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When it comes to services, productivity is even more difficult to measure. This is certainly true in education, where the input in the productivity ratio may be thought of as the cost per pupil, and the output, the quality of the education the students receive. While the input here is measurable, how is the output to be determined? A quality education consists of a complex combination of quantifiable and non-quantifiable factors. Academic achievement might be measured by performance on standardized tests. (Some people question this.) But, how is creativity, intellectual curiosity or emotional development to be assessed? How are language skills to be evaluated, particularly for students for whom English is a second language? What weight should be put on each factor? How are the differing ability, skills and backgrounds students bring to their school system. While it is possible that as a result of recent court rulings additional funding may be available to the schools, it is imperative that the schools make the best use of whatever funds are provided. They owe this to the taxpayers and the students. Productivity of the school system may be difficult to measure, but, like pornography, we know it when we see it. At an annual cost of approximately $11,000 per student (input), and with the quality of education so many students seem to come away with (output), it seems to us that the observer that the productivity of NYC’s public schools is abnormally low.

What can be done to improve the productivity of the public schools? This is a challenge that the mayor, chancellor, and educators face. The current contract negotiation stalemate is very much a result of the administration’s desire to make changes which they feel would improve productivity, but which the union sees as coming at unacceptable costs to member job protection, working conditions and prerogatives.

I shall be offering my suggestions on how to improve educational productivity in follow-up articles during the coming months. Meanwhile, I invite you, our readers, to submit your ideas and comments. Perhaps together we can help raise the productivity of our schools to an acceptable level.

Response to So You Want to be a Biology Major?

To the Editor: I am so glad to see an article like this. It makes the field of biology or any science broader than just going on to medical school. I majored in biology in college. I was not in the pre-med program therefore I did not have to take certain courses. I loved the subject even as I was preparing to teach elementary school. My path took me into early childhood education where I have been able to bring my love for science into my classroom and help many youngsters see that they are scientists every time they want to know more about the world around them. I have been able to provide the hands on experiences at various levels of intellect and readiness. Hopefully because of a spark early on, some of these children will become future research biologists, doctors, paleontologists and teachers. Majoring in the biological sciences is thrilling and I recommend it highly.

Response to Chancellor Klein Promises to Listen to Public as He Implements Systemic Change

To the Editor: I think that Chancellor Klein likes to hear self talk. I work in the NYC public school system and I have never seen things go south so quickly. There seems to be no one in charge. Despite the retirements, it is important that professionals could go and listen to lecturers and then come back to the schools to have more interaction and the negative results of no intervention. As a professional (adult and child) therapist, I can attest to the positive results of early intervention. This article is very informative for teens with depression. I am struggling with it and I know how it feels. When I read your article, I was amazed at how the things you wrote came so close to what I was feeling. There should be more awareness.

Response to More Than Moody: Depression in Teens

To the Editor: This article is very informative for teens with depression. I am struggling with it and I know how it feels. When I read your article, I was amazed at how the things you wrote came so close to what I was feeling. There should be more awareness.

Sarah Wells, New Boston, MI

LETTERS
New Journal of Education Published by CCNY

By ADAM SUGERMAN

The New Educator: A Journal of Educator Recruitment, Development, and Support is a quarterly peer-reviewed journal soon to be published by the City College of New York School of Education. This is the first such journal to be published by a CUNY school of education. It will serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas on issues pertaining to the recruitment, development, induction, support, and retention of educators committed to service in public schools. The preview issue will be released in Spring 2004 with the first volume debuting in 2005.

The idea for The New Educator was seeded almost two years ago by The City College School of Education’s Dean, Alfred S. Posamentier. The concept driving this journal grew as a response to the tremendous pressures being experienced by cities and school districts across the country not only to fill an increasing number of teacher and administrator vacancies, but also to do so with well-qualified candidates and to ensure that these candidates stay. The New Educator, they conjectured, could assist schools of education and school systems in communicating about the challenges of building and retaining large corps of qualified educators. City College seemed to be a particularly appropriate sponsoring institution for this publication as the work of the College’s School of Education is focused primarily on educating educators in the largest public urban school district in the nation.

Subsequently Dean Posamentier and the journal’s editor, Professor Beverly Falk, wrote a proposal that secured the international publisher Taylor and Francis to undertake this project. They then recruited a distinguished panel of advisors, including Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University, Mary Diez of Alverno College, Pedro Noguera of New York University, Ted Sizer of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Thomas Sobel of Teachers College, Columbia University, and Arthur Wise of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and others. An Editorial Board of City College School of Education faculty was established to launch the project. Work is currently in progress for the first volume, which will focus on such issues as the challenges of preparing educators for the 21st century, lessons from effective teacher education programs, the first years of teaching, and educating educators for diverse settings.

The New Educator will feature a wide range of formats: research, essays, commentaries, reports, program descriptions, reflective narratives, interviews, and book or resource reviews. Issues will have a themed section but also include articles not related to the theme. A particular emphasis will be placed on work that links theory with practice, is useful and accessible to the field, is generated through practice, and reflects the needs and perspectives of the diverse communities served by educational institutions in this new century. It is hoped that educators involved in the preparation, recruitment, development, and support of educators in all areas of education, will use the journal as an avenue for the exchange of knowledge, theory, and ideas in their practice, and a means of advancing their work and their field.

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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 3–4 months before the performance. Disney invites 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. Built in 1903, 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’s Tony Award winning musical, The Lion King. The New Amsterdam Theater is the perfect venue for events ranging from 15 to 1,800 people. The theater and its two historic lounges, 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, discussions and activities. And, for those students who always have a question after most Wednesday matinees, members of the cast, orchestra or crew are on-hand 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, which, seating over 2,000, specializes in school groups customized for any budget. Finally, groups see on Gray Line New York bus charters, as special Disney promotional rates are available.

For more information or to book call 212-703-1040 or 1-888-439-9000, fax 212-703-1085 or email bvtgrouptix@disney.com. Visit or www.disneyonbway.com.

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Dr. Joyce Coppin

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

It’s a Friday afternoon, and Dr. Joyce R. Coppin, Chief Executive of the Division of Human Resources and the Center for Recruitment and Professional Development for the Department of Education, apologizes for being late (by only 10 minutes)—she was at a meeting, “having fun.” As the interview proceeds, it’s clear that “fun” for this top administrator who oversees recruiting, placement and training, including retention initiatives for over 200,000 full and part-time public school employees means both challenge and excitement. The position has grown over the years, both in numbers and programs. With close to 80,000 new teaching staff to integrate into the system, new licensing areas, especially in bi-lingual education, and structures to streamline policies and procedures, Dr. Coppin has her hands full implementing decisions and determining effective ways to market what she thinks of still, after all the years, as one of the most exciting professions in the world—teaching. She is aware of the differences between her own student days and 2004. When she grew up, all her friends either directly or indirectly went into education; today, she sighs, not one of the children from that generation has gone into teaching.

Joyce Coppin is eager to change attitudes and implement decisions aimed at ensuring that the Children’s Developmental Services (CDS) system, new licensing areas, especially in bi-lingual and special education. A fourth path, Dr. Coppin notes, is open to students who qualify under the State’s Transcription Evaluation of Education. She is identified by other chess masters from around the world, and playing in the Chess-in-the-Schools program. She was in an intensive training program to help her prepare for the world championships—practicing every day with an international chess master, reviewing strategies used by chess masters from around the world, and playing in marathon tournaments on the weekends.

Historically, chess has been a male dominated game and though more girls are playing chess at a young age, they tend to lose interest as they grow older. While many young champions in the U.S. and abroad are the product of intensive tutoring in chess and a family history of producing champions, Medina only began her formal training a few years ago through the Chess-in-the-Schools program. She is identified by other chess masters as a true child prodigy.

Medina traveled to Greece with Chess-in-the-Schools, an organization that provides free chess instruction to 38,000 economically disadvantaged children in 160 New York City public schools each year.

Elizabeth Sciabarra has been appointed Chief Executive of the newly created Office of Student Enrollment Planning and Operations. In her new role, Ms. Sciabarra will drive the Department of Education’s effort to connect the issues of student placement, zoning, and enrollment to the reforms being implemented to create a system of 1,200 great schools. The Office of Student Enrollment Planning and Operations will subsume the Office of Zoning and Student Placement, which is also responsible for high school admissions.

“Liz Sciabarra’s creativity and experience, particularly with high schools, makes her the perfect person to attack head on the overcrowding which is such a challenge in our schools today,” Chancellor Joel Klein said.

“She is highly knowledgeable about issues of student placement, zoning, and enrollment. With her rise to this position, Ms. Sciabarra will be responsible for ensuring that we have a new ‘pathways’ for becoming a New York City public school teacher have certainly eased passage to certification and hiring. In addition to the traditional path whereby students major in teaching preparation programs and take the requisite exams, there is entry through the Teaching Fellows program (two exams to determine readiness, 200 hours of pre-service training, classroom observation and enrollment in a registered alternative program). Then, too, the Department of Education welcomes international students, especially in the “shortage areas” of math, science, bi-lingual and special education. A fourth path, Dr. Coppin notes, is open to students who qualify under the State’s Transcription Evaluation of Education. She is identified by other chess masters from around the world, and playing in the Chess-in-the-Schools program. She was in an intensive training program to help her prepare for the world championships—practicing every day with an international chess master, reviewing strategies used by chess masters from around the world, and playing in marathon tournaments on the weekends.

First reforms address the overcrowding issues that affect instruction and student choice. Ms. Sciabarra will work closely with John Lee, currently Executive Director of the Office of Zoning and Student Placement.

Ms. Sciabarra began her career as an educator at Brooklyn Technical High School, where she taught English, served as the Coordinator of Student Affairs, and became Assistant Principal of Pupil Personnel Services. After 18 years at Brooklyn Tech, she became Principal of New Dorp High School in Staten Island, where she initiated many rigorous academic and student life programs. In 1999, Ms. Sciabarra left New Dorp to work in the Superintendent’s Office of Brooklyn and Staten Island High Schools, where she first served as the Special Assistant to the Superintendent for schools in need of improvement and those under registration review.

She later became Deputy Superintendent and focused on curriculum, instruction, professional development of teachers and principals, the redesign of challenged high schools, and community engagement. Ms. Sciabarra also was the Deputy Superintendent of High Schools, and later the Superintendent of Selective High Schools. Most recently, Ms. Sciabarra was Chief Executive of the Office of New School Development.

RANKED CHESS PLAYER ONLY 12 YEARS OLD

A 12-year-old girl and New York City public school student from the Bronx has accomplished the impossible—in just 18 months she has advanced from a complete unknown to become the 74th best woman chess player in the nation. Her accomplishment has made her one of only two girls in the U.S. and the only American female from New York older. While many young champions in the U.S. and abroad are the product of intensive tutoring in chess and a family history of producing champions, Medina only began her formal training a few years ago through the Chess-in-the-Schools program. She is identified by other chess masters as a true child prodigy.

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Virtual Enterprises Brings HS Entrepreneurs Closer to Reality

By MICHELLE ACCORSO

When you were sixteen did you know what a “break-even” point was? Yet on a recent afternoon, at the World Financial Center, high school kids were speaking with ease and confidence about all the aspects that go into creating a business, specifically their own. They may be virtual projects but the execution was very credible.

This was the sixth annual Virtual Enterprises Business Plan Competition Finals organized by the NYC Department of Education’s Iris Blanc, Director of Virtual Enterprises and sponsored by Deloitte and Touche’s Joseph Delaney, Chair of the Virtual Enterprises Advisory Board. A total of eight groups presented approximately ten-minute business proposals to a panel of judges who took turns asking two questions per group at the end of each presentation. From companies focusing on printing to flower arrangements, the students from eight schools in and around New York City presented their businesses through creative slide shows, speeches and role-playing.

Muriel Siebert, CEO and President of Muriel Siebert & Company, commented on the event, “I’m very proud to be here. Thank you to the Board of Education. Every student in high school should know about finance.” Siebert explained how people who can afford the least end up spending the most in the financial world. “When a student orders a pizza and puts it on his or her credit card to pay back later, they’re led to believe it’s the same as paying cash. What they don’t realize, however, is with interest rates they could be paying for that pizza for years. People must have tools to know how to use the money they are making.”

Siebert, the first woman superintendent of a bank, wrote the first business curriculum six years ago, which included such important information as knowing the difference between buying and leasing a car and what an apartment lease is.

Students from Clara Barton High School had a plan to distribute personal use products called Heavenly Products, named for Clara Barton, the angel of the battlefield. Students discussed capitalization, production, distribution, net profits and social responsibility. Most teams had multimedia presentations using computers and large video screens, displaying self-confidence and dressed in a smart, corporate way.

The winning team from Tottenville High School in Staten Island presented OVEA, an ad agency, as their creative business. The dramatic beginning showed a group of masked physicians in a smart, corporate way.

After the sheet was removed, the “worst ad ever” was on the table. One doctor fainted; others applied CPR and blood transfusions until the OVEA Ad Agency appeared on the table. The audience laughed.

Delaney stated to all the students, “No matter what field you choose, you will always succeed.”

Lesia Koropey, in the Community Affairs department at Mercedes-Benz USA, awarded OVEA with the Mercedes-Benz Technology Award, which was a brand new “fully-loaded” laptop so they could continue their business plans for the future.

Iris Blanc concluded, “the skills you’ve learned makes you all winners.” In the words of Nick Tommasino, Senior Partner, Deloitte and Touche, “Our students are our future. It’s wonderful to have this ceremony back here again after the World Trade Center Disaster.”

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MIT GIVES 10 HIGH SCHOOLS GRANTS FOR INVENTIONS

More than 180 students at 10 high schools across the country are getting the chance this school year to work on teams to create inventions that benefit their schools or communities. These students, and their teachers and mentors, are this year’s recipients of the prestigious Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams grants program.

“In a time of tight school budgets and a national emphasis on standardized tests, high schools are hard pressed to fund educational projects that go beyond the basics of math and science,” said Merton Flemings, director of the Lemelson-MIT Program, which sponsors the Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams grants initiative. “Our aim is to foster inventiveness in high school students and encourage them to think outside the confines of a standardized test.”

“We want to show students that invention in science, technology and engineering is a viable and exciting career path,” added Joshua Schulz, InvenTeams grants officer for the Lemelson-MIT Program. “We’re giving students hands-on invention experience and connecting them with mentors from fields related to their proposed projects.”

 Teams from public, private and vocational high schools across the country have been named this year’s InvenTeams. Their proposed inventions represent the fields of assistive robotics, environmental science, health and safety, and consumer products. This year’s grants recipients are:

- Agawam High School, Agawam, Mass.: Pathole prediction and prevention device; Arlington High School, Arlington, Va.: Automatic pedestrian crossing device; East High School, Anchorage, Alaska: Snow robot to monitor snow conditions and avalanche hazards; Germantown Academy, Fort Washington, Pa.: Braille-to-voice assistive device; Gulliver Preparatory School, Miami, Fla.: Inspection-friendly luggage; Linn-Mar High School, Marion, Iowa: Assistive robotic device for the disabled; Norfolk Technical Vocational Center, Norfolk, Va.: Ergonomic student back-pack; North Miami Beach Senior High School, North Miami Beach, Fla.: Bathroom assistive device for the elderly; Paso Robles High School, Paso Robles, Calif.: Remote sensing environmental (air quality) monitoring device; Perry Hall High School, Baltimore, Md.: Solar-powered water-testing device.

High school science, mathematics and technology teachers applied for the Lemelson-MIT InvenTeams grants last spring. In the fall, 25 finalists were asked to complete second-round applications honing their invention ideas. A panel of Massachusetts Institute of Technology faculty and alumni, professional inventors and engineers, and Lemelson-MIT Program staff then reviewed the applications and selected the grant recipients.

The 10 InvenTeams will spend the next seven months working on their inventions and completing working prototypes. Each month they will file updates via the InvenTeams Web site. Information on the Lemelson-MIT Program can be found at http://web.mit.edu/inveteam.

The Lemelson-MIT Program was founded in 1994 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology by Jerome H. Lemelson, one of the world’s most prolific inventors, and his wife, Dorothy. It is funded by The Lemelson Foundation, a private philanthropy committed to honoring the contributions of inventors, innovators and entrepreneurs and to inspiring ingenuity in others. More information on the Lemelson-MIT Program can be found at http://login.mit.edu/inveteam.
INTERNET CENSORSHIP: US v. AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

By MARTHA McCARTHY, Ph.D.

With the mind-boggling growth of the Internet, policy makers have become increasingly concerned about protecting children from viewing pornographic and other harmful materials via cyberspace. Since 1996, Congress has made several attempts to enact legislation to shield children from access to certain materials, but only the most recent law, the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), has received Supreme Court endorsement. The 2003 decision upholding CIPA, United States v. American Library Association, was closely watched by civil rights organizations and children’s advocacy groups.

CIPA differs from earlier measures that attempted to regulate web site operators and impose criminal sanctions for certain transmissions to minors. CIPA instead requires public libraries and school districts receiving federal technology funds to enact Internet safety policies that include filtering measures to protect children from access to obscene, pornographic, or other harmful images. Thus, CIPA focuses on the recipients, rather than on those sending the materials.

The challenge to CIPA asserted that the blocking software prevents library patrons from accessing some constitutionally protected speech and causes libraries to relinquish their First Amendment rights as a condition of receiving federal aid. Disagreeing, the Supreme Court held that Congress has wide latitude to attach reasonable conditions to the receipt of federal funds; refusal to fund an activity is not the same as imposing a criminal sanction on the activity. The Court concluded that CIPA does not prescribe a condition that would be unconstitutional if performed by libraries themselves, noting that a number of libraries were using filters prior to CIPA.

The Court further held that Internet access in public libraries does not convert the libraries into a public forum, because a library does not acquire a public forum, because a library does not acquire a criminal sanction on the activity. The Court concluded that CIPA does not prescribe a condition that would be unconstitutional if performed by libraries themselves, noting that a number of libraries were using filters prior to CIPA.

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From the Land of Honalee to P.S. 77: An Outpouring of Love

By JOANNE KONTOPIRakis

Ivy Sterling, principal of P.S. 77 in Brooklyn, was wearing a bright red jacket and shiny Christmas pin. A warm woman with a voice like honey, she took time to spread caring to students and uplift all that she met. “Hello. Did you have fun today?” she asked students leaving the gymnasium. Approaching a long hallway of posters, decorated boxes, and other vibrant displays, she said, “Nobody would believe all this was done by autistic kids.”

“This is our Hall of Fame,” Principal Sterling announced. “I have several sites in the school.” Gesturing towards a poster displaying motivational and inspirational thoughts, she added, “This year, I am using the book Full Steam Ahead for teachers and students.

“Earlier this year, we had a character education assembly. Part of the assembly included the program “Don’t Laugh At Me: Operation Respect.” We asked the teachers to work with us on the theme of respect.”

On view was a Respect Quilt, and posters, which bore themes such as: “I Can Set Goals,” “Learn To Say I’m Sorry,” and “Respect For Others Culture.”

At the annual Holiday Concert, Sterling sang “Love Changes Everything,” and you know that she firmly believes it.

On the auditorium’s stage stood a large display created jointly by the library teacher and students. “These teachers and students need support. If you believe all children can learn more—then this school is it,” stated Dr. Charlotte K. Frank, Senior Vice President of McGraw-Hill, the motivation behind the event.

“This has reached three to five thousand people,” Yarrow commented. “We have made almost 400 workshop appearances in the past five years to leaders of education. We have five state offices, mostly advocacy organizations, whose purpose is to create environments in schools whose environments are caring and safe.”

“This school (P.S. 77) approaches the needs of the whole child. You have to reach the hearts of kids. Kids need the arts to connect to issues of dialogue—to learn the tools of compassionate exchange.”

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Making Sure Our Public Schools Are Safe

By MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

Our public schools are for learning—and if some students don’t want to learn, that doesn’t give them the right to rob and intimidate the rest of the students. Over the last two years, we’ve driven serious crime down some 23%; this year, our schools and problem students that I presented in a speech recently.

This is what I mean by problem schools: some 15% of high schools and middle schools account for roughly half of all reported school crimes. And just as we have on the streets of New York, we are immediately implementing new discipline policies for the schools where crime and disorder are most serious. We’ll increase the number of school safety agents—and double the number of police officers—working in those schools. Teachers and parent volunteers will be expected to help maintain order in the hallways and cafeterias. And the Principals in these schools will be held accountable for improving safety and stopping disruptive behavior. They’ll get the help they need to turn their schools around. But if they don’t succeed, they’ll be asked to look for work elsewhere.

Next, as to problem students. There are those who commit petty offenses, those who are chronically disruptive, and those who commit serious crimes. And from now on, there will be an effective response to each level of offense. Low-level disruptive behavior will lead to in-school detention. In-school suspension will lead to in-school detention. For chronically disruptive students—those receiving or two or more suspensions in one year—will trigger an immediate suspension resulting in removal from school to new Off-Site Suspension Centers. Furthermore, there will be a new, zero-tolerance policy for students who commit the most serious crimes—those involving the possession of weapons or resulting in serious bodily injury. Those students will be immediately and permanently removed from their schools and placed in a “Second Opportunity School” for up to a year, after which an appropriate alternative placement will be made.

We’re also going to get the schools, the courts and other elements of the justice system to work together more closely. Probation officers will be assigned to “Impact Schools” to work with students on probation and under court supervision. Department of Education officials will also be assigned to every courthouse in the city, to make sure that judges and probation officers have the school records they need to make the right bail and sentencing decisions. In a nutshell, we’re increasing accountability, consistency and security in our schools. Because if we want better educational performance in the schools, discipline and decorum come first. And let me wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

January is National Mentoring Month: “Who Mentored You?”

By MATILDA RAFFA CUOMO & DR. JAY WINSTEN

This month marks the third annual National Mentoring Month, a national effort to recruit volunteer mentors for young people who are at risk of not achieving their full potential. Research has shown a mentor can greatly enhance a young person’s prospects for leading a healthy and productive life. The campaign’s theme is “Who mentored you? Thank them...and pass it on!”

The initiative is spearheaded by the Harvard Mentoring Project of the Harvard School of Public Health, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, and Mentoring USA. Celebrities participating in the effort include Tom Brokaw, Ray Charles, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Walter Cronkite, Kelsey Grammer, Quincy Jones, Senator John McCain, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Cal Ripken, Jr., Martin Sheen, Mike Wallace and Oprah Winfrey. In fact, it was Oprah Winfrey who said, “If there was someone who was a family member, teacher, coach, boss or neighbor—who encouraged you, showed you the ropes, and helped you become the person you are today? That person was a mentor to you. Oprah Winfrey cites a fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Duncan, who taught her that it was okay to be smart, which changed the way she perceived herself. Many young people do not get that kind of support.

Harvard’s web site, www.WhoMentoredYou. presents video clips and written essays contributed by celebrities from various fields, who share recollections about important mentors from their childhood and young adult years. The web site includes excerpts from the second edition of Matilda Raffa Cuomo’s well-received book, The Person Who Changed My Life: Prominent Americans Recall Their Mentors. The book features 77 contributors who have distinguished themselves in their fields, and their essays tell about the men and women who served as their mentors and their procedures for identifying a mentor or her own unique gifts and abilities, can be a gift that keeps the lights blazing in a child’s eyes and changes that child’s life forever.

The campaign’s theme is “Who mentored you? Thank them...and pass it on!”

We need everyone’s help to prepare all of our children for productive and fulfilling lives. We need everyone’s help to prepare all of our children for productive and fulfilling lives. We need everyone’s help to prepare all of our children for productive and fulfilling lives.

Stopping School Bullying and Harassment will Curb School Violence

By ASSEMBLYMAN STEVEN SANDERS

The most recent and shocking reports of school violence underscore the need to do something about the way our schools function today. The most recent and shocking reports of school violence underscore the need to do something about the way our schools function today. The most recent and shocking reports of school violence underscore the need to do something about the way our schools function today.

It is widely known that there are warning signs and precursors to violence. We have learned this from Columbine and other school tragedies across the nation. A school that does not seriously address bullying, harassment including all too often bias driven harassment becomes an unsafe, seething environment. A school that doesn’t deal aggressively with anti-social behaviors and aggressors will lead to later incidents, including assaults and headline making tragedies. We can stop that.

My bill, the Dignity for All Students Act, which has passed twice by an overwhelming majority in the Assembly, must be passed in 2004 by the State Senate. The legislation would prohibit discrimination or harassment of students, bullying, taunting, intimidation and all behaviors that create an environment that makes students feel unsafe and which distracts them from learning. Touch or school safety; end up complying with all the rules put out by the schools. They will trigger an immediate suspension resulting in removal from school to new Off-Site Suspension Centers. Furthermore, there will be a new, zero-tolerance policy for students who commit the most serious crimes—those involving the possession of weapons or resulting in serious bodily injury. Those students will be immediately and permanently removed from their schools and placed in a “Second Opportunity School” for up to a year, after which an appropriate alternative placement will be made.

New York State Education Law does not contain any explicit prohibition against harassment of any kind in prima, prejudice, discrimination or harassment education. While some New York localities have passed anti-discrimination and harassment policies for their schools, there is no comprehensive statewide protection from harassment in schools under New York State law.

My bill, the Dignity for All Students Act, which has passed twice by an overwhelming majority in the Assembly, must be passed in 2004 by the State Senate. The legislation would prohibit discrimination or harassment of students, bullying, taunting, intimidation and all behaviors that create an environment that makes students feel unsafe and which distracts them from learning. The bill, the Dignity for All Students Act, which has passed twice by an overwhelming majority in the Assembly, must be passed in 2004 by the State Senate. The legislation would prohibit discrimination or harassment of students, bullying, taunting, intimidation and all behaviors that create an environment that makes students feel unsafe and which distracts them from learning.
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leading universities. “We put undergraduates
inertia that he believes has dampened teaching
novice tempered by the knowledge of a seasoned
his trademark bowtie—displays all the zeal of a
young. Only just fifty-seven. By the standards of
Bard from 1975 to the present—Botstein still is
young. Only just fifty-seven. By the standards of
many university presidents, that’s hardly past ado-
lescence. But Botstein—eyes gleaming above
his trademark bowtie—displays all the zeal of a
novice tempered by the knowledge of a seasoned
maestro.

Botstein’s principle target is an institutional
inertia that he believes has dampened teaching and
intellectual ferment at many of the nation’s
leading universities. “We put undergraduates
through a set of requirements and paces for
no redeeming intellectual reason—certainly not
high standards—without a constructive result,”
explains Botstein. “There’s a tremendous reluct-
tance to look at the basic fundamental structures
of how curricula are put together.” For example,
he points out that one may find faculty at the
same university teaching politics out of depart-
ments of government, public policy, sociology,
history and law. “The irony” of this organization
based upon discipline rather than specialization
“is that each of these pretenders to the owner-

ship of the subject of politics has been trained
by a Ph.D. program someplace, that has a vested
interest in finding jobs for its graduates, and they
read only in the journals that their profession in
fact favors.” Botstein blasts this organizational
approach as “errant nonsense from the point
of view of an undergraduate.” According to
Botstein, “the undergraduate is motivated by
curiosity, by the questions he or she frames, and
by a ‘need to know’...and [the effective college]
needs to respond to that ‘need to know.’”

Unlike many of his administrative peers at
other institutions—whom he characterizes as
increasingly “bland and faceless”—Botstein does
not hold his punches when it comes to criticizing
the state of America’s elite universities. “What’s
happened in the United States,” he laments, “is
an enormous intellectual uniformity that is structur-
al. You have the same departments everywhere;
the graduate schools look more or less identical.
Very few universities have developed a strategic
point of view. At Columbia University, they have
a residue of something that existed during the
First World War. [The University of] Chicago has
the residues of something that took place in the
1930’s. And the balkanization of professional
schools and departments makes any really seri-
ous thought about undergraduate education very
hard.” That’s why he believes that free-stand-

ing liberal arts colleges, such as Bard College
with its 1400 resident undergraduate campus in
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, have such a
critical role to play in the future of higher learn-
ing. These small colleges are “not hampered
by the enormous and overwhelming investment
in the graduate research enterprise” that keeps
larger institutions from thinking innovatively.

Botstein describes the ideal institution of higher
learning as being highly flexible. He says it is
essential that colleges evolve to meet both the
interests of the students and the socio-political
realities of the outside world. “In the 1950’s,”
he explains, “in the wake of the Second World
War and the naissance of the Cold War and the
bilateral world in which there were a thick com-
munist iron curtain world and ourselves, the
issues of freedom, of democracy, were central....
Today, young people are worried about other
things. They worry about globalization; they
worry about the international interdependence
of the world. Now they worry about religion,
about religion and politics, a subject which was
a dead subject in the 1950’s.” Botstein’s vision
of a meaningful liberal arts education is one that
is responsive to such “global” changes. He cites
the recent explosion of interest in China as a case
in point. “China is clearly emerging as the most
important political and economic force in the
world,” he notes. “It behooves young Americans
to know something about it. Fifteen years ago,
institutions didn’t teach Chinese on a regular
basis. Now they do—as they should.” Botstein
willingly concedes that this new focus will come
with tradeoffs. “Maybe we don’t teach French
anymore,” he admits, “not because the French
have been unkind to us, but because French is
irrelevant. Not if you want to read Balzac or
Proust or Camus, of course, but in terms of the
continued on page 12
Leon Botstein continued from page 11

political reality of the present day.” He makes clear that he—unlike some critics of an older generation—does not view this shift as a decline in standards. “That’s a little bit of nonsense,” says Botstein with a decisive wave of the hand. “I’m not sure some of the older pundits who would decry the standards of today would pass a elementary school test on the history of China.”

Interdisciplinary approaches to the liberal arts are also at the forefront of the Botstein agenda. Drawing from his own background in musicol-

They were legendary figures in our childhoods.” Botstein’s own parents were Polish Jews who gained prominence in academic medicine. “In my parents household,” recalls Botstein, “the por-

I was a professional administrator. I never trained for this job. I operate upon my intuition and my experience.” He uses a military analogy: “I never went to West Point. I got drafted. I am a citizen soldier—not a profes-

On Gustav Mahler will make a passing reference about Nietzsche. Someone who wants to work hermetically sealed” in one discipline—yet this happens to graduate students all too frequently. “You know someone who does a dissertation on

I didn’t tell you anything more about Nietzsche. Someone who wants to work on Gustav Mahler will make a passing reference to a thing that Gustav Mahler read or to the intel-

The adequacy is whether the composer is Brahms or

Stravinsky or Shostakovich or Copeland. These composers were never detached from the world

Or they came with religious belief and ended up without religious belief and ended up born-again.

Being good at one thing means nothing without the teachers who took an inter-

I owe to many, many, many people....I would be

him with sincere sorrow, “for their potential teachers were David Landis and Howard Farberman. Botstein readily acknowledges: “I’m sort of a composite of a variety of debts that

He decries this sanitization of the academy as a serious threat to the educational mission of the liberal arts college and the university. “In reality,” he concludes, “intelligence is deviancy. Achievement intellectually and artistically is a form of deviancy. You can’t expect Albert Einstein to have been Albert Einstein, and also to have behaved as if he were Ozzie and Harriet, assuming that Ozzie and Harriet behaved all that well.”

He gained prominence in academic medicine. “In my parents household,” recalls Botstein, “the portrait of their teachers hung in their offices, and they were legendary figures in our childhoods.”

His parents urged him to follow in their foot-

He was an avid reader of Dewey and of American letters....It is very clear whom Debussy did and did not know among painters and writers. We know the contents of Beethoven’s library and Hayden’s as well.”

He offered the same argument with regard to

“Increasingly people who run these institutions are recruited for their blandness,” he says with sincere sorrow, “for their capacity to speak at length about nothing, and to sound absolutely harmless—the way we treat our politicians...They will offend no constituency.”

He turned the school’s finances around; later, he bankrupted Franconia College in New Hampshire. He served on the City’s Board of Education from 1969 to 1970, as special assistant to the president of New York City’s Board of Education from 1969 to 1970, a series of fortuities landed him at the helm of bankrupt Franconia College in New Hampshire. He turned the school’s finances around; later, he helped build Bard from a one-campus, 600-stu-

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PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER JANUARY 2004
Accreditation Agencies Promote Change at CCNY School of Ed

By GRETCHEN L. JOHNSON

The Education Department of the City College of New York has undergone a transformation in the last few years. In 1998 the department was placed under intensive review by the New York State Education Department as a result of poor performance (on May 7) of teacher education students on the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations (NYSTCE). Less than five years later the department (now the School of Education) is a profoundly different place with 90 percent of graduate and undergraduate students passing the certification examinations, new and revised courses of study, and many individual programs that have achieved national accreditation.

Embolic of this turnaround is a recent $2 million grant to the School of Education from Stanley Kaplan (testing entrepreneur and CCNY alumnus ’39) to teach assistant principals how to improve the performance of the math teachers that they supervise. This is the largest grant by a living donor in the history of the college (New York Times October 22, 2003 p. B9). To do the same training with high school assistant principals, the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation has awarded the School of Education an additional $3.66 million.

The faculty and staff could not have brought about such significant changes and improvements without pressure from the outside. In 1998, as a condition of maintaining accreditation, the state demanded that the Department of Education improve passing rates of students on the NYSTCE and established aggressive goals for raising scores.

The 30-plus faculty members and staff of the department of education began a major effort. Together they tightened admissions requirements, developed new admissions examinations that could provide results on the NYSTCE, evaluated courses to ensure coverage of material on the examinations, and offered free preparation sessions for students taking the teacher certification examinations. Faculty members continued to write and receive major grants for materials development and teacher training in mathematics, science, and English as a Second Language. They developed new programs in middle school education. The CCNY Center for School Development received a $1.3 million grant (now in its third year) to provide technology training for educators and faculty, upgrade the existing computer laboratory, and establish a new multimedia laboratory.

Competitive admissions is a strategy that may eventually lead to higher student scores but over the short-term it reduces enrollments and departments of education feel great pressure to maintain their enrollment numbers. In a resource-starved public university education program, pressure to keep up enrollments can lead to a virtual open admissions policy. Regardless of one’s position on open admissions, the state’s demands on City College greatly helped in the successful implementation of practices such as higher admissions standards and the establishment of examination preparation sessions for students. Together, these changes contributed to the rise in scores on the NYSTCE.

In 2000, to meet new state regulations for teacher education, all departments of education in New York State were required to re-register their programs. City College’s re-registered programs included changes based on experiences, new content courses in the sciences and mathematics, the integration of technology, and careful distinctions between programs designed for initial teacher certification and advanced teacher certification. A requirement by New York state that the number of courses taught by adjuncts stay below 50 percent helped the department to avoid having to hire new faculty lines in the School of Education. The new faculty in turn brought talent and energy to the department.

As a condition for maintaining state registration, New York State required that all schools of education achieve national accreditation by 2004. This required faculty, staff and administrators on a complex and time-consuming path toward national accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). This effort included the development of a comprehensive assessment system to document the growth and achievement of students and the quality of programs.

The New York City Teaching Fellows Program was another outside pressure on the School of Education. Started by the New York City Board of Education in 2000, this fellow program brought an influx of teacher education students into City College at the rate of about 500 a year. The program was designed to provide certified teachers for hard-to-staff New York City schools, most of which were under registration review (SURR schools). Teaching fellows tend to have strong academic backgrounds and writing skills and they bring these strengths to the City College classroom as well as to their public school classrooms. Increased enrollments due to the fellows program helped make the Park in his requests for resources such as faculty lines. But program resources were also stretched thin as faculty struggled to keep up. Student enrollments can rise quickly, hiring of new faculty is a necessarily slow and deliberate process.

State and national accreditation requirements can seem onerous to a School of Education but can also play a critical role in initiating and sustaining improvements. Because of national and state accreditation requirements, the college administration is more responsive to the needs of the School of Education and more aware of its achievements and contributions to the college as a whole. But School of Education faculty and staff cannot rest easy on the achievements so far. NCATE’s demands for the development of a unified conceptual framework or philosophy, for the collection of measurable data on graduates based on this framework, and for increased communication with local schools, have made faculty realize that putting in place a comprehensive assessment plan that measures the contribution of individual programs must become a part of the ongoing life of the School of Education.

Gretchen L. Johnson is an Associate Professor of Education at The City College of the City University of New York.

Baruch College—A Brief History

COMPiled By CHRIS ROWAN

Background: In 1846, Townsend Harris, the self-educated President of the Board of Education for New York City, proposed the establishment of a free institution for higher education. At that time, the city was confined to Manhattan and there were only two colleges in the city, Columbia University and The College of the City of New York. The electorate voted to set up a “Free Academy” in 1847. Two years later, it moved into a small building at the corner of 23rd street and Lexington Avenue—which was then a remote and largely rural area of the city. (Initially, 149 male students were enrolled.)

The Free Academy changed its name to the City College of New York in 1866.

A school within the College: In 1919, the Lexington Avenue location became home to the School of Business and Civic Administration and in September 1929, a new structure opened its doors on the original site of the Free Academy—it was called the “Commerce Building.”

The Business School becomes Baruch: In 1953, the School of Business was named after Bernard M. Baruch, financier, philanthropist and City College alumnus, (class of 1889). In 1966, it became a separate institution within the City University.

Firsts: In 1930, the first women enrolled in the School of Business, making the ancestor of Baruch College the first coeducational division of the City University. Over 15,000 students now attend Baruch, and over half of the undergraduates are women. In 1932 (on May 7) The Ticker, the Baruch College newspaper, appeared for the first time.

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Tel: 212-681-1877 Fax: 212-681-1022
Tues., Jan. 13, 2004, from 9:00-11:00 am
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Sat. Jan. 24, 2004, from 10:00am-12:00 pm

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4/15/2004 10AM-1PM Advocacy Skills for Parents

Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc. 115 E. 16th St. 5th Floor NY, NY 10003
1/22/2004 10AM-1PM Transition from Preschool to School Age Programs

3/22/2004 10AM-1PM Education Options for Children with Special Needs

4/30/2004 10AM-1PM Preschool Services for 3-5 Year Olds

Baruch has something on its campus few colleges ever will.

A library named best in the nation.

At Baruch, we’ve always held our William and Anita Newman Library in high regard: but we’re not the only ones. Recently it was honored with the distinguished ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award for the top college library in America. We owe this recognition to our library staff, which has found innovative ways to support the diversity of cultures, languages and perspectives of our students. With a library this prestigious, it’s no wonder our students graduate with a world-class education.
Racial Inequity in Special Education: Harvard University Findings

Racial inequities pervade special education in American schools. In 1998, approximately 1.5 million minority children were identified as having mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or a specific learning disability. Racial Inequity in Special Education, The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University which is a new book published by Harvard University Press, explores the inequities experienced by minority schoolchildren in special education and the potential life consequences of such inequities. These issues are examined as systemic and as evidence of persistent racial inequities in our system of public education.

The book also covers both the over-representation of minority children in special education, as well as the under-servicing of minority children with serious emotional and behavioral educational needs. The research explores the complexity of the issues, including the high degree of subjectivity that affects special education identification and placement, and examines the possibility of widespread civil rights violations. The book also includes a comprehensive review of attempts by legislators, child advocates, and civil and educational rights agencies to address these complex problems.

Findings Include:

- Nationally, high school dropouts are nearly three times as likely as white students to be labeled mentally retarded, and nearly twice as likely to be labeled emotionally disturbed. In many states the disparities are even greater.
- Once identified for special education services, most minority students are far more likely than white students to be removed from mainstream classrooms and to be isolated from their regular education peers.
- Poverty related factors might correlate with an increased risk for disability, but fail to explain the gross overrepresentation of blacks in certain disability categories.
- The failure to provide high quality support and services in a timely manner may contribute to the disproportionate numbers of black youth with disabilities who wind up unemployed or in prison.
- High stakes tests used to retain students in grade or deny diplomas, over reliance on IQ testing, inequitable state funding formulas, and restrictions on bilingual education enacted by legislation may exacerbate problems experienced by minority children with disabilities and contribute to overrepresentation.

Recommendations Include:

- The goal of racial equity in special education should parallel the goal of racial equity in general education—so essential to the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.”
- The current level of data collection and public reporting on race and disability should be expanded to include ethnicity, English language learner status, and gender, from every school and district, with special attention paid to the potentially negative impact of foreclosing bilingual educational opportunities.
- A moratorium on the use of high stakes tests for denying diplomas and retaining students at grade level is needed until all children are provided with adequate opportunities to master the curriculum, including valid tests, and appropriate test accommodations.
- Federal and state civil rights enforcement needs to be strengthened substantially and focused on leveraging the necessary resources for long-term improvements, stimulating collaborative reform efforts, and inspiring voluntary compliance.

**Public Meeting of the Panel for Educational Policy**

Speaker sign-up will begin at 5:30pm at the door. Each speaker will be allowed two minutes to speak. The following is a list of public meeting dates. Please note that although meetings are generally scheduled for the third Monday of each month from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the locations listed below, they are subject to change.

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/12/04</td>
<td>Thomas Edison High School, Queens (165-65 84 Avenue)</td>
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<td>2/9/04</td>
<td>Department of Education, Manhattan (52 Chambers Street)</td>
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<td>3/15/04</td>
<td>High School of Art &amp; Design, Manhattan (1075 Second Avenue)</td>
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<td>4/19/04</td>
<td>Department of Education, Manhattan (52 Chambers Street)</td>
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<td>5/17/04</td>
<td>Michael J. Petrides, Staten Island (715 Ocean Terrace)</td>
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The Adolescent Girls Project (AGP) offers individual treatment to adolescent girls with a history of interpersonal violence. Treatment will be either a supportive treatment in a community clinic or a structured treatment that focuses on issues of self-esteem, difficulties with relationships and trust, and development of coping skills.

For more information, or to make a referral, please call (212) 263-2786.

TREATMENT FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The Adolescent Girls Project (AGP) offers individual treatment to adolescent girls with a history of interpersonal violence. Treatment will be either a supportive treatment in a community clinic or a structured treatment that focuses on issues of self-esteem, difficulties with relationships and trust, and development of coping skills.

For more information, or to make a referral, please call (212) 263-2786.

RESEARCH AND PSYCHOTHERAPY INTERVENTIONS FOR WOMEN

Treatment includes 16 sessions of individual therapy and focuses on issues of self-esteem, difficulties with relationships and trust, and development of coping skills.

For more information, or to make a referral, please call (212) 263-2481.

Victory for Those Living With Spina Bifida

The Spina Bifida Association of America (SBAA), the Spina Bifida Foundation (SBF) and the 70,000 people in the United States who live with Spina Bifida extend their gratitude to the members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives for passing the “Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities Prevention Act of 2003.” Passage of this momentous legislation will ensure tremendous advances in preventing Spina Bifida and improving the quality of life for the adults and children living with Spina Bifida and those whose lives are entwined in theirs.

The Spina Bifida Association of America (SBAA) is the only national voluntary health agency working exclusively for people with Spina Bifida and their families through education, advocacy, research and service.

Founded in 1973, the mission of SBAA is to promote the prevention of Spina Bifida and to enhance the lives of all affected. SBAA has, through its network of chapters, a presence in more than 120 communities nationwide.

For more information call (800) 621-3141 or visit www.sbaa.org

New York University Child Study Center

If you have been sexually or physically abused or assaulted in childhood, you may be eligible for a psychotherapy research study for women or adolescent girls at the Institute for Trauma and Stress at the NYU Child Study Center.

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For further information and a copy of the conference program, visit our website at www.nybicla.org

Contact us at (212) 691-1930, ext. 13
Guide to Advocacy for Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities

The National Center for Learning Disabilities and the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation have announced the release of the LD Advocates Guide, a handbook designed to provide simple, accessible instruction on how to work with the government and the media on issues affecting individuals with learning disabilities. The guide will provide critical help to parents working to make sure that the voices of those who struggle to learn are heard. It will be offered free, as a download from NCLD’s Web site at www.LDinfo.org.

“With almost three million school-age children with learning disabilities currently receiving special education services, the need for strong policy advocacy has never been more urgent,” said Jodell Seagrave, managing director of Schwab Learning, a non-profit program of the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation. The LD Advocates Guide offers a complete “how-to” reference on all aspects of public policy advocacy. Tasks that might seem daunting to a first-time advocate, such as writing a letter to a member of Congress or the press, are broken down into easy steps. Written in understandable language, the guide provides valuable information for those wanting to play a role in the important area of public policy.

“We know that many parents stand ready to advocate for improvements in the policies and legislation that affect their children. The LD Advocates Guide provides them with helpful tools and information,” NCLD executive director James H. Wendorf said. “Parents are essential in ensuring that teachers are prepared to help children with learning disabilities; that children with LD receive effective instruction and accommodations when needed; and that the public has a better understanding of the realities and challenges those with learning disabilities face every day.”

NCLD has been involved in public advocacy for individuals with LD since 1990. The organization has marshaled the support of thousands of parents and educators in their advocacy work and is actively involved in maintaining individual rights and improving federal law with regard to early identification of learning problems, early intervention, teacher preparation and increased educational funding. Over the past two years, NCLD’s Legislative Action Center has helped individual advocates send over 70,000 emails to legislators and the media. The center is part of the both www.LD.org and www.KeepKidssLearning.org.


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JANUARY 2004 • EDUCATION UPDATE • SPECIAL EDUCATION
Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, and Medgar Evers College of The City University of New York will host the eleventh annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The celebration marks the largest public performance honoring Dr. King in New York City, will feature a keynote address by the acclaimed jazz musician and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, Wynton Marsalis. The internationally renowned ensemble, The Boys Choir of Harlem, and legendary a cappella group, The Persuasions, with Wynton Marsalis as Artistic Director perform as the musical portion of the celebration. Opening up the festivities will be The Lafayette Inspirational Ensemble. Following the tribute in the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM in London, composer/composer-in association with the National Black Programming Consortium—will present special screenings of the new documentary, These Opera House tribute and film screenings are free and open to the public with seating available on a first-come, first-seated basis. The presenting sponsor for the eighteenth annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Come Share the Dream is Target Stores.

Born and raised in Crown Heights, Borough President Markowitz began his public career in 1971, at the age of 26, by organizing the Flatbush Tenants Council, which grew into Brooklyn Housing and Family Services, the largest tenants’ advocacy organization in New York State. Markowitz was elected to the New York State Senate in 1979 and served eleven consecutive terms in Albany, but his dream in life has always been to lead Brooklyn as borough president, a goal he attained when he arrived in office in January 2002. As Borough President, Markowitz has committed himself to being “Brooklyn’s chief advocate, biggest promoter, best salesman, greatest defender, and most enthusiastic cheerleader.” His career has often described as one of passionate and powerful advocacy on behalf of Brooklyn and its residents, particularly in matters of housing, health, education, neighborhood preservation, and community development. As a senator, he was credited with running one of the best constituent service offices in the state. In addition, Markowitz is credited with creating two of New York City’s largest free concert series: the Seaside Summer Concert series, inaugurated in 1978, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Concert series, launched in 1983, which bring international stars to standing-room-only audiences each summer.

An accomplished artist and classically trained musician, Wynton Marsalis has helped propel jazz to the forefront of American culture through his brilliant performances, recordings, compositions, and his vision as Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center. For his epic three-hour oratorio “Blood on the Fields,” Marsalis became the first jazz artist to be awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in music. Since making his recording debut as a bandleader in 1982, Marsalis has produced an innumerable catalogue of close to 40 outstanding jazz and classical recordings for which he earned nine Grammy Awards. Marsalis has been honored by Time magazine which selected him as one of “America’s 25 Most Influential People” and Life magazine which named him one of “The 50 Most Influential Boomers” in recognition of his critical role in increasing awareness of jazz in the consciousness of an entire generation. In March 2001, Marsalis was designated a United Nations “Messenger of Peace” by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and in April 2001 he received the Congressional “Horizon Award.” Internationally respected as a teacher and spokesman for music education, Marsalis has received honorary doctorates from more than a dozen universities and colleges. Through Jazz at Lincoln Center’s educational programming, he regularly conducts master classes, lectures, and concerts for students of all ages.

This year The Boys Choir of Harlem, founded by Dr. Walter J. Turnbull, celebrates its 35th anniversary. Internationally recognized for its virtuoso performances, the choir’s repertoire ranges from Haydn, Bach, and Mozart through more modern composers such as Ginastera and Poulenc, to contemporary works from such artists as Bernstein and Halskind. African-American spirituals, gospel, jazz, pop, and hip-hop are also incorporated into The Boys Choir of Harlem performances.

In addition to its regular schedule of performances, The Boys Choir of Harlem also has performed at celebrations including The United Nations 50th Anniversary Concert, the Centennial of the Statue of Liberty, Pope John Paul II’s Sunrise Mass in Central Park, and the 1993 Presidential Inauguration. Most recently, the choir participated in the commemorative ceremony for the African Burial Ground Reinterment Project. As recording artists, The Boys Choir of Harlem has released several CDs including Celebrate, The Boys Choir of Harlem Schubert & Spirituals, BCH Sings America, and BCH We Shall Overcome. Considered the “kings of a cappella” by fans worldwide, The Persuasions have led an incredible career innovatively adapting songs with their own inimitable arrangements. Pioneers in the music business, band members Jerry Lawson, Jayloris Washington, Jimmy Hayes, Ray Sanders, and Joe Russell have influenced such groups as Boyz II Men, Take 6, and Rockapella. With more than 800 performances and more than 20 records spanning the genres of gospel, Christmas music, children’s music, and the music of Frank Zappa, The Beatles, and The Grateful Dead, The Persuasions now shows no signs of slowing down. Most recently the group recorded A Cappella Dreams, a tribute to the various artists who influenced them.

Initially formed in 1962 in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, The Persuasions first achieved mainstream success in 1974 with their hit single “I Really Got It Bad For You.” Further praise followed in 1977 when the group won the prestigious Grammy Award for Best Doo-Wop Album in 2000. Congregants of the landmark Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, (which was a stop on the Underground Railroad), The Lafayette Inspirational Ensemble is a vital part of the American heritage. Founded in 1996, the choir participates in the Lafayette Opera House tribute and film screenings are free and open to the public with seating available on a first-come, first-seated basis. The presenting sponsor for the eighteenth annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Come Share the Dream is Target Stores.

On January 30th over 500 high school children in and around New York City will take part in this inspirational event, which celebrates the 75th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday by exploring the last five years of his life. After his famous “I Have a Dream” speech in August 1963, Dr. King embarked on a controversial path, speaking out against the Vietnam War and championing the poor in America. This documentary, from acclaimed filmmakers Orlando Bagwell (Africans in America, Malcolm X: Make It Plain) and Noland Walker (This Far By Faith, Africans in America) draws on the personal recollections and eyewitness accounts of friends, civil rights movement associates, journalists, law enforcement officers, and historians to illuminate this little-known chapter in the story of America’s most important and influential moral leader.

For more information email dwilliams@tempoofunderstanding.org or call 212-246-2746 to speak with Diane Williams.
The Schomburg Center for Research for in Black Culture: Events in January

By CORETTA SCOTT KING

This holiday honors the courage of a man who endured harassment, threats and beatings, and even bombings. We commemorate the man who went to jail 29 times to achieve freedom for others, and who knew he would pay the ultimate price for his leadership and the beliefs of nonviolent resistance and reconciliation, which are so desperately needed to unify America.

It is a day of intensive education and training in Martin’s philosophy and methods of nonviolent social change and conflict-resolution. The Holiday provides a unique opportunity to teach young people to fight evil, not people, to get in the bushes and find out “what is the most loving way I can resolve this conflict?”

On the King holiday, young people learn about the power of unconditional love even for one’s adversaries as a way to fight injustice and defuse violent disputes. It is a day to show them the power of forgiveness, understanding, reconciliation, which are so desperately needed to unify America, as well as international levels.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is not only for celebration and remembrance, education and tribute, but above all a day of service. Across America on the Holiday, his followers perform service in hospitals and shelters and prisons and wherever people need some help. It is a day of volunteer- ing to feed the hungry, rehabilitate housing, tutoring those who can’t read, mentoring at-risk youngsters, consoling the broken-hearted, and building the beloved community of his dream.

Dr. King once said that we all have to decide whether we “will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfish-ness. Life’s most persistent and nagging question, he said, is ‘What am I doing for others?’” He would quote Mark 9:35, the scripture in which Jesus of Nazareth tells James and John “…whosoever will be great among you shall be your servant; and whosoever shall desire to be great among you, let him be your servant. And he that would be first among you, let him be your servant.”

The King Holiday celebrates Dr. King’s global vision of the world as a house whose people and nations had triumphed over hatred, racism, war and violence. The holiday celebrates his vision of ecumenical solidarity, his insistence that all faiths had something meaningful to contribute to building the beloved community.

The Holiday commemorates America’s pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence—the man who taught by his example that nonviolent action is the most powerful, revolutionary force for social change available to oppressed people in their struggles for liberation.

From the National Visionary Leadership Project, founded by Camille O. Cosby and Renee Poussaint, comes a treasure trove of wisdom and contributions for a book signing celebrating African-American elders. Panelists and honorees include former New York City Mayor David Dinkins, Jim Brown, and others. All above events are free. The library is located at 515 Malcolm X Boulevard, New York, NY 10037-1801. For more information call (212) 491-2200.
CHILDREN’S BOOK REVIEWS

Start the Year with an Array of New Books!

By SELENE VASQUEZ

Picture Books:

Ages 8-10

Fiction: Ages 5 thru 12

Nonfiction: Ages 8-10

It’s Back to School We Go: First Day Stories from Around the World

by Ellen Jackson

978-0-7636-4222-2, $23.90.

This Little Piggy’s Book of Manners

by Kathryn Allen

Illustrated by Nancy Wolff

H.C. (unpaged, $15.95).

I Am America

by Charles Smith

(Cartwheel, 32 pp., $14.95).

Vivacious children of different ethnic and racial backgrounds are depicted in dazzling full color photographs.

The poetic text accompanies “the beautiful diversity rendered. “I am almond eyes. I am a proud nose. I am cheeks freckled the color of a rose.”

Selen S. Vasquez is a media specialist at Orange Brook Elementary School in Hollywood, Florida. She is formerly a children’s librarian for the NYPL.

Make your New Year’s Resolution Reading

By SELENE VASQUEZ

Picture Books:

Ages 5 thru 8

With an insatiable thirst for knowledge, this little mouse pays homage to Library Week by exploring all the resources and services offered in a contemporary school media center. A winning follow-up to his first story (I.0. Goes to the Library), I.Q. Goes to the Librarians

by Mary Ann Fraser

(CIP, unpagd, $15.95).

Babar’s Museum of Art

by Laurent De Brunhoff

Illustrated by Robert Sabuda

Schuster, 12 pp., $24.95.

A wide-eyed toddler makes his older sister find their doggie so he can sleep peacefully. A gentle story about all those monsters in the closet, the menacing shadows on the wall, and unknown noises that compose our childhood bedtime fears. Delicate watercolor and pen drawings with moonlight highlights.

Reviewer’s Address

Lucy McCormick Calkins:
The Art of Teaching Reading

by Merri Rosenberg

When Lucy McCormick Calkins speaks about how to teach reading and writing, it’s as if God himself—or at least Moses—were talking. All, Calkins, as the founder of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, has become the go-to educator for helping children become better and more enthusiastic readers and writers. Through the Teachers College project, Calkins has developed reading and writing workshops at more than 200 schools during the past 15 years, who’ve embraced her research and methods for building literate classrooms. My own daughter, now a high school senior, is one of Calkins’ Writing Project students and was in third grade when she began teaching her students to prepare for a variety of standardized tests and assessments that measure reading ability.

Her Manifesto, such as it is, urges teachers to pursue the following mission: “Each one of us must, in our classroom, author a comprehensive approach to teaching reading” with the goal of leading students to become people who choose to read.

Calkins addresses such issues as leveled books, literature circles and literature logs, guided reading, running records and writing workshops, among others, as well as the reality of standardizing education.

She discusses the benefits of book clubs, and offers specific strategies teachers can use to implement successful models in their own classrooms. Calkins even acknowledges that sometimes, practically a lot of work, but for many teachers, has often been corrupted for the sake of standardized test scores. There is no reason to believe, however, that reading and writing matter. Hundreds of pages later, she returns to that point, writing, reading, and teaching, and the importance of engaging students through stories, memoirs and responses to literature, it is even more important for them to compose lives in the world of words more important than helping kids live lives in which reading and writing make a difference.

Armed with this thoughtful, persuasive and comprehensive guide, it would be difficult for any teacher not to do just that for her students.

Overcoming a Brutal Disability: Healing with Nature

Helios Press recently released Healing with Nature, the gripping story of a healer who was severely injured and who overcame her physical and emotional trials through the creative genius of the natural world. By the personal account of anthropologist, folklorist, and journalist Dr. Susan S. Scott, therapist and photographer from Whidbey Island, Washington, who spent her days sitting and conversing with patients until a brutal spinal injury “kicked” her out of her therapist’s chair and forced her to walk in order to heal.

Whether walking through the old-growth forests around Seattle or strolling through city parks, Scott came “trunk to trunk” with some of the most dramatic phenomena in nature, witnessing the stunning ingenuity of how trees outgrow injuries and life-challenges. She noticed how a tree that had survived a landslide was growing right at the rim of the new abyss and that, to secure its post, had turned its roots into a powerful buttress. Another tree had outwitted its fellow trees in the race for sunlight by forming itself into an arch; from the middle of the arch, it grew another “second-story” stem that reached easily over the other trees. Scott, who had spent many years as a nature writer and photographer, realized immediately that something extraordinary was being revealed to her. The subject of healing, nature, and creativity has fascinated people since the beginning of human history. The inspirational walk in the outdoors, or “walking therapy,” was practiced well before Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman wandered in the woods. As Scott puts it, “Trees have the capacity to make great changes as we also do. But they cannot pick up and move from place to place. They must change themselves to survive, often do in the hopes of making a change in our lives. They must change themselves to survive, radically at times.”

Born in Tucson, Arizona, Scott grew up riding horses in the wild, unfenced terrain of the Arizona desert, surrounded by Palo Verde trees and a nature-loving family. A psychohistorian who has worked in private practice for twenty years, she earned a Ph.D. in psychology and did postgraduate training in Jungian Analytic Psychology. As a writer and photographer, she is also a member of the Wilderness Poets and the Endangered Species Project. Her lectures and nature photographs have been frequently featured at psychological institutes and healing centers across the country. She divides her time between her home on Whidbey Island, Washington and her psychotherapy office in nearby Seattle.

THE ART OF TEACHING READING

Published by

Lucy McCormick Calkins

(CIP, 44 pp., $23.95).

It’s Back to School We Go: First Day Stories from Around the World

by Ellen Jackson

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It’s Back to School We Go: First Day Stories from Around the World

by Ellen Jackson

978-0-7636-4222-2, $23.90.

Nonfiction: Ages 8-10

Visually eye-catching school experiences of children from 11 different countries, including Kenya, China, Kazakhstan and Canada. This educational multinational approach includes web sites for games, languages and e-pals from around the world.

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Choosing Choice—School Choice in International Perspective

REVIEWED BY MERRI ROSENBERG

Given the ongoing debate about vouchers, and their impact on the country’s public schools, this is clearly a timely contribution to the national discussion. One caveat, though. This is a scholarly work, geared to a professional audience of policy makers, high-level educational administrators and academics pursuing their own research in this field. It’s not for an easy afternoon read, curled up with a cup of hot cocoa. Small doses, giving one ample time to digest the research and the statistics, would probably be moredigestive.

The book is basically organized as a series of chapters, each of which deals with the specific experience of how countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Chile, China, England, Wales, Sweden, South Africa, and others managed to institute school choice—and how the consequences played out. As the editors write, “The evidence that school choice policies ‘work’ remains provisional and equivocal, even in countries where choice policies have been in place for some time, but the move toward choice and competition in national education systems appears inexorable.”

With that as a given, the results are sometimes still remarkable. The reasons are often different, but also as subtly different. In New Zealand, for example, the authors of that chapter found increasing polarization of student enrollment, along ethnic and socioeconomic grounds, when school choice programs were initiated. In England and Wales, a far more common reason is that the public schools appear to be doing a worse job in their primary educational mission, as seen by the success rate of academic high schools in obtaining admission to the top universities for their graduates or of technical high schools in obtaining employment and high wages for their graduates. There is also preliminary evidence that public schools facing private competition improve their performance.

Anyone concerned with the future of public schools, as the national voucher movement gains credibility and political currency, would be well advised to read this book carefully. Especially one would imagine, to American educators, resulting in much-feared “flight” that many educators believe would be the result of widespread voucher systems here. And in South Africa, school choice offered more opportunities for the offering of the emerging black middle class, even as poor black children were faced with little prospect of even exercising a choice.

Choosing Choice: School Choice in International Perspective

Edited by David N. Plank & Gary L. Sykes


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Center for Research & Treatment of Childhood Diabetes Expands

The world’s premier center for the research and treatment of childhood diabetes is about to get a new $32 million home, tripling its original size and making it the largest pediatric diabetes facility in the country, if not the world.

Just outside of Denver, ground was broken for the long needed center, which has become a worldwide hub for the study of childhood diabetes, a growing problem across the globe.

The driving force behind the four-story, 100,000-foot structure is philanthropist Barbara Davis. “The center has existed and served a pressing need for the past twenty-five years,” she said. “Now, it’s time to start a new chapter in its history, hopefully the last chapter, when all the children of the world will be cured of diabetes.”

Located at the Fitzsimons campus of the University of Colorado in Aurora, the largest medical-related redevelopment project in the U.S., the Barbara Davis Center for Childhood Diabetes at Fitzsimons will join other new facilities there, including a children’s hospital and cancer treatment center. In recent years, the Denver-based facility, co-founded by Mrs. Davis and her husband, businessman-philanthropist Marvin Davis, has annually treated over 5,000 youngsters for Type 1 diabetes and its symptoms. Over 21,000 infants in the Denver area alone are now tested annually for potential diabetes.

Patients come to the Center from all over the globe. Of late, the existing facility, according to its head researcher, Dr. George Eisenbarth, has been bustling at the seams. “Demand for our services keeps growing, so we grow, too,” he says.

Over the years, many dignitaries have sponsored children for visits to the Center for diagnosis and treatment, including Sidney Potier, Nelson Mandela and Queen Noor of Jordan.

The Center’s facility is currently pioneering islet transplantation, development of new islets from stem cells for use in transplantation, the prediction and prevention of type 1 diabetes and the use of continuous glucose monitoring.

Many of the funds that have supported the Center for its first 25 years have come from the world-famous Carousel of Hope gala, held semi-annually in Los Angeles and featuring some of the world’s biggest entertainment stars. To date, it alone has raised over $60 million for on-going support of the facility.

Each year, more than 180,000 Americans lose their lives to diabetes and its complications. One in three babies born today will develop diabetes as an adult, shortening their life expectancy by an average of 15 years.

Two outstanding physician-scientists at Weill Cornell Medical College have been elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, one of the highest honors bestowed by the scientific community. They are Dr. Flint Beal, Chairman and Anne Parish Titzell Professor of Neurology and Neuroscience at Weill Cornell Medical College, and Dr. Jean Pape, Professor of Medicine in the Division of International Medicine and Infectious Diseases at Weill Cornell Medical College and Director of the New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

The Institute of Medicine, established by the National Academy of Sciences in 1970, is recognized as a national resource for independent, scientifically informed analysis and recommendations on issues related to human health.

Born in London, England, Dr. Beal has earned international recognition as a specialist in the research and treatment of neurodegenerative disorders including Parkinson’s disease, Multiple Sclerosis and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). He received his medical degree from the University of Virginia in 1976, and did his internship and first-year residency in Medicine at New York-Presbyterian Hospital before completing his residency in Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Beal joined the neurology faculty at Harvard in 1983, and was a Professor of Neurology at the Harvard Medical School and Chief of the Neurology Laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital before coming to Weill Cornell Medical College in 1998.

Dr. Beal’s research has focused on the mechanism of neuronal degeneration in Alzheimer’s disease, Huntington’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). He is the author and co-author of more than 300 scientific articles and over 100 books, book chapters, and reviews. He serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of Neurochemistry, the Annals of Neurology, the Journal of Molecular Neuroscience, Experimental Neurology, and Neurobiology of Disease.

Dr. Beal is a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honorary Society and was a recipient of the Derek Denny-Brown Neurological Scholar Award of the American Neurological Association. He has served on the Council of the American Neurological Association and on the Science Advisory Committees of the Hereditary Disease Foundation, Huntington’s Disease Society of America, Parkinson’s Disease Study Group, Parkinson’s Disease Foundation, the Bachman-Crassius Foundation, The ALS Foundation, and the American Health Assistance Foundation.

Dr. Jean W. Pape, an internationally recognized infectious disease expert, was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He earned A.B. from Columbia (BS, 1971) and Cornell (MD, 1975) Universities. Upon completion of his postdoctoral training, he joined the Cornell faculty and returned to his native Haiti to establish the Cornell University Infectious Diseases Research and Training Unit. Subsequently, he defined the etiology of diarrhea in infants and introduced oral rehydration therapy into Haiti, decreasing the rate of hospital infant mortality from more than 40% to less than 1% within two years. Expansion of the program throughout Haiti resulted in a 50% decrease in national infant mortality.

Dr. Pape’s most important scientific accomplishment is the recognition and first comprehensive description of AIDS in the developing world. He assumed an international leadership role and has been unrelenting in his efforts to implement programs to control AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

Dr. Pape has served on the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Public Health Association, the American Thoracic Society, and the World Health Organization for prevention and control of热带病. He is a member of the World Health Organization’s Expert Panel on Priority Setting for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and diarrhea who validated and implemented a world-class vaccine and clinical trials unit has been established with NIAID support, and major funding from the UN Global Fund will expand the GHESKIO comprehensive care paradigm to 27 sites throughout the country.

Dr. Pape and his team have been credited with slowing the epidemic of AIDS in Haiti and serving as a model for how poor countries with fewer resources can control AIDS, tuberculosis, and diarrhea. Dr. Pape was awarded the Légion d’honneur in 2002 by the President of France, Jacques Chirac, for his “contribution to the improvement of the health of the Haitian people and that of people in the world.”

New Women’s Health Center Thrives in Bushwick

Since opening the doors of its new Women’s Health Center in July 2003, Wyckoff Heights Medical Center has already experienced a substantial increase in the volume of its OB/GYN visits. On the drawing boards for more than two years, the new $35 million dollar, 8,000 square foot Center brings a broad spectrum of integrated health services in a private practice atmosphere to the medically underserved Bushwick neighborhood, and expects to provide 25,000 OB/GYN visits in 2004.

Located directly across the street from the main hospital building at 40 Wyckoff Avenue, the new Women’s Health Center is a comprehensive ambulatory care facility, staffed by a dedicated group of professional caregivers, with on-site testing and treatment for health problems affecting women. It also offers programs for prevention, education and screening in order to improve concretely the health status of the high-risk women served, including prenatal testing, state-of-the-art digital mammography, bone densitometry, and complementary medicine.

A select list of hospital services:

- Arthrocentesis
- Arterial Aneurysm
- Bone Density Scans
- Cancer Screening
- Cardiology
- Diabetes Program
- Geriatrics
- GYN Obstetrics
- Hypertension
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374 Stockholm Street
Brooklyn, NY 11237
www.wyckoffhospital.org

New York City • JANUARY 2004 FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS & STUDENTS
COLUMBIA AND VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY NURSES PLAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

By JOCELYN K. EGEYES

With the increasing rise of terrorism threats and everyday man-made emergencies world-wide, nurses are at the forefront of helping to save lives. Usually first on the scene or first to respond to a patient, they need to think fast and perform quickly. And thanks to Columbia University’s and Vanderbilt University’s School of Nursing, nurses from around the world will soon be able to respond to emergencies using the same techniques.

The nursing schools at Columbia University and Vanderbilt University have worked in conjunction as part of the International Nursing Coalition for Mass Casualty Education to develop a standardized curriculum of competencies to serve all nurses.

“The key issue was how can we establish a community base that wherever nurses meet, there is a common knowledge on how to prepare emergency care,” said Kristine Gebbie, Director of Center for Health Policy at Columbia University’s School of Nursing. “It’s a necessity.”

The curriculum will help prepare nurses to respond in the same way to emergency situations, or mass casualty incidents such as fires, crashes, blackouts or even terrorist attacks. Dean of Columbia University’s School of Nursing, Dr. Mary O. Mundinger, said there has been a broad acceptance of the model. “Here we’ve got a model in nursing education and nursing practice that is standardized,” said Mundinger. “A graduate has to come out with some standard competence so when nurses come out of school, they all speak the same language."

In addition to University classes, there are also continuing education programs using the standardized curriculum. “A nurse is a nurse is a nurse," said Dr. Colleen Conway-Welch, Dean of Vanderbilt University’s School of Nursing. "Even if you have been out of the community for 20 years, you may want to help if help is needed.""Welch said she was contacted late in 2000 to start working on this project. Soon after, she called her friend Mundinger to join this coalition. Since then she has been working on this project. "Paul Kapsar, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Nursing, agreed. “Trying to get the nursing population that is not hospital based has been a big challenge because they don’t consider themselves first responders.”

Karen Ballard, from the New York State Nurses Association, said this information is crucial for all nurses. “We have different aspects of being prepared for an emergency,” said Ballard. “Because of the anxiety generated [in an emergency situation], it takes a lot of education so it becomes automatic.”

Welch said putting together this curriculum has been “analogous to birthing a baby. And now I have this toddler on hand and we are working hard to see it is sustainable and make sure we have the right people to support it,” said Welch. “This is life and death information.”

Columbia University School of Nursing has received three large bequests totaling $5.4 million. The gifts bring the School’s endowment to over $40 million; the highest of any nursing school, and includes 10 endowed chairs, also the most in a nursing school. These new gifts are primarily for financial aid, including the largest single gift the School has ever received, in the amount of $4.4 million from the Frances L. Somers estate. The remaining gifts are from the Elise Fish and Jacqueline Webb estates.

“We are need blind in our admissions process, and these gifts will substantially assist us in providing the $3 million in financial aid grants our students receive each year,” said Dean, O’Neil Mundinger. “We are enormously proud of our growing alumni support. We celebrate the opportunity such support gives promising young men and women who have chosen nursing as a profession and who will someday be Columbia alumni.”

Columbia University School of Nursing, founded in 1892, is dedicated to advanced nursing education and practice and health services research. Dr. Mary O. Mundinger, a noted health policy expert, has served as dean of Columbia’s nursing school since 1986.

New Center for Osteoporosis Treatment, Research & Education

Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital announced the completion of the Toni Stabile Osteoporosis Center, a new standard for treatment, research, and education relating to the disease. The center, the largest in the New York City metropolitan area and one of the largest in the world, was made possible by a generous donation by the Madeline C. Stabile Foundation, named for the late sister of Toni Stabile.

The gift by Ms. Toni Stabile, an award-winning investigative journalist and advocate for persons with osteoporosis, established and endowed the new center and created the Madeline C. Stabile Professorship. “The Toni Stabile Osteoporosis Center sets the highest standard for osteoporosis care,” said Dr. Herbert Parides, President and CEO of New York-Presbyterian Hospital.

The outpatient center, which treats over 1,500 patients per year, includes a Fracture Intervention Program for patients who have recently sustained osteoporotic fractures, state-of-the-art bone densitometry testing, including bone densitometry testing with dual energy x-ray absorption (DEXA), as well as a complete laboratory facility.

“The Toni Stabile Center is dedicated to treating every patient as an individual, with unique concerns and issues, and offers therapies tailored to each person’s specific needs,” said Dr. Ethel Siris, Director of the Toni Stabile Osteoporosis Center and Attending Physician at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and Madeline C. Stabile Professor of Clinical Medicine at Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons. “As part of an individualized treatment regimen, patients are provided with state-of-the-art approved therapies, or they may choose to participate in clinical research opportunities with the latest and most innovative approaches to care. All treatment is directed by a team of world-class physicians who are international authorities on osteoporosis and are at the forefront of research on osteoporosis.”

“Also central to the Center’s mission are education and training,” said Dr. Siris. Each year, the Center performs over 8,500 bone density tests. Screenings are done for persons at risk for the disease, including post-menopausal women and older men, as well as patients with malabsorption disorders, those on glucocorticoids, and others. The Center also offers programs to educate physicians and the public about the disease.

Afflicting more than 25 million Americans, osteoporosis is a disorder in which bone becomes thinner, weaker, more porous, and much more susceptible to fracture. Osteoporosis is the major cause of spinal compression fractures and hip fractures, accounting for 1.5 million fractures each year.

Certain risk factors are associated with an increased likelihood of developing osteoporosis. These include: post-menopausal women; women with a family history of osteoporosis; women who are thin, petite, Caucasian, or Asian; women with diets deficient in calcium and vitamin D; men with low testosterone levels; persons with a history of fracture after age 50; persons over age 70; long-term smokers; persons who consume excess alcohol; persons who are obese for long periods; persons with certain medical conditions (kidney disease, malabsorption, overactive thyroid); and persons on certain medications (steroids, anti-seizure medications).

For more information about the Toni Stabile Osteoporosis Center, please call Dr. Siris at (212) 305-2239.

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Scott Noppe-Brandon is the Executive Director of the Lincoln Center Institute.

**Arts Vital to National Educational Reform**

Recently, I was invited to participate in a conference on the impact that The Nation at Risk report has had on education in the United States over the past twenty years. The conference, sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the J. Paul Getty Trust, was divided into two sections, the first looking back over the past two decades, the second looking ahead at the challenges to come in educational reform. Speakers and attendees included past and current Secretaries of Education, framers of the original The Nation at Risk report, leaders of community, public service and business organizations, philanthropists, academics, and school leaders.

The meeting was rich enough to warrant an entire article of commentary, but I choose instead to use the experience as a springboard for a different conversation. That conversation has to do with a harsh truth, which is that the arts currently play a very minor role in the national agenda for school reform. Only twice during the course of the daylong meeting were the arts mentioned. Allow me to be clear: no one actually wants to fight for the value of the arts within the curriculum, nor are they willing to fight to make certain that the arts and their related identities—imagination and creativity—are not marginalized, if not completely dismissed, from the educational agenda. The arts are not part of the National at Risk report; why do so few of our educational leaders seriously discuss the need for the arts to be part of the national (and local) educational agenda in this age of reform, restructuring, and standards?

The arts should be part of the educational agenda at the policy level, that place where much of what matters within education is decided. I am not complaining for the sake of complaining; I subscribe to the notion that credit should be given for building arks, not for predicting rain. This is at the heart of my dilemma. Are we in the arts mostly talking among ourselves because no one else is truly listening? Is it that no one else understands us and believes in the value of what we do as much as we believe in it? Math educators alone do not fight for the value of math within the curriculum, and literacy, or rather illiteracy, is dismissed as the national problem it is, but which of our current educational and political leaders are willing to fight to make certain that the arts and their related identities—imagination and creativity—are not marginalized, if not completely dismissed, from the educational agenda? When will we hear that the arts are as important as any other subject, requiring school leaders to make room—literally create rooms for arts—that think anew, and be imaginative about the role that the arts can play within education?

I end with a request for your voice to be heard. Do you have an opinion on why the arts are not considered vital to the national educational reform agenda? If so, please email me at snb@lincolncenter.org with your thoughts. I promise a response—and action.

Scott Noppe-Brandon, Executive Director of the Lincoln Center Institute.

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**The Rossini Festival in Pesaro: Part II**

By Irving Spitz

[Part I appeared in the December issue. Refer to www.educationupdate.com]

The ensemble opera, performing on the Adriatic, certainly deserves more recognition. A short one-act opera, Adalbert, by Pietro Generali, a forgotten contemporary of Rossini was staged. The simple plot revolves around a newly-wed young girl who was found to have already been married, isolated her father and is eventually reunited with him when her lover returns from army service. Despite the simple-low budget staging, the opera was well sung by accomplished soloists, most notably the alluring and ardently passionate soprano Cinzia Forte in the title role who floated her pianissimo lines in the great Italian tradition.

Performances of II Viaggio A Reims, an opera composed in honor of the coronation of Charles X, followed. It relates how an international assortment of visitors from all over Europe plan to travel to Reims to attend the coronation of Charles X but are stranded at an inn for lack of transportation and host their own celebration in the king’s honor. The opera is notoriously difficult to cast since it calls for at least 9 accomplished soloists, something few opera houses can afford. Alternatively, it can be performed by young enthusiastic singers at the start of their careers. Under these circumstances, the expectations of the audience are not high. Pesaro opted for this latter route, featuring it as part of the Pesaro youth festival. The delightful production by Emilio Sagi was set in a spa. Lo and behold, these passionate and eager young soloists, most notably the alluring and ardent soprano Eunshil Kim in the role of the lightsome Contessa di Folleville and bass Wojciech Adalbert Gierlach in the comic role of Don Profondo were particularly exciting.

The outstanding orchestra of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna was in the pit for both Adina and Comte Ory and played magnificently under conductors Renato Palumbo in Adina and Jesus Lopez Cobos in Comte Ory. The Orchestra of Galicia supplied orchestral accompaniment for Semiramide (under conductor Carlo Rizzi) and Viaggio (under Christopher Franklin). The Prague Chamber Choir featured in all the operas and acquitted them admirably.

Pesaro is also home to the Rossini Foundation, which works closely with the festival. The Foundation members, international Rossini experts, whose role is to critically review and edit Rossini’s lesser-known and well known scores, editions now regarded as the “gold standard.” The current production of Semiramide was the first performance of such a newly edited score.

Visiting Pesaro makes you realize how much of the vast output of Rossini has been unjustly neglected. By reviving long forgotten and neglected scores, the Pesaro festival and the Rossini foundation are bringing them to the attention to the opera loving public and for this we all owe Pesaro an immense debt of gratitude.

When Rossini met Beethoven, the latter is reported to have said somewhat condescendingly, “Above all, compose a lot of Barbers.” Luckily for us, he did. Next year’s program promises more delights and includes Elisabetta Regina D’Inghilterra, Tancredi and Mattile Di Shapran.##

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ESL Students Get Special Language Instruction

Do ESL students have a disadvantage in test taking? Many think so. Yet, schools with large ESL populations are finding success despite the language barrier, thanks to direct instruction in teaching young children the language of the classroom.

Research has shown that the amount of everyday language experience the child has in the home directly affects how fast language is learned. Children whose parents do not speak English are clearly a step behind. SRA’s Language for Learning is a unique program that addresses this problem.

SRA has numerous success stories for schools using Language for Learning including: Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, IL; City Springs Elementary, Baltimore, MD; EB Kennedy Elementary, Hartford, CT; Honey Creek Elementary, Milwaukee, WI; Hutchins Elementary, San Antonio, TX; New Hanover County Schools, Wilmington, NC; Portland Elementary, Portland, AK; Rodeo Institute for Teacher Excellence, Houston, TX; Valle Vista Elementary, Delano, CA. #

Navajo Code Talkers Show Language Matters

By SYBI MAIMIN

The importance of teaching and preserving languages was made critically clear during World War II when Navajo Code Talkers from the American Southwest developed a code based on their native language that literally saved thousands of lives in the Pacific Theater. Called Navajo Code Talkers, the Native Americans were recruited after a marine commanding general in the Pacific was convinced by the son of a missionary who had grown up on a reservation of the potential value of a code based on the obscure tongue. Navajo is a complex, unwritten language that has no alphabet or symbols and includes guttural and nasal sounds, voice intonations, and dialects. Hard to speak, it proved to be an invaluable resource, and utterly confused the Japanese, expert cryptologists who cracked the army and navy codes, but never understood marine communications. In fact, no one has ever broken the Navajo code, including Navajos who were not trained as code talkers and other marines.

Sam Billison, president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association, recently reminisced about his wartime experiences in a fascinating talk co-sponsored by the Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Born in a hogan on a Navajo reservation to a sheep-herder father and rug-weaver mother, he was sent to a US government Indian boarding school at age four. Assimilation of the tribes into an English-speaking American way of life was official policy and the goal of the schools. Native children were forbidden to speak their mother tongue and punished if they did so. As with other code talkers, Billison knew Navajo only because he had learned it at home.

By 1942, the Japanese were breaking all US codes, which had to be changed daily. After a test showed the speed and agility with which they could decipher messages, twenty-nine Navajos, ages 14 to 16, were recruited and told to come up with a code. They realized they needed an alphabet, with 3 or 4 words representing each letter. They also needed to create words that were not part of their language, such as battleship, tank, sergeant, and types of airplanes. Objects that operated in the air were named for birds, those that performed on the ground for animals, and those that travel by sea for fish. Dive-bombers were “humming birds,” submarines were “fish,” bombers were “iron fish,” France was “beard,” and squad was “black street.” The dictionary they created and code words for military terms had to be memorized and new words created as the need arose. In 1942, there were about 50,000 Navajos tribe members; about 540 served in the marines with 420 of those trained as code talkers. They talked over telephones and radios and transmitted information about tactics, troop movements, and orders. Deployed on ships, tanks, planes, and in the infantry, code talkers participated in every Pacific operation from 1942 to 1945. An officer exclaimed, “Were it not for the Navajos the marines would never have taken Iwo Jima.”

The code talkers work was top secret, even after the war. Billiston explains that upon discharge, they were told to simply say, “I fought with the marines” if questioned about their duties. Their accomplishments were finally recognized in 1968, too late for some, for example Billiston. “Many were gone and had never told their families what they had done.” In his case, his parents had already passed on, so never took pride in their son’s wartime contribution. After much pressure, in 2003 the code talker’s, or their heirs, were awarded Congressional gold or silver medals.

Often asked why the Navajos were willing to serve a country that had so mistreated them, Billiston explains, “All native Americans still feel the United States is our country, our mother country, so we fight for it.” He credits the GI Bill for his own career trajectory. He went on to earn a doctorate and become an educator. Without it, “I would still be a sheep herder.” In fact, he muses, “Who would think that a bunch of sheep herders would create a code that no one in the world could break.”

A likeable female cast, including Kirsten Dunst, Julia Stiles, and Maggie Gyllenhaal, playing skin-deep roles from class brat to class temptress, is a main reason to see Mike Newell’s “Mona Lisa Smile.” Star Julia Roberts’ cashmeres fit her perfectly, but alas, the role of Katherine Watson, a 1950s firebrand does not. From modest circumstances and trained at U.C.L.A, she comes east to a prestigious all women’s Massachusetts college to send tremors through the establishment by teaching modern art and encouraging young women to choose careers along with marriage. Wellesley is portrayed as an all white WASP finishing school. Some alums from that era complain the film doesn’t fairly represent their school, but Hollywood’s idea of it; others say it is on the mark. Filmed on the Wellesley campus, nicely shown are the details that capture the school’s traditions—for instance, the hoop race which supposedly determined who would be the first to marry.

The drama purports to examine the role of women at Wellesley in post war America, when being a wife and homemaker was emphasized as a girl’s true calling. In one scene, the teacher of “poise and elocution,” (Marcia Gay Harden) teaches students how to set a table and arrange dinner party seating to advance a husband’s career.

In the classroom, Katherine first earns the girls’ disdain and too quickly penetrates it to earn their esteem. The exception is the upper-crust snob Betty (Dunst) who causes Katherine’s colleague and friend, Amanda (Juliet Stevenson) to be fired when in a school newspaper expose she reveals that the progressive faculty nurse is supplying contraceptives to students. But soon Katherine is not only their teacher, she’s their confidant and mentor, preaching against conformity.

Katherine doesn’t stay here long, finding it stuffy. But she leaves behind girls she has urged to think and feel and even question why the Mona Lisa is smiling. (117 minutes, PG-13).

Another kind of school, Chicago’s Joffrey Ballet, a topnotch dance training ground, is center-stage in Robert Altman’s quasi-documentary “The Company.” Combining the story of a rising ballerina with a behind the scenes glimpses, it offers sublimely graceful dance vignettes. (112-minutes, PG-13).

The Partnership for Reading announces the availability of “A Child Becomes A Reader,” two booklets that use findings from scientifically based research to suggest how parents can help their young children become strong readers. One booklet covers birth to preschool, the other K3.

“A Child Becomes A Reader” highlights the importance of parents and caregivers talking, listening, playing and reading to children’s early literacy development. In addition, the series helps parents understand and recognize what effective literacy programs look like in day care centers, preschools and classrooms.

“Learning about reading and writing begins at home long before children start school,” said Sandra Baxter, Director of the Partnership for Reading. “We know from research how children learn to read, and parents play an integral role in this learning process from the time children are born. The Partnership provides parents with the tools and support they need to give their children a strong start to becoming skilled, successful readers—the cornerstone for all learning.”
New Jersey Launches New Tool for Improving School Performance

New Jersey’s business leaders, along with Governor James E. McGreevey, and representatives of the education community, will launch a new Web site called Just for the Kids-New Jersey. This school improvement tool provides a fair comparison of schools through data for educational decision-making, and identifies best practices that can be shared across schools with similar challenges. This free Web site, www.just4kids.org, which is open to the public and is funded by The Business Coalition for Educational Excellence (BCEE) at the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, will enable teachers and administrators to tap into practices that have effectively enhanced student achievement. Twenty high achieving community colleges will be an affordable partner for the JFTK Web site to provide their expertise. The BCEE will also announce funding of a Just for the Kids Benchmark Study to be conducted by Rutgers University that will examine six high achieving schools and share findings regarding their effective practices. The Business Coalition for Educational Excellence (BCEE), at the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, is an association of New Jersey business leaders, educators, and policymakers committed to ensuring that all children achieve at high levels, become productive citizens and are well prepared to function successfully in the workforce. The BCEE promotes policies and implements programs to support the business-labor educational agenda in K-12 educational reform and has greatly impacted the course of education reform in the state. The BCEE has four areas of interest: standards and assessments, teacher quality, accountability and technology. Companies such as Prudential Financial, Inc.; ETS; Verizon; Johnson & Johnson; Washington Mutual; State Farm Insurance; and The Merck Institute for Science Education provide support for BCEE programs. For more information on The Business Coalition for Educational Excellence, please visit www.bcee.org.

Effectiveness of McGreevey’s Education Priorities

Continuing his aggressive efforts to create jobs and strengthen New Jersey’s economy, Governor James E. McGreevey signed the New Jersey Community Colleges Compact, an executive order that creates a new statewide partnership between the State of New Jersey and its nineteen community colleges. The Compact empowers New Jersey’s community colleges to provide education for not only educational endeavors, but also for workforce development and business attraction programs. In order to secure New Jersey’s economic future, we have set out aggressive job goals for the next five years, like creating 200,000 new jobs, training 150,000 workers, and relocating or expanding 500 businesses into our state. But we cannot accomplish those goals alone,” said McGreevey. “This Compact ensures that our community colleges will be an affordable partner as we build New Jersey’s future, creating jobs for our families and our children for years to come. By training 21st century workers, our community colleges will provide our workforce with the skills to be competitive and will enable us to attract new businesses to our state by offering the skilled labor they require in this competitive marketplace.” The Compact calls for the colleges to work in cooperation with the NJ Department of Labor on customized training, workforce literacy and self-employment assistance. The Colleges will also work with the NJ Commerce and Economic Growth Commission on business attraction programs, urban enterprise zones and small business development centers. Additionally, the Compact enables the colleges to work with the Department of Education on new career academies throughout the state and the 12th grade option, enabling seniors to begin preparing for high-paying jobs before they even leave high school.

McGreevey’s signing of the Community College Compact is a historic moment for our state’s community college system, said McGreevey. “This Compact exemplifies the collaborative spirit and commitment of the College Presidents, who are working together to ensure that the state’s workforce and economic development needs.”

The goal of the Standards Implementation Grants is to promote effective instruction in schools through the implementation of standards-based curriculum programs and effective methods of assessment for evaluating students and informing instruction. The grants lead to increased student achievement in participating schools, including lowering-achieving students and those belonging to groups traditionally under-represented in science, mathematics, and technology education.

The New Jersey Statewide Systemic Initiative (NJSSI) is a unique partnership of schools, districts, colleges, universities, science centers, museums, businesses and industry focused on improving the performance and participation of students in science and mathematics through training 21st century workers, our community colleges. The Compact empowers New Jersey’s community colleges to provide education for not only educational endeavors, but also for workforce development and business attraction programs.

The New Jersey Statewide Systemic Initiative (NJSSI) will distribute approximately $300,000 to over 20 districts in an effort to implement successful, evidence-based programs that are focused primarily on the professional development of teachers.

NJSSI has distributed these grants since 1997, which have helped schools and school districts from every section of New Jersey and have led to increased student achievement in participating schools,” said the NJSSI Program Director, Deborah Cook of Rutgers University.

“Due to continued state and federal funding, we can build upon the work of last year to honor schools that are demonstrating effective practices to prepare their students for the future. "By celebrating 25 schools that are getting it right and preparing children to succeed, we are providing great examples for every other school in the state,” said McGreevey. “Each of these schools are recipients of the Governor’s School of Excellence Award because they are proving how initiatives like targeting early literacy and supporting great teachers make the difference between a ‘good’ school and an ‘excellent’ school. They represent the best of all we are doing to improve education in this state.”

The Governor’s School of Excellence program is an important one—we want school districts to look at these schools as examples of how to implement programs that will examine six high achieving schools and encourage the replication of their practices. To date, Just for the Kids data is being used in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. Within the year, Illinois, Hawaii, and Michigan will be launching Just for the Kids websites at the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), national sponsor of the Just for the Kids School Improvement Model, is a part of a nationwide collaboration to support the business-labor-educational agenda in K-12 educational reform and has greatly impacted the course of education reform in the state. The BCEE has four areas of interest: standards and assessments, teacher quality, accountability and technology. Companies such as Prudential Financial, Inc.; ETS; Verizon; Johnson & Johnson; Washington Mutual; State Farm Insurance; and The Merck Institute for Science Education provide support for BCEE programs. For more information on The Business Coalition for Educational Excellence, please visit www.bcee.org.

The Governor’s School of Excellence program provides awards to schools that demonstrate significant improvement in the quality of professional development of teachers. Demonstrated success in providing better learning opportunities for specialized populations such as special education students or second language learners. Documentation that shows areas of significant improvement that may not fit one of the aforementioned categories.

The Governor’s School of Excellence program provides awards to schools that demonstrate significant improvement during a two-year period. The schools can use the funds for educational purposes which they decide. The schools report to the Commissioner at the conclusion of the School year how they have used the money. Each school may be recognized only once in three years. Schools that receive awards will serve as demonstration centers for exemplary programs.

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Sweet Treats in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden

Making plans for the New Year? Resolve to enjoy winter at The New York Botanical Garden. What could be better than sparkling white blankets of snow accented with bright evergreen trees and twinkle lights? You and the children about to enjoy! It may be cold outside, but there are programs and activities in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden to keep visitors warm and busy. Drink a steaming cup of mint tea while discovering the NEW! Peppermint Paradise. Learn the different uses of the versatile mint plant and how it is used in products from medicine to candy and healing capabilities while having fun smelling, tasting, touching, and exploring the plants and plant part.

For Families: Peppermint Paradise: January 13 through February 8, 2004 in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden, 1:30 p.m.5:30 p.m. January 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, and February 7, 10, 14, 18, 21.

The cool, refreshing flavor of peppermint and its exquisite scent make it a one-of-a-kind experience at Peppermint Paradise in the Adventure Garden. As children walk along the path, they encounter life-sized peppermint sticks with swirling red ribbons that lead to tasty treats inside the Texaco Kids Lab. Participate in fun and astonishing minty pursuits while learning about the myriad uses for mint plants, such as how mint is used medicinally to “settle” stomachs and peppermint is used to soothe irritable skin. Enjoy learning about the plant parts in such favorites as candy canes, gum, toothpaste, and tea. Press mint leaves in the Bendheim Herbarium; enjoy a cup of fragrant mint tea and a peppermint candy, and put up an easy-to-grow mint plant to take home.

Offspring Up in February! Chocolate and Vanilla Adventures in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden, February 10 March 28, 2004, 1:30 p.m.4:30 p.m. TuesdayFriday; 10 a.m.4:30 p.m. Thursday.Friday, Saturday.

It may be cold outside, but there are programs and activities in the Everett Children’s Adventure Garden to keep visitors warm and busy. Drink a steaming cup of mint tea and each year the children have a new language to experience. They start with Russian, study Chinese in first grade, move to French, Spanish, and Italian in second through fourth grade, and then complete elementary school with the study of Latin.

This program is an excellent example of how the learning process transcends the boundaries of the subject matter. Our main objective is to exercise the brain during this crucial time of development. I have been fascinated by research conducted at Harvard and MIT that have actually shown that the study of more than one language in young children results in measurable increases in brain development, with the use of MRI technology.

So when your children complain about subjects that don’t hold their interest, you can try telling them that it is the process of thinking about the material that makes them smarter and gives them a greater resource of knowledge from which to draw. Unfortunately, they still might not like that subject, but at least you’ve given them an answer.

Dr. Hankin is superintendent of Syosset Central School District. Randi Sachs is Public Information Officer of Syosset Schools.

PRODUCT REVIEW:

COLORIDE WORKBOOKS

By RICK SULZ

High technology is a wonderful thing, and, when used as an educational enrichment tool, it greatly enhances learning. That’s an undisputed fact. But given the fact that teachers have been teaching and students learning for countless centuries, one sometimes wonders “is it possible that there may be unique pedagogical benefits that only LOW technology can provide?”

During the years of my student experience, lessons weren’t taught with interactive multimedia or user-defined cognitive models, yet frequently made creative use of methods that might have been less technically advanced, but still made a positive impact on the learning process. Did these lessons have to be presented by an operating system to be effective?

Feedback Card Inc.’s Coloride Workbooks provide teachers with programs of learning subjects as diverse as music, math and language studies, clearly answering the question with a “yes!” The workbooks offer a series of problems and questions in each of several subjects that are color-coded. By matching their responses against a color-coordinated answer key, students can grade their own mastery of the material.

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT’S SEAT:

Learning—the Process that Counts

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

I’m sure every parent has been asked this question by their children more than once: “When am I ever going to use geometry outside of school?”

As much as you might be tempted to say, “It will be on your next test,” or, “I had to learn it when I was in college,” there is a better answer that can help you to wholeheartedly support schoolwork that may seem irrelevant to your children.

It is that the act of learning is as important as the subject material you are covering—especially in the elementary and middle school years. The most important lessons a teacher gives are those underlying the subject matter: how to think, how to resolve problems, how to use your knowledge.

While students may believe that they must write a five-page report on the ancient Egyptians because this information their teacher has decided that they will need to know always, it is actually the process of doing the report that makes it educationally valid. Through such an assignment, children learn the value of research and how to gather information and evaluate which facts and concepts are important and which are insignificant. The writing process teaches them how to organize their materials and how to communicate a specific message to the reader.

The historical data they learn about the ancient Egyptians can be added to the storehouse of knowledge in their minds, and remains there long after specific names and dates are forgotten.

Understanding how ancient civilizations lived and what things they actually had in common do with us today is a resource that will be used to make decisions and evaluate situations throughout their lives. Whether we are aware of it or not, we draw upon the resources of our accumulated knowledge each and every day.

The early school years are a time when children’s brains are developing. In Syosset, we begin the study of world languages in kindergarten, and each year the children have a new language to experience. They start with Russian, study Chinese in first grade, move to French, Spanish, and Italian in second through fourth grade, and then complete elementary school with the study of Latin.

This program is an excellent example of how the learning process transcends the boundaries of the subject matter. Our main objective is to exercise the brain during this crucial time of development. I have been fascinated by research conducted at Harvard and MIT that have actually shown that the study of more than one language in young children results in measurable increases in brain development, with the use of MRI technology.

So when your children complain about subjects that don’t hold their interest, you can try telling them that it is the process of thinking about the material that makes them smarter and gives them a greater resource of knowledge from which to draw. Unfortunately, they still might not like that subject, but at least you’ve given them an answer.

Dr. Hankin is superintendent of Syosset Central School District. Randi Sachs is Public Information Officer of Syosset Schools.

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PRODUCT REVIEW:

MUSICAL SPANISH
By POLA ROSEN, E.D.D

Sad to say, but true: when students are asked to name their least favorite academic subject, study after study has shown that “language study” ranks high in their lists. What should be an incomparably broadening cultural experience seems to have become, in the minds of many, a sterile exercise in rote memorization and “drill and kill.” In a city that can claim to have the most diverse population in our nation, if not the world, the inability of our present teaching methods to ignite the interest of a new generation in this vital resource represents a serious failure of our educational system as a whole.

While innumerable attempts have been made to produce superior ways of introducing young minds to the benefits of language enrichment, most have suffered from either basic pedagogical flaws, or being what is often known in layman’s terms as “dry as sawdust.” It was a pleasure then to see the alternative that Musical Spanish CD series offers beginning students.

Just as Snow White and the Seven Dwarves advised us to “whistle while you work,” the Musical Spanish program presents a strong series of lessons in Spanish language and grammar set to popular music as a mnemonic device and learning aid. In the words of the publisher, the materials are “designed to integrate right and left brain learning techniques, (to) help you to remember the words and their meaning,” and are “proven to help even students who have trouble learning through traditional methods.”

The program is contained in lesson books grouped by subject, combined with music on audio CDs that supplement the text, and enrich the academic content. Each (catchy) song covers four to five grammatical points on a variety of linguistic topics, as well as additional material available in the interactive portions of the CDs. The series is just as appropriate for adults as it is for children, and, in fact, may remind some older learners of the School of the Modern Short, familiar from Saturday morning television in the 70’s.

Although the musical style might not be to every student’s taste, it would be well worth the struggling language learner’s time to log on the manufacturer’s site, www.musicalspanish.com where both sample lessons and mp3’s can be downloaded, and on line orders taken.

Free Resources for Teachers

Art—“Colorful Impressions: Printmaking Revolution in 18th Century France” presents 15 pieces from the period of innovation unleashed by German artist Jakob Christophel Le Blon’s breakthrough in the use of color in the 1720s. The resulting “printed paintings” & “engraved drawings,” as they were called, allowed the middle classes to hang on their walls replicas of art works found in the mansions of aristocrats & roy-alty. www.nga.gov/exhibitions/colorfulinfo.htm

Language arts—“A Child Becomes a Reader” tells what parents can do to help children (ages 0-4 & 5-8) become readers. It includes sugges-
tions about what to look for in day care centers & preschools, & a summary of scientific research on how children learn to read & write. www.nifl.gov/partnership/iferreading/publications/html/par-
ett_guides/

Science—Earth System Science Education Alliance” offers three earth science courses for teachers. The courses are delivered over the Internet for teachers of grades K4, 5-8, & 912. A master teacher mentors 2024 teachers; an Earth scientist assists with science content. Teachers collaborate & earn graduate or continuing edu-
cation credit while solving problems, building models, & designing classroom activities. www.
cet.edu/essea/

“How Things Fly” answers questions that include: What makes an airplane fly? What makes a wing work? How does a pilot control an airplane? How does a spacecraft stay in orbit? Why does a balloon float? Learning activities & booklists are provided. www.nasm.edu/galler-
ies/gal109/

“Molecular Workbench Project” offers a “molecular simulation engine”—a set of tools that can be used to compute & visualize the motion of atoms & molecules. Five units draw on molecular models generated by the simulation engine to help students learn about kinetic energy, states of matter; atomic solutions in & around cells; monomers & polymers; & protein shaping. Thirty-five activities include how hot air balloons work, how super-Rock are like atoms, what matter is made of, & “rainstorm in a bag.” www.workbench.concord.org/

“Science Education” includes booklets on cells, genetics, health, chemistry, & medicine. The booklets explore advances in the delivery & development of drugs, links between genes & diseases, how genes work, the body’s reaction to medicines, & the hundreds of thousands of molecules that perform specialized functions inside the fundamental unit of life (the cell). One booklet, “The Structures of Life,” features stories designed to inspire young people to consider careers in biomedical research. www.nigms.nih.gov/news/science_ed/

Social studies—“The Battle of Bennington: An American Victory” recounts a small but important triumph in the summer of 1777. For two months, General John Burgoyne led his army along the Lake Champlain-Hudson River corridor, capturing several American forts. In August, however, finding himself in need of provision, wagons, & horses, he sent a force to Bennington, Vermont, to capture these supplies. What happened there contributed to the British defeat at Saratoga & helped decide the outcome of the war. www.cr.nps.gov/nthwp/wlvps/lessons/10/bennington/107bennington.htm

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PRODUCT REVIEW:

ADVANCED FORCE’S REMOTE DESKTOP MANAGER

By MITCHELL LEVINE

Managing the largest computer network in secondary education is a vast undertaking, but New York’s Department of Education is doing it. With the new year beginning, the goal of implementing the “one-to-one computing standard” in our city’s public schools, or the ideal of one computer for every student, teacher, and administrator in the system, is quickly becoming a top priority — and formidable stressor - in technology procurement here.

With 1254 K-12 schools in the five boroughs, tech managers in New York education have a logistical challenge every bit as vast as their counterparts in the corporate sector, but nowhere near the amount of resources available to deal with it. In the corporate world, IT directors can simply buy the all of the latest and greatest products the high-technology industry markets with their annual budget each year, and just throw out all the old stuff. Plus they usually have full staffs of techies to configure it all.

Needless to say, that’s not the way it works in education, where administrators consider themselves fortunate if they actually have one full-time manager handling their computers. With a major initiative like the one now facing the Department of Ed. happening, it’s a very good thing indeed that an application like Advanced Force’s Remote Desktop Manager is now available.

Remote Task Manager (RTM) is a systems control interface that can be run from any remote computer, and the software was being run on the host computer, enabling a Systems Administrator to control most aspects of a remote environment, including starting or stopping services or devices, adding new services or devices, managing the system parameters and resources, and adjusting security levels.

An integrated Event Viewer lets the Administrator monitor all events as though they were being run on the host computer, and the software even supports remote installs without ever having to be physically present on that station.

I didn’t have a large network of Windows machines available to set up my trial on, but I was able to install the software on a small (four units) one, and perform remote configurations with relatively large amount of ease, even as a non-expert. For a school system which is soon going to be configuring literally thousands of new computers, it’s easy to see how this would be a must-have app.

Unfortunately, the product will be of no use to the many students and teachers that work with Mac OS only, but considering the fact that most of the mobile units currently being deployed run some variant of Windows, it still should have broadly applicable functionality for a large number of end-users in the districts.

While RTM does have a learning curve, although most IT managers probably have much more network savvy than I can boast of — its ability to maximize time efficiency in a school system with little to spare makes it effort well spent. For more information, as well as a trial download, visit the manufacturer’s site at www.protect-me.com.

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No Child Left Behind’s Case for School Report Cards

The No Child Left Behind law offers an unprecedented amount of data and information. For the first time, school districts must distribute a report card with information on every school’s academic performance. To help parents make the most of their school report cards, Parent Leadership Associates has released a four-page guide, Eight Tips on Using Your School’s Report Card.

Make sure the report has the required information. No Child Left Behind requires academic performance to be broken down by student groups—race, gender, low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities.

Use the information provided on the report card to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your school. Keep asking questions. What is being done to improve the weaknesses addressed? What schools are doing better and what can we learn from them?

Get involved. Schools need dedicated parents to help them improve student achievement.

“The information released by school districts under No Child Left Behind is an opportunity for parents to get a more complete picture of their school,” said Adam Kernan-Schloss, president of KSA-Plus Communications and co-founder of Parent Leadership Associates.
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COLLEGES

January events at Sarah Lawrence College

Friends of the Sarah Lawrence College Library Offer Mini Courses

“19th Century Music” and “Our Mutual Friend by Charles Dickens” are the themes of two mini-courses to be held over three days, January 14-16, in Marshall Field House at Sarah Lawrence College. The mini-courses are sponsored by the Friends of the Sarah Lawrence Library and are free to members. For more information about becoming a Friend of the Library or the two mini-courses, call (914) 271-4722 or go to http://www.slc.edu/library/friends.

“19th Century Music” to be held from 10 a.m.-12 noon, is broken up into particular subjects of study with regard to 19th century music over the three days. The sessions are entitled: Romantic Landscape, “War of the Romantics,” and “Approaches to Wagner.” The mini-course will be taught by music faculty member Martin Goldner. Our Mutual Friend by Charles Dickens,”

held from 1-3 p.m. will be devoted to the study of the Charles Dickens novel. Eja Wachs, literature faculty member will lead the three sessions.

In addition to the January mini-courses, Friends of the Library enjoy numerous benefits throughout the year including invitations to visiting author programs, borrow- ing privileges from the Library’s holdings of 200,000 volumes, subscriptions to newsworthy news, and information on orientation to the Library’s computer-based information resources. For further information, call (914) 100 English and foreign language periodicals, a news- letter listing Friends’ events, as well as lectures, concerts and special events at the College.

Sarah Lawrence College is a small liberal arts college for men and women with a dis- tinctive system of education. In addition to the undergraduate College, eight graduate programs and the Center for Continuing Education meet many important educational needs in the region.

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