh.org

Dahesh Museum of Art

580 Madison Avenue and 57th Street
PROFILE: ZALMEN MLOTKE & THE YIDDISH THEATER
By JOANNA LEEFER

I n the early 20th century, New York City was the host to two dozen Yiddish Theaters groups entertaining more than two million people. As Jewish immigrants assimilated and moved out of the city, the audience dwindled. Today only one of these theaters survives: The Folksbiene. Now in its 89th year, it is guided by its impassioned executive director, Zalmen Mlotek, who believes “We have a treasure in Yiddish culture...it’s not just a window into the past; it’s a vibrant way of expressing Jewishness...in a non-threatening, non-religious way.” His mission is to “preserve Yiddish cultural events with enough English culture to attract new audiences.”

One of Mlotek’s newest contributions to Yiddish theater is the addition of super titles to all his productions. As with opera, Mlotek believes this addition will allow a limited-Yiddish speaking audience to “enjoy this rich tradition.”

Mlotek also hopes to interest young people in the Yiddish productions. He is accomplishing this through the creation of the Folksbiene Company’s Kids and Yiddish Theater productions. Now in its 5th season, Mlotek hopes this series will “… unite the generations, and make Yiddish broadly accessible in a multi-cultural city.”

This year’s production for children is a whimsical combination of music and magic woven together in the theatrical production called “Farmitsh and Far-Fetched!” This zany comedy is directed by Joanne Borts with musical direction by Zalmen Mlotek. Mlotek describes the show as a blend of “Saturday Night Live and Sesame Street, intertwined with English and Yiddish.” The production, which opened recently at Manhattan’s Jewish Community Center, is a fusion of Yiddish and English, with a dash of hip-hop. The cast includes five children actors between the ages of 9 and 17 years old, and the internationally acclaimed music-magician Josh Dolgin who is known for combining hip-hop and Klezmer on stage and in recordings.

This year Moltex also presents a revival of The Lady Next Door, a comedic drama originally introduced and produced in 1916 as Di Neksdorfs. The original production, written by Leon Kobrin, depicted real life conditions in a Jewish tenement.

Although Moltex feels it’s important to know the background of Yiddish theater, he is not a purist. He feels Yiddish Theater should evolve. “Every generation should put a personal stamp on it, as long as it translates and turns someone on.”

Zalmen Mlotek is not a stranger to Yiddish theater. “I grew up with Yiddish. To me, Yiddish is a living, breathing life style.” Mlotek’s father and mother were both prominent figures in the Jewish cultural community. His mother, Hannah, a publisher of several Yiddish musical anthologies, was honored recently by the Milken Foundation. His father, Joseph, was a producer of Yiddish festivals in the U.S.

Both his parents were regular contributors to the Jewish Forward, a weekly Yiddish newspaper. Their columns answered reader’s questions about titles and origins of fragments of old Yiddish songs. After research they identified the songs and later published them in their entirety. Isaac Bashevis Singer, the Nobel-prize winning Yiddish writer, referred to the elder Mloteks as the “Sherlock Holmes of Yiddish songs.”

Zalmen Mlotek describes his life as a “natural evolution to become involved in Yiddish music, theater, language and culture.” He attended Workman Circle schools, then studied at Juilliard, and with Leonard Bernstein. He began conducting shows in Yiddish summer camps in the Catskills. He now travels extensively, as a one-man ambassador, to Russia and Europe, conducting classes and workshops on Yiddish theater.

The first Yiddish theater in America began in 1882, an outgrowth of the Purim plays of the 1770s in Europe. Thanks to Mlotek, the tradition is “alive and well” and expanding around the world.

Looney Tunes: Back in Action & THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS
By JAN AARON

F or holiday filmgoers who want to take the kids out or get in touch with their inner child, there’s Warner Bros. Looney Tunes: Back in Action, a blend of live-action and animation. Directed by Joe Dante’s premise creates a world where cartoon characters blend in with their human costars, and showcases Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck as scene-stealers throughout. When Warner studio’s tough VP of comedy Kate (Janet Elman) fires Daffy, she orders the studio security guard and aspiring stuntman DJ (Brendan Fraser) to boot him off the lot. When this goes wildly wrong, Daffy and DJ end up taking off for Las Vegas to rescue his dad (a self-parodying Timothy Dalton) who is a Warner star and secret agent.

Recognizing her blunder, Kate and Bugs Bunny take off to lure Daffy back. Reunited, the foursome end up going all over the world trying to foil the maniacal monkey key plot being hatched by Mr. Chairman (Steve Martin), head of the Acme Corporation. Along the way, they must interact with a host of other Warner cartoon icons. Of the live actors, Martin impresses the most, although he has limited screen time.

The film strives to entertain kids with nonstop action and adults with inside jokes. A highlight for adults is a chase through the Louvre where the Daffy and Bugs leap into and out of paintings and they’ll certainly get a kick out of some scenes that recall “Psycho” or show Daffy in a photo with Richard Nixon. For the kids, there’s a frenetic pace and some jokes and pranks sure to delight them.

Oscar and Emmy award winner Jerry Goldsmith’s score adds just the right notes throughout. (91 minutes, PG)

When the kids are ticked in, take in Denys Arcand’s remarkable The Barbarian Invasions, a story of a dying Remy that celebrates life, as his friends, a marvelous group of talkative intellectuals, turn his hospital room into a roundtable of delectable chitchat, which ultimately becomes immensely moving. (99 minutes, R)

For times and theaters of both films, call 212-777-FILM.

“LADY NEXT DOOR” OPENS
FOLKSBIENE’S 89TH SEASON
By JAN AARON

A tale of 20th century immigrants, performed first in 1916, gets the forever-young Folksbiene Yiddish Theatre’s 89th consecutive season off to a great start with Leon Kobrin’s “The Lady Next Door” at the handsome new Folksbiene Center, is a fusion of Yiddish and English, directed by Joanne Borts with musical direction by Zalmen Mlotek. Mlotek describes his life as a “natural evolution to become involved in Yiddish music, theater, language and culture.” He attended Workman Circle schools, then studied at Juilliard, and with Leonard Bernstein. He began conducting shows in Yiddish summer camps in the Catskills. He now travels extensively, as a one-man ambassador, to Russia and Europe, conducting classes and workshops on Yiddish theater.

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POETRY CORNER
No Need for Tears
By JOAN CONSTANCE CROFT

Mourn not the Shell when Life’s fretting is o’er,
But pray the soul has come to rest
Upon some distant happier shore,
Where love and joy go side by side
And only hurtful things have died.

And do not shed too many tears,
I’ve wept them all before,
Enough to fill an ocean and standing on the shore,
The waves have washed around my feet
’til my heart could weep no more.
Just throw away my ashes on the sea
That they may ride the waves, and with incoming tides
Rush gaily in the cayes, or dash up freely on the rocks
To come teasing back again,
Released at last from inhibition, wasteful doubt and pain.
Mourn not the Shell, Life’s fretting is o’er.

Joan Constance Croft has written poetry for some considerable years and has published poems on a number of previous occasions in Education Update. She is now 82 years of age and lives with her husband Ronald, aged 83, at a retired Senior Textile Executive and Church Organist and Choirmaster in Bolton, Lancashire, England.

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Review our grouping system at www.habarbadi.com/groupings
Our unique grouping technique will help your students understand themselves and others better. It will make your large school feel like a smaller more harmonious community and help make your large classes more coherent and manageable.
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www.habarbadi.com/groupings
Distance Learning Profile: Houston Independent School District’s Virtual School

By MITCHELL LEVINE

The Houston Independent School District may be in fact the geographically largest of Texas’ brick-and-mortar school systems, but that didn’t stop it from developing a virtual education portal that’s not just a clearinghouse for curricula delivery, but, as Project Manager and Program Director Jo Beth Harris describes it, an “interactive learning resource for parents, teachers and students.”

“Originally, the courseware was developed for the middle school program in April of 2000, with the Texas state standards as our model. Texas is known for the rigor of its standards, and we actually customized the program specifically to meet the challenge points of the TAKS exams (Texas Assessment of Learning and Knowledge).” The state assessment program—created with the intent to both measure and promote higher level thinking skills and abstract reasoning—was used as a baseline for the school’s lesson plans, an initiative known as Project Clear. As Harris says, “Project Clear’s developers cross-referenced it by the standards, and added detail to enhance the content and organize it as a modular series of lesson plans for grades 6-8,” including language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics.

Using the very popular Blackboard enterprise system for Internet delivery, the Virtual School has expanded the program’s scope to include individual classes for high school students in grades 9–12, with not only the standard general studies sequences but classes in study skills, test preparation for the SAT, PSAT, and ACT exams, and a fourteen Advanced Placement classes for possible college credit as well. Harris points out that the Virtual School, beyond simply welcoming out-of-town students, offers state-certified teachers to offer additional support and online assessment to their distance learners, all with a 24 hour turnaround time. Although the program is primarily designed to provide individual courses for secondary learners, it is possible to earn a certification diploma, under a contract with student’s local school district.

When asked for a brief summary of the program’s philosophy, Ms. Harris quickly replied, “The Virtual School was intended to make available for all students interactive learning anytime, anywhere!” For more information visit the school’s site at virtualschool.houstonisd.org.

Distance Learning Profile: University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Independent Study High School

By MITCHELL LEVINE

Distance education has come along way since the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Independent Study High School’s inception in 1929. In its 75-year history, Nebraska’s High School has moved from delivering courses on horseback to offering an interactive, real-time web-based course management system they call Way Cool™. Introduced in April of 2003, Way Cool™ allows students to submit assignments and tests online, receive instantaneous grading, view feedback on graded assignments and access their online courses.

“The entire scheme of online and distance learning has changed dramatically, particularly in the last five to ten years,” says Carol Ash, director of Nebraska’s High School. “We offered our first online course more than five years ago, and already we have moved from that platform to Way Cool™, which goes beyond just an online course to a full course management system. I like to think of Way Cool™ as a student’s homeroom on the Internet.”

Having year-round open enrollment is such a blessing for so many students, Ash continues. This kind of flexibility allows students to customize their academic schedule. Our students can enroll in courses at any time throughout the year and complete in as little as five weeks or take as long as a year.

Students wishing to earn their diplomas from Nebraska’s High School have the option of choosing from two-sequences: a general education or college preparatory sequence. Students wishing to attend college after graduation are encouraged to enroll in the college preparatory sequence. In addition to granting diplomas, courses Nebraska’s High School can also be used to supplement either a homeschool curriculum or a local high school curriculum. With more than 160 online and print courses in 14 subjects, Nebraska’s High School offers courses such as Latin, Career Planning, Drivers Education and courses that are challenging to teach at home, such as science courses with labs.

All of Nebraska’s courses are designed by an in-house instructional design staff that has won numerous curriculum awards from the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA), an organization devoted to advancing new distance education technologies within universities. Nebraska’s High School also offers advising services, a friendly customer service staff and Way Cool™, its online course management system. For more information about Nebraska’s High School, visit http://NebraskaHS.unl.edu or call (402) 472-2175.

Win Free Movie Tickets: Where is this Statue?

Soon after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865, the Union League Club, a Republican organization founded two years earlier to promote good government, commissioned Henry Kirke Brown to create this commemorative statue. Of the many outdoor portrait statues of Lincoln erected in the United States, this appears to be the first in New York City. If you know where this statue is, please email us the location at ednews1@aol.com or fax us at (212) 477-5893. You must include your name, address, and telephone number. The first to respond will win the prize.

Congratulations to our last winner! Katherine G. Brennan of Manhattan was the first to write in with the correct location of Admiral Farragut located in Madison Square Park.
PRODUCT REVIEW:

E&B COMPANY’S SLIPPER AND FLIPPER PDA CASES

By MITCHELL LEVINE

A PDA in the year 2003 is a remarkable piece of technology; once you have one, it’s hard to believe you ever got along without it. And increasingly, schools in our area are agreeing. Although laptops may still prevail in terms of power and versatility—and even this gap is closing—PDAs now provide not only functionality, but even more importantly, simple exposure to technological paradigms to which many students might be otherwise deprived. In those districts where students most need access to the tech, because parents are least likely to make it available in the home, deploying a desirable item like a laptop to a child is also the most likely to be a security risk—to both the child and the laptop.

In these days of techno-convergence, a quality PDA can provide enterprise capabilities, Internet access, Bluetooth compatibility, and most of the other features sought after by education buyers, while still offering an inconspicuous profile. The problem is, unlike the case with any potential volume discounts for education buyers, just about no one can make a living specializing in PDA repairs alone. For this reason, a good quality case is as important as a quality handheld computer.

E&B Company’s cases are about as good as I’ve used myself—in fact, my Palm is sitting in a Slipper T3 now. Several versions are available, specifically designed for a variety of popular models: Palms, iPaqs, Handspring Visors, etc. The leather wallet cases feature flip-tops with magnetic closures, and access points for cradles and power switches, enabling the user to charge and sync the units while cased. Belt clips are also available for transport case. A small weakness is the lack of substantial space to hold multiple peripherals and accessories, but I’ve really had no problem keeping the few I use in place.

For students, E&B offers a good basic model, the Flipper. These neoprene-based, sport/utility cases are side opening and highly durable. Equipped with a belt clip as a standard feature, they provide more space for accessories, and a substantially lower price point, even prior to any potential volume discounts for education procurement. These products have a bit more padding, and, while perhaps not be designed for ruggedized environments, they should be at least a bit more protective than most comparably priced solutions.

The best endorsement I can give to these well-designed products is that I wouldn’t want to do without mine. For those interested in understanding why, much more information, as well as online ordering, can be found at the company’s site, www.ecases.com.

PRODUCT REVIEW:

Radtech’s ScreensavRz

By MITCHELL LEVINE

Today’s mobile computers pack a lot of power and multimedia performance into their compact chassis. But there’s a price to pay for those streamlined form factors. Compressing all of these components into a miniatureized scale, while still providing benchmarks on a par with their desktop colleagues, usually involves a trade-off in terms of heat production, an often-deadly by-product. Similarly, to produce graphics with high resolution and color depth, active-matrix screens must be equally sensitive instruments.

As is the case with CPUs as well, the natural enemies of a laptop screen are dust, dirt, and what is often referred to as “gunk.” Even light exposure to these adversaries can quickly snap an LCD into a steep downward spiral over reasonably short periods of time. Keeping a screen free from environmental toxins can be a formidable task, and a potentially dangerous one for the screen. According to research, typical cleaning mishaps; i.e., using Windex and other cleaning solutions for acrylics. The synthetic cloths are not only durable, they’re specifically designed not to leave oily residues, allowing the user to polish virtually every surface on a typical notebook. The company manufactures variations on the item for Power Macs, iBooks, iMacs, and even iPods. Although the cost will vary according to the particular model you’re looking to protect, the laptop version averages out at about $15 (educational pricing is available for accredited institutions)—a sum far below what a year of spray ‘n’ wipe solutions can set you back at $900 to $1000—if the injured party’s insurance won’t cover cleaning mishaps; i.e., using Windex and other cleaning solutions for acrylics.

Radtech’s ScreensavRz accessory defines a new class of problem-solvers by simply and cost-effectively preventing the problem from developing in the first place. A light, ultra-sheer microfiber polishing cloth that fits over the keyboards of most popular brands of laptops, ScreensavRz protects the display surface by shielding the screen from oils, dirt and abrasion when closed. It even repairs certain types of pre-existing damage: dappen the ScreensavRz with water, and most light scuffing you may have can actually be wiped away.

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PRODUCT REVIEW: Innovative's LCD Arms
By MITCHELL LEVINE

The benefits of flat panel screens are subtle, but they're there. One of the biggest obstacles to technology deployment, especially in the schools that need it most, is space. Cathodites take up desk room that's in short supply in most education environments in New York. Due to better use of resolution, they're also easier to read.

Those excellent qualities, however, don't necessarily mean that they're easy to use, per se: they're large and flat. With the many mandates for accessibility created by the provisions of the No Child Left Behind, schools must be prepared to offer the differently abled exactly the same opportunities for technoliteracy mainstream students receive. Of course, the advantages of flat-screen displays definitely complement these efforts, but the disadvantages are an equal liability to them. Is it possible to have all the benefits without the headaches while trying to deploy Apple's flat-panel monitors?

Thanks to Innovative Office Products LCD Arms accessory, the answer is now a resounding "yes." The product is a shock-mounted swivel arm for 20" and 23" Apple Cinema Display (a separate product also services 17" monitors) that suspends screens 18 vertical inches, with a full 27° of complete extension.

The arm also routes all cables within its housing, keeping clutter to a minimum. While sturdily holding screens and maintaining lateral stability, our review model—which I was able to set up in only 15 minutes, probably an office record—allowed for over two hundred degrees of display rotation, exceeding the manufacturers stated claims. Once in place, the monitor can easily be adjusted with a single hand, and pulled in and out of position in much the same way.

The ergonomic plusses of this configuration are easy to see, and, considering the fact that our current generation of students are the very first to actually grow up with extensive in-class computer usage, these features should be carefully evaluated: no one really knows exactly what the true long-term effects of sustained use of technology by young people will be years from now. Taking extra care to attempt to ensure that our current best estimates of what is kinesthetically reliable should be a priority for technology buyers, and this product may provide that in addition to its advantages for those with special needs.

The company's website, www.lcdarms.com, not only details a wide variety of products designed for different manufacturers displays', but, on their education-specific page, offer a number of units pre-configured for various types of school users; librarians, public spaces, info kiosks, etc. #

For more information, as well as on-line ordering, log on to the above URL or call the company toll-free at (800) 524-2744.

PRODUCT REVIEW: SHARP ACTIUS RD20
By MITCHELL LEVINE

We've reviewed an awful lot of laptops in this section over the last few years; unsurprising, as it's common knowledge that our school systems are gearing up to make a full deployment of them in the near future. But, despite all of the different manufacturers and models we've had the distinguished fortune to evaluate, it's been the case that I've never seen one before that could be called a true "desktop replacement." Of course, I do almost all of my own computing on a laptop, but like most mobile computer users, I've just acclimated myself to occupying a lower position of features and performance availability. I don't search for the largest Mersene primes, or help power SETI, I do almost all of my own graphics systems. In fact, it's very hard to believe that a 3D-enhanced graphics chip like NVIDIA's Geoforce 4 would actually be included as a system component—especially considering both the high prominence of graphics-intensive tutorial software these days, and the sluggish action of most typical notebook graphics systems. In fact, it's very hard to believe.

The only criticism I've been able to come up with is that it doesn't have the 3D perspective gaveworthy their top-of-the-line model, the RD3D, comes equipped with—but as the world has always persisted with 2D flatscreen monitors in the past, I suspect it will continue to spin round in the future regardless. Actually, my only real complaint, come to think of it, is that I don't have more space to describe its features! Perhaps the reader will be best served by exploring them personally, which you can do, with Education Update’s highest recommendation, at www.sharpsystems.com.

PRODUCT REVIEW: PHONICS TUTOR FREQUENT WORDS
By MITCHELL LEVINE

One thing no one in education seems to agree on is reading methodology. A confusing proliferation of approaches have been suggested with no end in sight. A point of general agreement, it seems to me, is that the officially sanctioned paradigm, whole-language learning, is not effective. Just about everything else conceivable has been suggested, usually with a coterie of devotees, all of whom seem to believe that their way is "best by test."

Ironically, the method that research upholds as the most empirically validated is also the most demanding: phonics-based learning. Tedious for kids, exceedingly difficult for both amateurs and professionals, the phonics method has been a pedagogical stepchild: respected, but definitely disliked. Because of this status, it’s a pleasure to see that an old favorite of Education Update, 4:20 Communication’s PhonicsTutor has finally released a new addition to its well-received phonics-based reading software, PhonicsTutor Frequent Words edition.

For those who’ve unforgivably forgotten our review of the parent suite in 2001, PhonicsTutor provides both a tutorial and assessment system intended for both non-readers and remedial readers. Briefly, the program teaches the student to recognize words in print by breaking them down to the phonemic level through a series of eight modes, from word-sounding to ultimate recognition and spelling. The software, however, is not "drill and kill," or a mechanical tutorial: it’s specifically designed to enable interaction between the learner and a teacher. This interactive process not only stimulates the learning relationship and discourages the use of the product as "busywork," but additionally ensures that it will be appropriate for learners of all ages and levels of mastery.

What’s specifically new in the latest build of the product is that, in response to numerous customer requests, the developer has standardized the curricula by using as its basis the most statistically frequent word in the English language. According to the manufacturer, “Six different frequent word lists, such as the Ayres list, were examined and entered into our database... By knowing how to read and spell these words, a student will have mastered 96% of all words used in telephone conversations and 76% of all words in print.”

Compared to a number of other approaches I’ve encountered, the latest version of PhonicsTutor seems like an ideal implementation of this concept: One thing should be mentioned though: unlike some enterprise software for education, assessment is not done electronically—the software’s focus is on teaching. The package provides a student workbook with traditional pencil and paper tests to inventory student progress. While this might seem like an unnecessary added burden, it not only keeps the size of the program down, it also reinforces graphic skills that are complementary to those that the tutorial is designed to develop.

Very reasonably priced for the market, and available for both institutions and individual learners and families, anyone with a need to augment reading skill for one or more learners should definitely get more information at the company’s site at www.phonictutor.com.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL OUR READERS!

from the staff at
EDUCATION UPDATE
Magda’s Daughter: A Hidden Child’s Journey Home by Evi Blaikie

There are as many stories of the Holocaust as there are survivors. In recent years, there has been increasing recognition that such stories need to embrace the wider spectrum of those who emerged alive from that dark period in world history, to include not only those who endured the labor and death camps, but also those who spent the war in hiding.

Evi Blaikie’s memoir, Magda’s Daughter, is one of those accounts. Spared the devastation of life in the concentration camps, Evi Blaikie’s childhood was nonetheless profoundly affected by the dislocations of World War II, disruptions whose echoes lingered long into her adulthood. Her parents were fairly assimilated Hungarian Jews who had immigrated to Paris. Born as Evelyne Juliette Weisz in Paris barely a year before World War II started, her mother soon sent her to Hungary with an aunt when Evi was a toddler. As Bella Brodzki writes in her introduction to Evi’s memoir, “Because she didn’t know life before the war, had no conscious understanding of what constituted ‘normal’ existence...she lacked the capacity for envisioning a different world, another future...Blaiik’s memoir makes a strong case for the necessity of bringing to light what has been concealed in the discourse of the Holocaust until a relatively short time ago: the lost perspectives and experiences of those who survived....Evi came of age as a child survivor, a Hidden Child— but she didn’t know it.”

She writes, “After the war, who had time to care about our confusion, our feelings of abandonment, alienation, fear of the future, the unknown, our nightmares of the horrors remembered? Once we were fed, we were going to care about our confusion, our feelings of uncertainty of what constituted ‘normal’ existence...”

Evi’s childhood meant that she struggled to be a good mother to her own children. “I cuddled my children, fed and clothed them, and watched anxiously if the mercury climbed in the thermometer, indicating a fever. But I didn’t know how to play with them or how to talk to them. I didn’t remember being a child, neither did I know how that felt. I always thought of them as little adults.”

There is much here that would add to anyone’s understanding of the complexity of the Holocaust, and its ramifications today. Ignore the sloppy copy-editing (a “Jean” becomes “Jean” throughout), or the: “leecher,” she writes, “leach,” aggravating it though it can be. Focus on the elements of Evi’s story, her struggle to make sense of what was so senseless, and the lessons it carries about what children need.

Opening Windows of Science at the Harlem Society

By JOCELYN K. EGYES

Every morning over the summer 16-year-old Sobella Quezada woke up at 7 AM at her home in the South Bronx to get ready for work. After a 40 minute subway commute Quezada arrived at a molecular cytology care facility in Manhattan where she researched apoptosis and rapid multiplication of a specific cell population. Her day technically ended at 5 PM but there were many days she was there longer.

“I could’ve worked in McDonald’s, but I decided not to settle for mediocre,” said Quezada. “I was never told to give up or not to participate in the program. It was just the opposite,” she said. Quezada said she was happy to learn from the program.

A ceremony at Rockefeller University recognized students and mentors for their work and participation in the program. Dr. Sat Bhattacharya said many people thought she wasn’t good enough to participate in the program. “I decided not to settle for mediocre,” said Quezada. “I was never told to give up or not to participate in the program. It was just the opposite,” she said. Quezada said she was happy to learn from the program.

“Dream is to be a doctor”

The student from Manhattan said: “I’m an enormous opportunity for the students. If they want to do medicine, they don’t have to settle for mediocre.”

Upcoming Events at Logos:

- Wednesday, January 7th, 2004 at 7 P.M., KTYV Reading Group will discuss The Red Tent by Arisa Diamant.
- Children’s story time with Denise Dumaine is every Monday at 3 P.M.
- Logos Bookstore’s Recommendations

Loxos also has Glad Tidings, a rollicking rendition of yuletide classics rendered on banjo, fiddle, mandolin, guitar, bass, percussion, Irish whistle complete with singing. Both are great gift ideas.

Logos has Christmas cards, Gregorian chant, gift tags, gift enclosure cards, ornaments, Christmas books and many other gift items.

For Chanukah, Logos has dreidels, books, stickers and cards, among other gift items. All books on the shelves are 10% off. Those people who have Block Party Cards, books are 20% off and other items are 10% off. Those people who do not have those cards can come to Logos to pick them up. There on the front desk is a local merchant map which shows where all the participating merchants are. Buy your books, holiday cards, and other items at Logos, then go enjoy free wine tastings, pickel tastings, deluxe coffee and tea packages and many other fine deals at other stores!!

For more information call Logos at (212) 571-7292 or go online to LogosBookstore.com

Happy Holidays, friends! Happy New Year, 2004! - S. S., 6 Lexington Avenue subway to 86th St., M68 Bus (86th St.), M79 Bus (79th St.), M31 Bus (York Ave.), M15 Bus (1st & 2nd Aves.)
The Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of New York-Presbyterian, the only children’s hospital in Manhattan and one of the largest in the country, opened its doors recently. One of the most technologically advanced children’s hospitals in the world, the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of New York-Presbyterian is a family-centered, high-tech facility that offers world-class care and unparalleled resources in an innovative physical environment devoted exclusively to children.

Building on NewYork-Presbyterian’s record of breakthroughs in pediatric care, this ten-story, 265,000-square-foot hospital facility positions The Children’s Hospital of NewYork-Presbyterian to expand on its leadership position in pediatric clinical care, research and the training of future physicians. The Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital, an affiliate of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, provides the highest-level care in every area of pediatrics and is world-renowned for advancements in neonatal and critical care, cardiology, oncology and neurology.

The new $120-million building is being funded entirely through philanthropy, including personal contributions of $55 million by more than 600 employees of Morgan Stanley. John Mack, Chairman of the Board of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, said, “For over 100 years, children have come through our doors to get the finest pediatric care available. Through the outstanding generosity of the many people involved, NewYork-Presbyterian will have a new state-of-the-art facility to carry on its tradition of providing the best care to those who need it most for decades to come.”

In addition to Morgan Stanley, other members of the New York City financial community, including JP Morgan Chase and a consortium of donors from Goldman Sachs, made significant contributions to the new hospital. The medical staff and employees of the Children’s Hospital also made important contributions.

“The relationship between the Children’s Hospital and Morgan Stanley reflects our commitment to the local community where our employees live and work,” said Morgan Stanley President and Chief Operating Officer Robert Scott. “The opening of the new hospital means more than our name on a building. It represents a deep and personal relationship that will last into the future.”

A key element in the design of patient areas revolves around the understanding of “family-centered care.” When a child is ill, the entire family must be a part of the treatment and healing process. The philosophy of family-centered care also emphasizes the importance of teamwork in the treatment of children, and the involvement of multidisciplinary groups of physicians and medical professionals to oversee a child’s care from diagnosis forward.

Dr. Herbert Parades, President and CEO, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (the parent of the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of NewYork-Presbyterian), said, “With the opening of the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of NewYork-Presbyterian, we now have the physical plant to match the expert clinical care and cutting-edge research that we do here every day. We know that when a child is sick, the entire family hurts. The stress of having a child who needs hospitalization is unimaginable. Recognizing this, our goal is to keep the physical and emotional needs of the child and his or her family at the heart of everything that we do. This new facility makes it possible.”

The Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital houses inpatient, ambulatory and diagnostic services, including the largest neonatal intensive care unit and pediatric intensive care unit in the tri-state area. In addition to having floors dedicated to providing intensive care for children at every age, from the tiniest newborns through adolescents, there are individual floors dedicated to specialized services such as cardiology, neurology, oncology and surgery. The Hospital has 100 medical/surgical beds, 41 pediatric intensive care beds (including 14 cardiac intensive care beds), and 50 neonatal intensive care beds. Most of the patient rooms are single occupancy, measuring 382 square feet, with facilities for parents to stay overnight with their child, computer connections for the child and family, and lounge areas that respect the family privacy and an opportunity for quiet contemplation.

The design of the neonatal intensive care unit, where the average length of stay is 17 days, reflects the hospital’s attention to the needs of families during long-term stays. The new unit provides parent amenities and enhanced privacy at every bedside, surgical capabilities that minimize the need to transport babies out of the unit, and a liaison service to greet and assist the families of new patients. In the pediatric intensive care unit there is a “safe space” from medical procedures where children are taught coping mechanisms, such as talk therapy and relaxation. Inpatient units also feature a meditation room, a kitchen, a laundry room and a classroom staffed by New York City public school teachers.

The new Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of NewYork-Presbyterian will mean for children, Dr. John M. Driscoll, Jr., Pediatric-In-Chief at Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital, said, “We know we can’t duplicate the comforts of home for our patients. We know that they’ll miss going to school with their friends, playing outside and being a child. This new facility enables us to come as close as we can to making sure that each patient who comes through our doors receives the highest quality care in an environment that still allows them to be children.”

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The New York Times • DECEMBER 2003
FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS & STUDENTS

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The French Academy of Sciences selected Dr. David Sabatini as the recipient of its highest honor for 2003, the Grande Medaille D’Or (the Grand Gold Medal), in recognition of his scientific contributions to Cell Biology. Previous recipients of the Medal include many illustrious scientists, such as Louis Pasteur, Pierre and Marie Curie, Gustave Eiffel, and Henri Poincare.

The Grande Medaille was presented to Dr. Sabatini at a formal ceremony held in Paris under the Grand Coupole of the Institut de France. The Medal is given every year to a French or foreign scientist working in one of the many disciplines represented in the Academy, which include the mathematical, physical, chemical, natural, biological and biomedical sciences. The award recognizes a decisive contribution to science in one of these areas and emphasizes the originality of the discoveries, their international impact, and the awardee’s role in creating a true school of research. The rules of the Academy stipulate that the work of the recipient of the medal must have been carried out in an important area of fundamental research, and must have resulted in new insights and a greater understanding of the discipline in which the award was given.

The Academy cited Dr. Sabatini’s work as having revolutionized research in Cell Biology through his innovations in electron microscopy and through seminal biochemical studies on the sorting mechanisms that generate the organizational complexity of the cell. In the early 1960’s Dr. Sabatini introduced glutaraldehyde as a reagent that preserves the fine molecular architecture of the cell, as well as many of its enzymatic activities. His methods led to the discovery of new structures within the cell, notably microtubules and other components of the cell cytoskeleton. They also helped to elucidate the functional role of subcellular organelles, opening many new avenues of research in cell biology.

Proteins are the most important functional components of cells and much of Dr. Sabatini’s research dealt with the mechanisms and pathways, which newly synthesized protein, distributes molecules to their sites of function within the cell. His work on the synthesis of proteins by ribosomes attached to the membranes of the organelle known as the “Endoplasmic Reticulum” set the foundations for the “Signal Hypothesis”, which he formulated in 1971 together with his then associate, Gunter Blobel, the Rockefeller University scientist, who, in 1999, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine. This hypothesis explains how secretory proteins, such as insulin and growth hormone, synthesized in the deep interior of glandular cells, begin their journey toward the blood stream. It also applies to many nonsecretory proteins that share their subcellular site of synthesis with secretory proteins but are subsequently sorted to various destinations within the cell. This is the case for many important receptors that remain anchored at the cell surface, where they recognize hormones and growth factors that activate cellular response pathways.

Defects in protein sorting and transport underlie many diseases, such as cystic fibrosis, Alzheimer’s, and certain forms of hypercholesterolemia that lead to atherosclerosis. Sabatini has also carried out pioneering research using cultured epithelial cells of kidney origin, which provided great insights into the protein trafficking mechanisms that are responsible for the generation and maintenance of the polarized architecture of epithelial cells. Cells of this type, such as those that line the digestive tract and cavities within various organs, form layers that serve to separate different physiological compartments and control transport of molecules between them. A major achievement of his laboratory was the landmark discovery that different types of enveloped viruses, a class of viruses that includes influenza, rabies and HIV, bud from the cellular membrane of epithelial cells with characteristic polarity, i.e. the viral particles are released either from the apical surface of the cell, which faces an external space that communicates with the environment, or the basolateral one, which confronts the internal milieu of the body and is accessible to the bloodstream. These findings explain the routes by which viral infections spread within the organism and throughout the population. They also served as a foundation for a continuing stream of discoveries over the last thirty years, throughout the world, that illuminate how the complex organization of the cell is achieved.

Dr. Sabatini is a native of Argentina, and he received his medical degree in that country from the University of Litoral in Rosario in 1954 and his Ph.D. from The Rockefeller University in 1966 where he remained on the faculty until 1972, when he became Professor and Chairman of the Department of Cell Biology at the NYU School of Medicine.

AAAS Urges United Nations to Endorse Cloning for Research Purposes

AAAS, the world’s largest general science society, urged the United Nations to support embryonic cloning for research or “therapeutic” purposes, but ban all efforts to use cloning for human reproduction. “AAAS, along with most of the world’s mainstream scientists, endorses a legally enforceable ban on any efforts to clone a human being,” said Alan I. Leshner, chief executive officer of AAAS and executive publisher of its journal, Science. “Our fear of reproductive cloning is understandable and appropriate. But, we must not allow those concerns to block biomedical advances that may someday be achieved through other kinds of research that involve cloned cells. AAAS urges the United Nations to support research cloning methods intended to alleviate human suffering caused by injuries and disease.”

What is research cloning, and how is it different from reproductive cloning? Both involve a technique called nuclear transplantation—replacing the nucleus of a donor’s egg with the DNA from an adult cell. Under certain conditions, the resulting entity will begin developing like a fertilized egg. In reproductive cloning, the entity is implanted into a uterus, where it has the potential to develop into a full organism; a clone of the donor of the adult cell. In research cloning, the entity is not implanted in a uterus. Instead, after several days, researchers harvest embryonic stem cells, which theoretically can develop into any type of cell and, according to many researchers, may someday be used to treat neurodegenerative diseases or other conditions.

Founded in 1848, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has worked to advance science for human well-being through its projects, programs and publications in the areas of science policy, science education and international scientific cooperation.
Resource & Reference Guide

BOOKS

Bank Street Bookstore, 112th St. & Bway; (212) 678-1650

Exceptional selection of books for children, teachers and parents. Knowledgeable staff. Free monthly new books to the Open Mon.-Thurs. 10-8 PM, Fri & Sat 10-6 PM, Sun 12-5 PM.

Logos Books, 1575 York Ave., (84th Street), (212) 517-7292

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Aha! Process, Inc. - Eye-Opening Learning

Visit www.aha-process.com for Hidden Rules of Class at Work, and all of Dr. Baby Payne’s books, workshops and videos surrounding the issues of poverty, raising students achievement and building intellectual capital (800)442-9454.

High Marks in Chemistry; 1-877-600-7466

Aha! Process, Inc. - Eye-Opening Learning

Anklang, Chandra Buana, Thursday, December 11, 12 13 and 14, Performing Arts Center, Dec. 11, 12, 13 at 8 p.m., Dec. 14 at 2:00, Free

Works will be performed by students in the Sarah Lawrence College Dance Program. Reservations are required. For more information and to place reservations, please call (914) 995-2433.

Concert “Guitars and Steel Drums” The Cygnum Ensemble in Concert Wednesday, December 17 Reisinger Concert Hall, 8 p.m. $10/58

This program features contemporary music from the Sarah Lawrence College ensemble in residence. For more information, please call (914) 995-2411.

Continuing Education

JASA: Jewish Association For Services For The Aged, 132 West 31st Street, 15th Floor; NYC, (912) 572-3004 or call catalog and information about courses.

DANCE PROGRAMS

New Dance Group Arts Center 254 West 47th St., NY 10036, (212) 719-2733; www.ndg.org

Musical Theater Program for kids/young adults. Dance classes in all disciplines. Teaching/rehearsal space available. Located between Broadway and 8th Avenue.

Camps

Sol Goldman YM-YWHA of the Educational Alliance, 344 E. 14th Street, New York, N.Y. (212) 729-0800

The New Town Day Camp, for children ages 2.9-6.0 years, is located at the Sol Goldman Y of The Educational Alliance, 344 E. 14th Street. The camp provides outdoor activities including rooftop playground and sprinkler time, and indoor fun with music, arts & crafts and drama. Field trips to The Aquanym, CP Zoo, and other interesting places play.

Colleges

December events at Sarah Lawrence College

Concert

Traditional Music of Bali, Featuring Gamelan Andalan, Chandra Buana, Thursday, December 11, Reisinger Concert Hall, 8 p.m. $10/58

Program to be announced. Directed by Barbara Bieriny and I Synmon Sarthyanto. For more information, please call (914) 395-2411.

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Concert

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Lyceum Kennedy of New York, 225 East 43rd Street, New York, NY, 10017; Tel: 212-661-1877; Fax: 212-681-1922, adn@lyceumkennedy.com, www.lyceumkennedy.com

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Schools

www.SchoolProfessionals.com, info@schoolprofessionals.com, (212) 916-0825

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Special Education

The Add Resource Center, In New York City, (646) 209-400 or Westchester/CT (914) 763-5648, addr@mail.com

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Stone Mountain School, www.stonemountainschool.org, (703) 815-6599

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The Smith School, (212) 679-6354

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The Sterling School, (718) 625-3502

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Technology

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