

CUNY Matters

A Newsletter for The City University of New York • Summer 1997

CITY COLLEGE'S OWN POSTAL CARD

A Passion for Philately— Delivered on the 150th

When Taki Petrochilos came to City College as a freshman in 1980, he was very big on school spirit. He recalls helping to make the huge banner for the inauguration of President Bernard W. Harleston and then, years later, getting just a bit teary when he saw the same banner unfurled for new President Yolanda T. Moses in 1994.

As a freshman, Petrochilos was also well launched into a life-long passion for stamp collecting, and he distinctly remembers

Postal Service had honored an institution of higher learning—Columbia University—with a stamp.

But with the arrival of a new president, Petrochilos, who is now Assistant to the Director of Athletics at City College, decided to unfurl his philatelic *idée fixe* one more time. This time calls to local Postal Service officials and to the American Philatelic Society in Philadelphia helped him to begin threading the new-stamp process.



The City College of New York • CUNY • 150TH ANNIVERSARY

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



Late Breaking News

The nominations of Alfred B. Curtis, Jr. and Kenneth Cook to The City University Board of Trustees were approved on June 17, 1997 by the New York State Senate in Albany.

Late in May, Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani nominated Curtis to replace Trustee Jerome Berg, whose seat's term had expired last June.

Curtis, a Staten Island resident, is President and CEO of the United Nations Development Corporation, a not-for-profit agency established by the State legislature to provide facilities for the United Nations community and funded at \$280 million.

Prior to this he served for two years as Commissioner for the New York City Department of Youth Services and Executive Director of the Interagency Coordinating Council on Youth for the City of New York.

An Assistant Vice President at Chemical Bank for five years before entering public service, Curtis graduated from the College of Staten Island with a B.S. in 1986, and had previously attended

Queens College. He has also been a President of the Staten Island NAACP.

Early in June Gov. George E. Pataki nominated Cook to take the seat formerly occupied by Trustee Charles E. Inniss, who died on Jan. 30.

Cook, a resident of Brooklyn and a 1958 B.S. graduate in chemistry and biology from Brooklyn College, retired in 1994 from a 25-year career as a science teacher at Junior High School 232 in Brooklyn. He also brings several years of experience working with GED students at Prospect Heights High School.

Cook was also a student counselor at Borough of Manhattan Community College's summer program in 1982. From 1980-84 he worked with Project Turnaround at J.H.S. 232, an after-school program aimed at preventing students from dropping out.

Cook also earned an M.S. in Psychology and Counseling at Long Island University and an M.S. in biochemistry at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. He served in the Korean war as radio operator on a B-29 bomber. ♦

TRENDING UPWARD

Highlights of 1997-98 City Budget

Several enhancements for The City University of New York were negotiated during final deliberations on the City Adopted Budget for 1997-98. Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds observed, "The substantial capital additions and the increased operating support for language immersion (\$1 million) and library acquisitions (\$500,000) at the community colleges are due to the support we received from the City Council, the City Administration, and the Borough Presidents, as well as the fine work of the trustees, presidents, faculty, students, union leaders, CLAC, and friends of the University."

The City budget also funded 21 community college and 28 senior college capital projects, ranging from rehabilitation of the Whitman and Gershwin Theaters at Brooklyn College and a new gym floor at Kingsborough to upgraded biology and geology prep areas at Queensborough and \$1.5 million for the design of the Queens Center for Molecular and Cellular Biology.

A majority of the funded projects will result in improved computer and communication services. Among City Council-sponsored projects were Web stations for a virtual library at BMCC (\$381,000), Mechanical Technology Workstations at Queensborough (\$140,000), and replacement of out-moded equipment at CUNY-TV (\$300,000). Borough Presidents sponsored more than \$500,000 for computers at the new GSUC library, \$240,000 for new distance learning classrooms at Baruch, and \$220,000 for a telecommunications infrastructure at LaGuardia.

Other good news in the budget included the earmarking of \$2.85 million for a bonded project to acquire "Center 3" at LaGuardia Community College (the State's matching amount has

not yet been approved). LaGuardia now leases several floors of this building, a block from its main campus center, and the project will allow expansion into the entire space.

Heading a separate category of City Council initiatives were 18 grants totaling nearly \$500,000. The largest of these, \$100,000, went to the Bridge for Medicine program at the Medical School. The program was established in 1979 to give approximately 100 seniors from inner-city high schools intensive college-level course work to prepare them for careers in health science.

The sum of \$83,000 was allocated to the Caribbean Research Center at Medgar Evers College. York College received \$55,000 for its New York State Small Business Development program. LaGuardia Community College, as the repository for mayoral papers, received \$50,000 for the Koch/Wagner archives, \$60,000 for the LaGuardia Archives. ♦



OVER EASY

For several years the Board of Trustees and Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds have hosted an annual breakfast to honor members of the New York City Council and provide the occasion for informal discussion of issues of mutual concern. Greeting Board Chairwoman Anne A. Paolucci, center, and Chancellor Reynolds at Harry's Restaurant across from City Hall on May 28 is City Council Speaker Peter Vallone. All three spoke to the gathering of Council and Board members, college presidents, the CUNY Legislative Action Council (CLAC) and union representatives, as well as various CUNY students, faculty, and officials. Some of the many projects supported by the Council in the 1997-98 City budget are noted in the accompanying article. Photo, André Beckles

Grand Tour Begins for CUNY Memorabilia

Among CUNY memorabilia in a 150th anniversary traveling exhibition that opened at Baruch College on May 7 is this picture of early publishing giant R. R. Bowker, Free Academy Class of 1868, and his notebook for a "Lectures on Vision" class. Bowker went on to found the Library Journal and Publisher's Weekly, still flagship journals in their fields. For more on the exhibition, see page 8.



Reporting in Tongues

By James Anderson

Professor of English, Lehman College

Visit your local newsstand and the rather abstract concept of multilingual journalism suddenly takes life. Magazines, newspapers, and journals written in the myriad languages spoken in the New York area abound, vying for the attention of immigrant and native communities.

This is a fact, says Professor Patricio Lorzundi, chair of Lehman College's Multilingual Journalism Program, that academia can no longer afford to ignore. "You have a market that's crying out for professionals, journalists who can write, report, and edit in English and other languages as well. We aim to fill this need."

Lorzundi's program, two years old now, has enrolled 20 students who are pursuing a broad range of studies. The students' core courses provide a well-rounded introduction in the basics any reporter brings to the newsroom, including writing, editing, and reporting for both print and electronic media. Their studies span everything from audio and video production to desktop publishing. Subsequently, students may branch out into foreign language courses and translation, including Spanish, French, Russian, and Japanese. Asako Tochika, a current MLJ student, calls this pre-professional training "an invaluable experience."

Extramural response to Lorzundi's brainchild has been very welcoming. "Multilin-



gualism is a fact of life," says Albor Ruiz, a representative of the National Association of the Hispanic Press. "This program not only recognizes this fact but also will be important in harnessing the immense talent of many young New Yorkers."

Herman Morales, senior vice president of Univision Group, the large Spanish-language broadcaster, sees the MLJ as not only a way to bring new talent to news coverage, but as a way to improve media cov-

erage for the growing and increasingly influential Hispanic sector of the U.S. population. "A program such as this," Morales believes, "should generate a pool of candidates who are equipped with the language skills and cultural sensitivity to address the growing diversity of the nation."

Lorzundi, who holds a CUNY Ph.D. in Spanish, brings extensive experience to the Program—as a UPI features editor, news editor of *El Diario*, and, from 1985 to 1992, editor-in-chief of *Noticias del Mundo*, a major Spanish-language paper in the city. He is also the author of *Estilo y Referencia*, the first style manual for North American journalists and writers of Spanish.

As a centerpiece of the 42-credit program, Lorzundi is planning to launch a community-based newspaper called *The Bronx Journal* (a mock-up front page is shown at left). Its target audience and reporting area center on a borough that has long been short-changed by the local media, and it will include sections written in several languages, including English, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, and Haitian patois. MLJ enrollees will staff the new publication and be responsible for its reporting on cultural, business, and community issues in the Bronx.

Working with a staff of 10 or more students, Lorzundi envisions having the *Journal* up and running this fall on a monthly or bi-monthly cycle. "It's a great opportunity to get the kind of exposure and portfolio the industry's hiring officers require," says Colin Broderick, a student in Lehman's Honors Program. ♦

Analysis of 1995 Survey On Student Experience

Though City University students continue to sustain high educational aspirations, course availability has increasingly hampered their curricular itineraries. But their satisfaction with the courses they do take is very high. While their patronage of an array of 14 student services has risen, satisfaction ratings for these services have fallen off. Also, on average the household income of CUNY students is declining.

These are some of the findings presented to the Board of Trustees' Committee on Student Affairs in April by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. This data was drawn from the 1995 Student Experience Survey, which was intended to measure students' social origins, attitudes, and perceptions of their academic environment (the last such survey was administered in 1989). One thousand students on each of 17 campuses were questioned, and the response rate was 39% (in 1989 it was 36%).

Student responses are best understood against the background of rapidly changing demographics. Since 1989 the percentage of students born outside the U.S. mainland jumped from 38% to 47% (Medgar Evers and Hostos, at 64%, have the highest proportion). Almost half of these students come from the Caribbean region. The Soviet Union cohort more than tripled since 1989, rising from 2.3% to 7% of all immigrants at CUNY.

In the last six years, the household income of CUNY students has declined. At community colleges, students from households earning less than \$20,000 rose from 41% to 51%; at senior colleges the rise was from 27% to 36%. Unsurprisingly, the percentage of students willing to agree that college posed a financial strain rose markedly from 58% to 83%.

Though presented with more obstacles to graduation, students maintain high career goals. Three out of five senior college and 45% of community college students intend to complete a graduate degree. The survey revealed that 11% imagined a strong chance of having to leave college permanently; 21% saw a temporary interruption as possible; 24% entertained a transfer outside of CUNY; and 30% considered moving to another CUNY campus.

Dissatisfaction with course offerings was found to be on the rise. In six years the figure of 67% for those feeling "not enough courses are offered at times when I can take them" rose to 75%. CUNY-wide, 38% said they took fewer courses than they had planned in the fall 1995 semester. Despite these difficulties, most students (81%) expressed satisfaction with their degree progress, and an even higher percentage (88%) found most of their courses interesting. A smaller majority, 57%, agreed that all or most of their teachers took their responsibilities to students seriously. But only 10% said that it is hard to get an appointment with all or most teachers to discuss classwork.

In the area of student services usage is up but satisfaction rankings dropped. Twelve of 14 services experienced higher traffic, notably computer (+19%) and

Continued on page 12

CCNY stamp, continued from page 1

But only semi-successfully; the best he could garner was an offer for a special cancellation. Then it was suggested that the venerable City College campus might be perfect for the Service's series of Historic Preservation postal cards ("postcard" is *not* postally correct among collectors). An array of six Collegiate Gothic buildings on the St. Nicholas heights campus, designed by the eminent George Browne Post, had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, and they are now undergoing an extensive \$180 million restoration.

Especially notable among them is Shepard Hall. According to Petrochilos, President Moses' office, sensing the opening for a CCNY postal card, made a proposal to the Postal Service's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee to make it a reality. The Postal Service was convinced, and it soon became only a question of whether the design and manufacturing processes could be hastened to coincide with the Sesquicentennial festivities planned for the spring of 1997.

The happy answer to that question came on the morning of May 7 in Aaron Davis Hall on the CCNY campus, with a First Day of Issue ceremony unveiling a new 20-cent Postal Card that features an aerial view of Shepard Hall. Petrochilos' pride on the occasion was matched by that of Allen Kane, the Chief Marketing Officer and Senior Vice President of the Postal Service.

In his remarks, Kane spoke affectionately of his own City University affiliations. "I attended three colleges in the system and have degrees from two of them. I



Above, a vintage view of Shepard Hall. The postcard, posted on May 18, 1908, with a 1-cent stamp, was discovered in a Massachusetts antique store by CUNY Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson; right, U.S. Postal Service Senior Vice President Allen R. Kane speaking at the first day of issue ceremony.

started my undergraduate life at Hunter College, transferred to Brooklyn College, and received my undergraduate degree there in 1967 at a total cost of around \$240. My son's accounting textbook last year almost equaled the cost of my undergraduate degree! I went on to get my MBA from Baruch College in 1970. I owe a lot to the education and training I got here," Kane added, "and I appreciate the opportunity to come back to commemorate CCNY's contribution to the city and nation."

Kane closed his remarks by placing the 28 million images of Shepard Hall that will be criss-crossing the nation in larger philatelic context: "The Postal Service's commemorative stamp program has helped to advance the knowledge and awareness of America's heritage. Stamps have marked historical milestones, fundamental U.S. principles, and extraordinary achievements in the arts and literature that have shaped our nation. This morning we are commemorating the role of a great public college."

The postal card—printed in Washington by offset on 22-pound paper and employing the colors yellow, magenta, cyan, and black—follows two other campuses that have been honored in the Historic Preservation series, St. John's College and Princeton University.

The painting of Shepard Hall was



executed by Howard Koslow, a resident of Toms River, NJ.

Moses extended "a special word of gratitude" to him: "Mr. Koslow's painting captures beautifully the grace and grandeur of Shepard Hall."

The President ended by hailing the first mover. "Last but not least, I would like to salute Taki Petrochilos," Moses said. "Taki's passion for stamp collecting and his love for City College helped inspire the effort to secure this unique honor for CCNY."

As for Petrochilos, he is now doing what you might expect. He is preparing a wide berth in one of his many stamp folders for numerous forms of the postal card, as well as the initial printout of the computer graphic of Koslow's painting and cards signed by everyone on the May 7 dais. "Be sure to send me a copy of *CUNY•Matters*," he admonishes. "The story will go in too." ♦

Graduate School Conference Celebrates Teaching

Nancy Wilson, a longtime adjunct in the English department at Lehman College and co-author with Sondra Perl of *Through Teachers' Eyes: Portraits of Writing Teachers at Work*, attended a recent conference on teaching at the Graduate School and reports.

I'm going to tell a story, a teaching story," began Sondra Perl, Professor of English at Lehman College and the Graduate Center. "Like any such story it consists of partial truths... is messy and incomplete." Perl's story was the focal point of an extraordinary afternoon conference addressing "The Meaning of Teaching."

Welcoming the Graduate Center audience to the program, which was sponsored by the Ph.D. Program in English, its Executive Officer William P. Kelly noted the rarity of such occasions. Academic forums, he observed, usually focus on scholarship; teaching is often taken for granted. "We don't formally acknowledge and pay attention to it," he noted.

On March 21, however, scholars, teachers and graduate students gathered to honor an exemplary teacher, Sondra Perl, and in a broader sense to honor teaching itself. When Perl, who was recently named New York State Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, was asked by Prof. Kelly how she would like to celebrate her award, she suggested a conference on teaching. In the spirit of collaboration that informs all her work, she invited Professor Kenneth Bruffee, Brooklyn College, and Marie Ponsot, Professor Emerita, Queens College, to join her. "I'm not the only one who works hard and thoughtfully with students or brings passion to the classroom," she said. "I didn't want to stand here alone."

The three professors, all distinguished teachers of writing, challenged several academic traditions. Bruffee spoke of collaboration. Ponsot spoke of pleasure. And Perl herself, in a talk that kept the audience rapt, told her first-person story, a narrative of teaching.

Bruffee began his talk with a list of Perl's professional collaborations. Among other things, he noted, she was a founding member of the CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors and a founding director of the New York City Writing Project, which is now part of the Institute for Literacy Studies at Lehman. "Even her justly renowned book...was researched and written collaboratively."

Collaboration, he commented, has long been "suspect" in academe. Quoting David Damrosch on "the archaic hyperindividualism" of university training, which produces "alienation and aggression" in its graduates, Bruffee praised Perl for contributing to "a deep, paradigmatic change...salutary and long overdue...from individualistic thought and practice to what is now being given the cover term 'relational.'" In conclusion, he called for new kinds of graduate programs, rich in collaborative teaching and learning—programs that might produce "more Sondra Perls."

Ponsot spoke of "the pleasures of

pedagogy...of reading, writing and teaching." For her these pleasures are central—not "best butter smeared over harsh realities." Referring to the notion of writing as primarily "hard" and "painful," she said she did not recognize herself (or Perl) in that description. The work of writing, reading and teaching can indeed be "strenuous," she said, even "exhausting," but we are sustained by the pleasure of seeing students' writing improve, the energy that comes from making and reading texts, and "the knowledge that we are doing the world's work."

Quoting bell hooks's response to a statement by Martin Luther King, Jr., she concluded, " 'We must start from a decision to love.' Sondra starts from that point of view."

The themes of collaboration and pleasure were evident in Perl's own talk, "Facing the Other on Austrian Soil." Rather than present her theories of teaching, Perl opened her classroom to the audience. She spoke of her experience teaching two graduate courses, part of a City College M.A. program in Language and Literacy taught by CUNY faculty in Austria to Austrian teachers of English, which raised questions of pedagogy—and of ethics and identity as well.

"Although most of my learning as a teacher has occurred here, on CUNY grounds," Perl told us, "in Austria, a setting so alien, so distant and so different from what I have grown accustomed to here, I found myself needing to think hard about the meaning of teaching."

Starting with her initial qualms about teaching in Austria, Perl took us scene by scene through the courses—and into her own history as well. Born an American Jew, she had grown up with stories of the Holocaust. Though not a child of survivors, she recognized in herself "deep prejudices" against Germans and Austrians: "I had inherited my mother's hatred of Germans and her conviction that, no matter what they say or do... within every German, there lies a Nazi in disguise." In Innsbruck, the memories haunted her, intruded on her teaching.

For Perl teaches composition theory through practice, and whether her students are CUNY freshmen or teachers in an M.A. program, she asks them to write about issues that matter to them and explore these issues honestly. And in course after course, alongside her students, she does the same herself. In Austria, however, she found it "almost impossible to write." If she wrote about the questions that were haunting her, she would risk alienating her students. Yet not to write about them would be to deny the honesty and humanity central to her teaching.

As Perl's story unfolded, we heard how, slowly, she found the courage to share her questions with the Austrian teachers. Hesitantly at first, not sure how far she would be willing to go, she told her writing group



Prof. Sondra Perl speaking at the GSUC conference on teaching. Photo, Gerald Cyrus

that she couldn't continue a poem she was writing. "The more I walk on this land," she said, "the more my mind fills with images of the Holocaust. But how can I read this to you?...I don't know how to talk about this or how to ask you about it." The teachers' response surprised her. "How can you not talk about this?" said one. "We never discuss our past, but we must! Of course, you should continue to write and you must let us hear it."

So gradually, tentatively, Perl began to write and talk about the issue that concerned her and, in doing so, to provide a model of ethical teaching. A teacher, she believes, cannot—and should not—evade ethical issues.

Quoting Louise Rosenblatt, she argued that he or she should not "try to pose as a completely objective person....A much more wholesome situation is created when the teacher is a really live person who has examined his own attitudes and assumptions and who, when appropriate, states them frankly and honestly."

"How better to enact for these teachers what it means to be a human being in the classroom," Perl asked us, "than to be the person I am, with my fear of raising [these questions]?" She continued to write, and to read some of her writing aloud, and the teachers responded by writing as well, some about the Holocaust, others about questions of their own.

Reflecting on the poems, letters, memoirs and essays they wrote (some of which she read to us, along with her own poems and journal entries), Perl ended her talk with a reflection on speech and silence: "What was transformative for me," she said, "was speaking out...I see now that I could not have come here and remained silent." ♦

"The experiment is to be tried, whether the children of the people—the children of the whole people—can be educated; and an institution of learning of the highest grade can be successfully controlled by popular will, not by the privileged few..."

Horace Webster, to the entering first class of the Free Academy, Jan. 29, 1849.

Perl's Style: A Precipis

Looking back over two decades, I notice that my work revolves around three key features: a willingness, even a desire, to have my plans altered or disrupted by the issues and questions students bring to class; an interest in listening to and for students' voices, both oral and written; and an abiding love of stories.

The first feature, letting the ideas and the agenda I bring to class be shaped by what students bring, gives students an entry point and grants their ideas and questions a formative role in the curriculum I have constructed. Since no two students ever present the same questions and responses on any given night, I am, if I am listening well, always faced with the creative act of gathering together their questions and responses so that we can use them to direct our learning.

The second feature is linked to the first. Many students, and certainly many of the adults I teach, will not risk raising questions or responding honestly if they suspect that their doubts or concerns will be ridiculed, ignored, or rejected. So, quite consciously, I attempt to create a classroom environment in which I invite students' voices to be heard and in which they are respected. In fact, I want our meetings to draw out their voices and to welcome the kind of speaking out that encourages dialogue.

The third key feature is my own love of stories, both those read in literature and those told in response to that literature. Nothing instructs as well as a story. Nor do we learn so much about ourselves as when we delve into our own stories to discover how they have shaped us.

—From Sondra Perl's essay "Composing Texts, Composing Lives" in the *Harvard Educational Review* (1994)

Joseph Machlis: An Accidental Life in Music

You know **Joseph Machlis**—that formal first name doesn't last long in his jovial and witty company—goes back, way back, when he gives his phone number as PLaza such-and-such. A City College graduate exactly 70 years ago and a piano student at the school which became Juilliard, he remembers hearing Rachmaninov shine in person, and the blond-maned Paderewski. And don't get him started on the Old Met, because it will break your heart—he heard all the great singers, up to and especially including Callas as *Tosca* and *Violetta*. Machlis may not have helped found Queens College (that happened a year before he arrived there in 1938), but few would deny that he established the field of music appreciation, most notably with his famed textbook, *The Enjoyment of Music*. It appeared in 1955, is now in its seventh edition, and has sold well over 2 million copies. Approaching his 91st birthday (on Aug. 11), Machlis is still very much a part of the musical scene: teaching at Juilliard these last 15 years (he retired from Queens in 1974), sponsoring musicales, and publishing novels with musical themes. Royalties from *Enjoyment* allowed him to purchase a classy apartment on East 57th Street for his musicales and holding court. However, he sleeps in a small, very quiet rear apartment a few blocks away, where “clutter” is the operative word...perfect surroundings for a candid and wide-ranging interview. —Gary Schmidgall

GS: Many CUNY students over the decades have been immigrants, and you were one too.

JM: Yes, my parents and I came from Russia in 1909, when I was three, and we settled in the bustling immigrant ghetto on the Lower East Side. Yiddish was all I heard until I went to school. My father was a typesetter at *The Day*, which was one of the best paid professions at the time because of the union. When we became more well-to-do, we moved to Williamsburg in Brooklyn.

GS: And you eventually attended City College—in music, I assume?

JM: Oh no, there was no formal musical curriculum in college in those days. When I was 16 I began studying piano at the Institute of Musical Art, which was the precursor to the Juilliard School, but I was also interested in writing. I got my B.A. in English in 1927. Then I won a scholarship at the Institute to study piano in Paris with Isidore Philipp.

GS: A concert career beckoned?

JM: Yes, but I came out in the teeth of the Depression—no time to launch a career. And I also began to feel that this life was not for me. A pianist sees his world through 10 fingers, and, though I seemed to enjoy myself on stage and loved it, I was pulled in the direction of writing and literature.

GS: What, then, brought you to the new Queens College campus in 1938 as a music teacher?

JM: Thereby hangs a wonderful City College tale, which I'll tell you later. What was special about Queens was that the new President, Paul Klapper, did not want his students to miss out, as he himself had, on serious arts appreciation. Queens students

were required to take either two terms of music or art history. Also rather groundbreaking were the small classes we had then, just 25 or 30 students, and the elaborate binders of mimeographed reading materials we gave out free to them.

GS: You have the reputation as a pioneer teacher of music to laity; what was your concept, exactly?

JM: I vowed not to repeat the mistake of English professors, who used to frighten—or simply bore—their students to death by starting off with the Old English of *Beowulf* and the Middle English of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Instead, they should have started with Sinclair Lewis and Theodore Dreiser, the popular novelists of my day. So that's what I did. I had seduction in mind, so I devised a course that started with surefire works of Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, Grieg. My goal was to lure you as pleasantly as possible, not into the beginnings of music or its history. My basic principle was that appreciation does not depend on dates.

GS: That sounds suspiciously like the last sentence in the Postscript of your text: “Let us always remember that the ultimate wisdom resides neither in dates nor facts. It is to be found in one place only—the sounds themselves.”

JM: Yes, and that's why “enjoyment” is the operative word in my title. Of course, once my seduction had worked, I was able to go “backward” to the more complex, demanding composers like Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach.

GS: As a fisher for the ears of students amid the hectic and sometimes raunchy world of popular music today, would you retire “lures” you used when you started out?

JM: Yes, I'd be inclined to give them Stravinsky now, for example, his “Rite of Spring,” which is terribly close to some of the rhythms in fashion now. Bartok's “Concerto for Orchestra” would be another work I'd think particularly accessible now. (Here the phone rings and Machlis greets “my loving editor.” A new Machlis book has just appeared, and details are discussed. Machlis grumps slightly.) “A book doesn't exist until the *Times* notices it.”

GS: And what have we here?

JM: My latest novel, called *Allegro*. It's about a renowned young concert star who becomes addicted to cocaine. I based it in part on some events from real life. Take a

copy from that pile under the chair.

GS: (perusing the tantalizing blurb on the back) Ned Rorem says, “Joe pulls out all the double-stops in this skillful recital...like Willa Cather mixed with Isaac Singer.” Not bad! Has all your fiction been about classical music?

JM: Every novel but one. Another explores a famous soprano who makes her peace with and performs for the Nazis—also based on an artist in real life.

GS: How did you come by your own appreciation of music? In usual European Hausmusik fashion?

JM: No, in a way it was accidental. My grandmother came over from Russia and brought me a gift of \$50. My father said, “Good, a new suit, shoes...” But my mother said, “No, a gift is for something you

ACCIDENTAL: a chromatically altered note that appears in the course of a piece without belonging to the prevailing key.

—The Enjoyment of Music

wouldn't buy otherwise.” So she went out with the money and, a few days later, a piano sailed up on a pulley through the window of our Brooklyn apartment. Next, she haggled down to a dollar at a pushcart for two little busts; she put them on the piano and said “*das ist Beethoven, das ist Mozart*.” My parents were cultured—had attended all the main theaters in St. Petersburg—but their taste ran mainly to lighter fare, operettas. They did subscribe to opera and sym-

phony, and when they didn't want to hear something, my stepsister and I would go.

GS: Do you recall your first opera?

JM: *Lucia di Lammermoor*...at the Old Met. (He hums a march from it to prove it.) Followed by *Aida*.

GS: My first opera could have ruined me for life! An uncle who knew nothing about opera decided on Wagner's *Meistersinger*, about the longest opera there is. What works would you spring on an unsuspecting grandniece or -nephew?

JM: I'd want them to meet Puccini's *Cio-cio-san* or Verdi's *Violetta*. Which reminds me, I hope you saw Terrence McNally's plays *The Lisbon Traviata* and *Master Class*. Zoe Caldwell's was one of the great performances of all time.

GS: As a sometime Shakespeare teacher, I have certain pet plays. *Love's Labour's Lost* I've been known to call the greatest of his comedies, even his greatest play. But I'm not always successful in selling my view to students. Have any of your pet composers had a hard time in the classroom?

JM: I adore Mahler, but it was impossible to get my students to respond to him. He just seems too thick, too Germanic, too overwhelming. He requires a subtler sensibility.

GS: I want to ask you about changes you may have seen in the generations of students you've taught. You quote Edward MacDowell saying, a century

ago, that he wanted “youthful optimistic vitality” echoed in American music. That doesn't sound very “now” as our *fin de siècle* approaches.

JM: Very Whitman, isn't it? “I sing the body electric...” Well, I am a little out of it now, and would hate to try to characterize the Generation Xers.

GS: But you have kept up with the younger generation through the Juilliard School since your retirement from Queens.

JM: For 15 years...another accident! A dean called me and said, “Do you want to come and teach on Thursday?” The composer David Del Tredici, it seems, had suddenly upped and left for Harvard, and another composer, David Diamond, said to then Juilliard President Peter Mennin, “Try Joe Machlis.” Why would a happy new retiree want to do that, I asked, on four days notice. “Well, it's your alma mater,” (he replied.) “That's right, it's my alma mater! I'm coming.” Later I joked that this reminded me of the search long ago for a new cantor of St. Thomas in Leipzig. After many candidates, including the famous Georg Philipp Telemann, turned down the post, a town councilor moped that “since the best man could not be obtained, a lesser one will have to be accepted.” So they swallowed their pride and hired Johann Sebastian Bach!

Now, you asked about changes in students, and one that does distress me comes to mind: vocabulary. For my seventh edition of *Enjoyment*, my editor said I had to throw out some of my heavy words. So I found myself rewriting to make it “easier” to read.

GS: You mean to accord more with the wretched 1,000-word-or-so TV vocabulary?

JM: Exactly. Now, Juilliard students are a very special case, another world. I remember, at Marlboro, being with an ancient little pianist (*Machlis catches himself and laughs*)—listen to me!...I'm there myself now! Anyway, we'd be with these very young players in their 20s, and there would be no age difference because we were all musicians. I think there is an enormous generation gap now, but not at a place like Juilliard.

GS: Over the decades have you ever experienced falling away from a composer you once loved?

JM: I had a great Wagner passion early in life, but I outgrew it.

GS: Just like Nietzsche.

JM: Yes. Of course, Hitler helped me along. As a Jew I couldn't remain oblivious to Nazi implications. Siegfried was not only a blond, blue-eyed cowboy running about the stage but also the perfect embodiment of Nazi ideology. Doing my master's work at Columbia in English also helped to exorcize Wagner, because my fo-



Professor emeritus Joseph Machlis. Photo, André Beckles

New Director for GSUC Women's Studies Center

Earlier this year Electa Arenal, a Professor in the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures Program at GSUC, began her three-and-a-half-year term as Director of the Center for the Study of Women and Society. She succeeds political scientist Joyce Gelb of City College and the Graduate School. Arenal will also coordinate the Certificate Program in Women's Studies, an optional course of study for students already enrolled in the Ph.D. program.

A faculty member at the College of Staten Island since 1968, Dr. Arenal was primed for her new appointment by having served, while on extended leave in 1992-94, as Director of Research at the Center for Women's Studies in the Humanities at the University of Bergen in Norway. Her publications include *Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns in Their Own Words*, a bilingual critical edition of the 17th-century writings of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, sometimes referred to as the first feminist of the Americas, and an edition of the works of the daughter of the Spanish playwright Lope de Vega, Sor Marcela de San Félix. From 1991-95 Arenal served on the MLA Committee on the Status of Women.

The new Director spoke of her mission at the Center, established in 1977, as "one of bringing together researchers, students, policy makers, field workers, activists, and artists who need the time and space to meet, exchange ideas, and create new research agendas." She adds, "Our multicultural mandate requires us to stimulate cultural translation, to cross boundaries and raise intellectual and social consciousness." Arenal also hopes to establish an endowment at the Center to help further these goals.

cus was on his prose criticism. To my disgust, I found in his pages all the elements that Nazi ideologues blended into their propaganda: anti-rationalism, intuitionism, an hysterically exaggerated nationalism, anti-semitism, and nature worship... specifically, the worship of German nature—the Rhine and so forth.

GS: No wonder you absented yourself from Valhalla. Speaking of politics, you quote Jefferson's lovely remark about music being "the favorite passion of my soul." Politicians who are truly passionate about serious music are as rare as California condors, and I think I'd faint if I heard a politician say he played chamber music. What is your view of the art in the current political climate?

JM: When I was growing up, the influence of Europe was still enormous, and there *everyone* seemed to play. Most people played at home, in the family circle, in quartets and whatnot. Music was integral to the life of the family. Every home had a piano. Now, with schools cutting back funding, the foundations of our musical culture are being slowly destroyed.

GS: Do you think the phenomenon of the movie *Shine* says anything pro or con about the situation? Was there some cost to classical music in the media joyride for "Rach 3"?

JM: First of all, I enjoyed the movie, was moved by it, especially the failure of father and son to reconcile until at the

father's grave. That was very deep and beautifully done.

GS: Now that sounds like the response of novelist Machlis.

JM: I didn't mind the playing as I watched, though I'm told now David Helfgott's recitals are not good. I think it's wrong to emphasize how he plays. To paraphrase Samuel Johnson, the wonder is not that he plays well, but that, after his life experience, he plays at all.

GS: You spoke earlier of luring listeners, and he'll certainly do that at Hollywood Bowl later this summer. Speaking of luring again, I forgot to ask how the idea for *The Enjoyment of Music* came to you. Don't tell me that was accidental, too.

JM: Believe it. I had been blithely teaching my music courses for years without a thought in that direction when a representative from Norton came by and simply asked me, "Do you have a book?" I told him, "No, just those big binders of mimeographs, just syllabi."

GS: And the light went on.

JM: Yes. They became the book.

GS: One last question. This interview will reach the CUNY community in the summer. I have some very strongly seasonal musical tastes, and with summer I get an overwhelming hankering for the music of Delius, his "Summer Night on the River," "Song of the High Hills," or "Florida Suite." What works say summer to you?

JM: I'm really more a "man of all seasons," but I'd certainly say Debussy's "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun" and Ravel's "Daphnis and Chloe." (With that I left, but not before Machlis related the story he had promised to tell about how he came to Queens College—see sidebar.) ♦



Machlis tests his chops for his CUNY Matters interviewer in his art-filled East Side apartment. Photo, André Beckles



Spring Reception Honors Grantsmanship

Isaac Max Shapiro indulges in finger food at the annual Spring Reception on May 20 honoring CUNY recipients of major institutional grants. He is with his mother, Dr. Martha Bell of Brooklyn College, the principal investigator for a U.S. Department

of Education grant, "Making the Core Curriculum a Reality for Disadvantaged Students." Isaac joined the festivities because his babysitter had classes to attend at Brooklyn College and his father, Prof. George Shapiro of the College's Mathematics Department, was also being honored for a New York State grant for mathematics education in grades 8-12. Photo, André Beckles

A City College Short Story

Toward the end of the interview I asked Machlis about Earle Fenton Palmer, his dedicatee for *Enjoyment*. What he related was a story he told, memorably and at greater length, when he gave a talk at City College last year. Machlis once hoped to compose short stories for a living. He still has the knack for it; this one contains a few accidentals and has not one but two happy endings.

Seventeen and fresh out of high school, I traveled from Brooklyn to City College. I will never forget my first view of this huge, amazing Gothic pile high on the hill. I had just been reading Scott's novels, and I thought, "My God, it's Kenilworth!" Well, like its architecture, most of the College's teachers were awfully intimidating and remote. They all had three names and seemed to radiate the feeling that they should have been at some fancy Ivy League campus instead of where they were. They had that air of "sniffing the unwashed masses" about them.

But there was one wizened little English professor who was not at all like that. He too had three names, and I took a writing course from him. One of my essays he liked very much was on Isaiah. Well, one day we were discussing another paper I had written about playing the piano, and he rather dreamily asked me if I would come to his house and play for him and his wife. He had always felt he had missed out by not having learned music. Piano lessons, he told me, hadn't taken on his older brother, and his parents refused to waste money on lessons for him. Of course I would come. So I got into my best suit and went to his house on 116th Street in Morningside Heights. I played a little, and the couple was so delighted and charming. I did this again a few more times after that. I went on to take (Professor) Palmer's wonderful course in the English novel—all the great novels of Dickens, Eliot, the Brontës.

Well, I graduated and for several more years I devoted myself entirely to the piano. But slowly I began to realize that putting my whole life into the keyboard was not going to be for me...that words, language, literature would have to be a part of my life too. So one day I closed the piano. I stopped. I decided I would try my hand at short stories and lived a kind of Bohemian life. I got nowhere, and several years later I found myself teaching a dozen little girls in Brighton how to play the piano. I was miserable and lost and didn't know which way to turn.

Then I thought of that old professor. He was, of course, Earle Fenton Palmer. It had been nearly 10 years since our asso-

ciation, but I decided I'd write him one of those letters that begin "You probably won't remember me..." and ask him for advice. Well, he instantly recalled me as the author of a fine essay on Isaiah and a fine pianist. Then he asked me if I would consider teaching at a new college in Queens. Its first president, Paul Klapper, happened to be a former student of his, and he would be happy to recommend me. Thus I got the first full-time job of my life.

Of course, I wanted to do something to thank Palmer, by then retired from City, but he resisted: "What did I do? I just made a phone call." I insisted, telling him, "You gave me the push to try for something I didn't have the confidence for. I'm deeply grateful and want to give you something in return. I could give you a muffler or a bottle of scotch, but that you already have. Let me give you something from me, from myself. Let me give you some piano lessons." Palmer got that dreamy look of old and accepted. And so I did, for five years... every Thursday. My 70-year-old student practiced three, four hours a day and got to playing Bach minuets, Chopin waltzes, even the first movement of Beethoven's "Moonlight" sonata.

Then his wife developed Alzheimer's and they moved to Troy, NY, for health care. He often urged me to visit him, and I was never able to get there.

Several years later, with *The Enjoyment of Music* ready for the printer, I called him and said, "If any man ever owed a book to another man, it's this one for you." I finally made my long-put-off trip to Troy with a heartfelt presentation copy, and we had a wonderful, emotional reunion (his wife had since died). "You're going to find out now whether the lessons of your red pencil stuck," I said, and read him passages from the book. Near 90 now, a palsy had driven him from the piano, so my playing pleased him and, I think, brought a few tears.

I can to this day remember him blowing a kiss to me from the verandah as I left after dinner that evening. I knew I was seeing him for the last time. Though sad, it was, I thought, a perfect coda to a relationship full of tenderness, gratitude, admiration, and, most of all, love. ♦

4TH Annual Scholars Symposium Unites Once and Future Winners

By Gary Schmidgall

High-performance automobiles—Ferraris, Jaguars, Porsches, Rolls-Royces—require very special maintenance: highly trained mechanics, sophisticated diagnostic machines, kid gloves, and more than the usual TLC. Recognizing that its own high-performance students, those with high-octane GPAs and impressive mileage in school and community service, might need similarly scrupulous support, CUNY several years ago established its Scholarship Enhancement Program (SEP).

The Program involves the senior colleges in identifying top-ranking students and then informing, encouraging, and preparing them to compete for national graduate fellowships and scholarships such as the Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright, Mellon, Woodrow Wilson, Ford, and National Science Foundation. A yearly highlight of the Program, which is directed by Virginia Slaughter in the Office of Academic Affairs, is the Scholars Symposium.

The Symposium gathers many of CUNY's best students (mostly seniors and juniors, plus a sprinkling of sophomores), faculty mentors, campus SEP representatives, past scholarship winners, and officials from scholarship-granting institutions for a day of intense preparation and information-sharing about the keen competition for the nation's most prestigious awards for graduate study. Think of those carefully choreographed, multipurpose pit-stops that racing cars make at the Indy 500 or Daytona 500, and you have a good idea of what transpired at the Scholars Symposium on May 9 in the conference rooms of Baruch College's Newman Library.

The morning commenced with several short presentations by a panel of past award winners. The moderator, Hunter *summa cum laude* graduate Rosemarie Roberts, took part in the first Symposium in 1994 with spectacular results: She was offered a Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship for Minorities, an American Psychology Association Fellowship, and an NSF Fellowship. She chose the last and paid CUNY the supreme compliment of deciding to pursue her doctoral research in questions of social justice at the Graduate School.

Mauricio Rubio saluted Baruch College for taking him in as a SEEK student in 1991. He graduated *magna cum laude* in 1995 and received a Woodrow Wilson for masters-level study at Princeton. As befits a grad who is taking this year off to work as an analyst in the Emerging Markets Department of Bear Stearns, Rubio urged prospective competitors, "Do your research. Don't be afraid to cold-call former applicants and winners to get advice on strategy and the fine points."

Leota Lone Dog, who won a 1996 Ford Predoctoral Minority Fellowship, spoke of eight long years of evening classes that brought her a Hunter B.A. in Art History and Women's Studies. She urged Sympo-

sium students to "trust your own imagination" as they create their scholarly identity—and prepare their fellowship applications. She also emphasized the need to "take the initiative and find your own support on campus." Lone Dog is now pursuing an American Studies doctorate at NYU and conducting an oral history and documentary film project involving Native American elders who live in New York City. She is focusing on Brooklyn from 1900 to the present where, she says, well over 50 nations are represented.

Hunter alumna Elaine Freedgood, whose Mellon Humanities Fellowship helped her garner a Columbia Ph.D. in English with a dissertation on risk in Victorian literature, was eager to offer some "nothing ventured, nothing gained" advice. In academe, she said, "your chances of not getting what you want or not getting it right away are good. Every job interview does not bring an offer; every essay you submit is not accepted for publication. You get turned down a lot." Don't let failure or fear of failure intimidate you, Freedgood suggested. Her own experience bears out this advice: After taking a few short-term teaching positions, she will start on a tenure track in the English Department at the University of Pennsylvania this fall.

A stellar Queens 1997 graduate in psychology, Yesilernis Peña, echoed Freedgood's point by noting how, at every step of the competition process, she was beset by doubts. She lauded her campus mentors and SEP supporters for en-



less. He has just completed work on a Columbia Ph.D. in English on the subject of racial passing in 20th-century American fiction, and clearly he could never pass for a shrinking violet. Exuding confidence, he urged students to "be tenacious and make your presence known in class. Make sure your professors know who you are." Thompson left no doubt that the outcome of his doctoral defense a week later would be to his satisfaction (it was).

After this plenary session, attendees separated into discussion groups led by honors faculty members that addressed five topics: Research Scholarships and Fellowship Opportunities, Planning Your Academic Career, Putting Together an Application, The Application Essay, and Mock Interviewing.

Two sessions were reserved for juniors and seniors closest to submitting their application. Ten students with a Mellon, Marshall, Fulbright, or other major prize in their sights convened with Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds, Senior Faculty Fellow Robert Picken, and Prof. L. Michael Griffel of Hunter College to submit to mock interview questions.

Queens junior Mary Hershberger garnered praise from the interviewers for so ani-



Three past winners of major graduate awards who returned to speak at the fourth Scholars Symposium: upper right, Leota Lone Dog attending the Women's Music Festival in Michigan last summer; middle, Mauricio Rubio outside his office

during a year's leave from Princeton; lower left, Carlyle Thompson just after successfully defending his dissertation at Columbia, flanked by Columbia English professor Robert O'Meally, left, and Prof. George Cunningham of Brooklyn College.

mately conveying her interest in linguistic research. "Most people look for a seat when they get on the subway; I try to find a place to eavesdrop and hear a few good diphthongs," she stated. Chancellor Reynolds noted the effectiveness of using an anecdote and being able to make an easy transition from the anecdotal to the factual in describing one's research interests. The Chancellor also urged the importance of "hitting your whole audience of voting interviewers with eye contact as you answer a question."

Dr. Picken threw a typical "hardball" question and evoked discussion of how to deal with one, as well as with "curve" and "softball" queries. Prof. Griffel zeroed in on body language, warning not to maintain a stiff or too casual posture and suggesting a change in posture during a response.

Urging the avoidance of white knuckles, Reynolds added, "Hands say so much. Keep them visible if there is a conference table and keep them relaxed."

Professors Joyce Gelb and Gary Schwartz led a lively and probing session on writing the personal essay that figures in all major fellowship applications. Critiques of several students' work-in-progress essays evoked admonitions to "push yourself to recognize yourself"—doubtless easier said than done, but vital to producing an essay that, as one mentor remarked, moves "from the external to the internal."

Sitting in on the session was Mary Fedorko, Fulbright director of U.S. student programs and a practiced reader of personal essays. "Be yourself," she urged, "This is the one place where there is 'breath' in your application, so make the most of it." She also added that it is important "to talk about your intellectual development—the people or events that led you to where you are."

This advice was echoed by Elizabeth Rosen, a writer on the Chancellor's staff. With her colleague Marybeth McMahon, she taught an intensive Personal Essay writing workshop for SEP earlier this year. As she reminded students, "not every reader is going to be interested, as you are, in 19th century literature or how the alimentary tract works. What you have to do in your essay is express what *in yourself* brought you to your intellectual focus." Students were also urged, in preparing their opening paragraphs, to be like Shakespeare, who conveys so much about his characters in their first speeches.

All participants gathered in the afternoon for luncheon and heard several speakers offer further words of encouragement and admonition.

After greetings from Acting Academic Affairs Vice Chancellor Anne Martin and Trustee Nilda Soto Ruiz, Dan Porterfield, a CUNY Ph.D. and former Rhodes Scholar, fondly recalled being present as an assistant to Chancellor Reynolds when the idea for the Scholarship Enhancement Program was born, and gave a brief overview of the application process. He particularly emphasized the need to "dig deep" when students came to the personal essay. "You want to present a statement that no one else could have written."

Dr. Jeffrey Johnson brought news of a recent hefty increase in the stipends for National Science Foundation Fellowships and spoke at length of the NSF's Minority Fellowship programs. He reiterated the "just do it" advice about applying by remarking, "I am often asked what the chances are for getting an NSF grant. My answer is always: Somewhere between 100% and zero—it's zero if you don't apply."

Johnson also brought some encouraging statistics with him. "It's just a myth that only near-perfect GPAs win our competition. In our top cohort, most all of which are offered fellowships, the range of GPAs has been 3.15 to 4, and in our second-best cohort, from which alternates are often chosen, the range is 2.9 to 4." Clearly, if a student brings outstanding credentials beyond the GPA, hope is not lost.

And the winners are... Though a Rhodes Scholarship was narrowly missed this year by finalist Mohamad Bazzi of Hunter College, several important awards came CUNY's way in the 1997 cycle. In addition

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WORTHY OF TICKER TAPE, BUT...

8 Top Pre-Meds Win Salk Awards

June Brooklyn College grad **David Sternberg** is into the novel. No, not the long fiction of Philip Roth or Toni Morrison but the *novel* reactions and very long words of advanced virological research. Just fasten your lips around the title of his research paper, "Novel Reactions and Kinetics of Acetylcholinesterase and the Fluorescent Label Pyrenebutylmethylphosphonofluoride."

Sternberg is one of eight outstanding CUNY students who received Jonas E. Salk scholarships at a Baruch College ceremony on June 9, and they will all be attending such leading medical schools as Harvard, Cornell, Mount Sinai, and McGill University in the fall. Chosen for academic excellence, impressive research projects, and volunteer work, these Salk Scholars hailed not only from the city but also from Antigua, Nigeria and three corners of the old Soviet Union. Sternberg, a Staten Islander who tutored in art history at the College and is an avid fisherman and blue belt in karate, will apply his award to studies at NYU Medical School.



At the Salk Awards ceremony, from rear left, Trustee Edith Everett, Colette Knight, Eve Sisser, Rhondalyn McLean, Kira Manusis, Fahd Ali, Natalya Koltunova, Matvey Brokhin, Elissa Rubin, and Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds. Front row, from left, WPIX science reporter Karen Hasby, David Sternberg, Mamie Caton, and Catherine Okonji. Photo, André Beckles

The scholarships are named for Dr. Jonas E. Salk, discoverer of the polio vaccine, who graduated from City College in 1934. They carry a \$1,000 annual stipend for medical school tuition. When Dr. Salk was offered a ticker tape parade by New York City in 1955, he requested instead the establishment of scholarships for future medical researchers.

Natalya Koltunova, a native of Tashkent in Uzbekistan who arrived here in 1991, suffered a serious eye injury and required years of therapy as a child. While pursuing

her Hunter degree, she not only "gave something back" by interpreting for Russian patients at the Elmhurst Hospital Eye Clinic but also performed research on cytokines at Cornell's Hematology/Oncology Laboratory. She will be attending its medical school this fall.

As a child with severe asthma, **Catherine Okonji** got to know hospitals all too well, but later she was inspired to become a doctor by visits with her aunt to help children in Nigerian hospitals. The daughter of a Nigerian diplomat, Okonji decided due to

political unrest back home to attend City College, where, in addition to doing research on drug therapy for cocaine addiction, she sang in the College Choir, choreographed routines for her troupe, Les Gazelles Africaines, and tutored biology and chemistry. She's off to the Baylor College of Medicine.

Matvey Brokhin began his advanced studies at age 16 in St. Petersburg—not in the lab but on the podium. He majored in orchestral conducting. Though when he arrived in this country in 1993 and entered Hunter College he decided to pursue medicine, he still completed his degree in music as well as pre-med course work (with a perfect GPA). Brokhin also volunteered in an emergency room and, through Hunter's Linkage Program with Mr. Sinai, conducted research on blood cells infected with sickle cell disease. He takes his Salk to the SUNY Health Science Center in Brooklyn.

Two more Salks from City College are Antigua native and Bronx resident since 1991, **Colette Knight**, and lifelong Harlem resident **Rhondalyn McLean**. Knight's honor for College service may have come via Tin Pan Alley (she won the E.Y. "Yip" Harburg Award), but her path takes her to Harvard Medical School this fall. Her research at City and the CUNY Medical School has been on the effect of nitric acid on prostaglandins and the possible applications of aminolevulinic acid in tumor therapy. McLean expects her work as a physician to focus on advocacy for underserved communities and changes in health care policy. Soon to be packing for medical school at SUNY Buffalo, the anthropology major conducted research on the ecological and immunological factors of an invasion of a tropical island by the insect *Drosophila melanogaster*.

Eve Sisser, who entered Queens College at age 16, worked for three years in a genetics lab on a similar study, the invasion of the island of Guadaloupe by an Asian fruit fly and the parasitic wasps that attack them. She also worked at an Einstein Medical School neurosurgery lab on the role of growth factors in development, disease, and aging.

Discouraged from pre-med studies because she was Jewish, **Kira Manusis** trained passionately for a place on her state's gymnastics team in the former Soviet Union. Finally, in 1989, her family brought her to the States to make a medical career possible for her. Her path was never easy: At one time she was the sole family breadwinner; another period required 12-hour days in a supermarket and withdrawal from school.

Since returning to Brooklyn College, Manusis has earned an Emergency Care certificate, become an EMT on the College EMS squad, tutored biology, and taught children's gymnastics at the Jewish Community Center. This fall she triumphs by starting studies at NYU Medical School.

A highlight of the awards ceremony was an address by Karen Hasby, the science reporter for WPIX-TV. In addition to the eight Salk Scholarships, seven other top-ranking CUNY pre-meds were recognized as Honorary 1997 Salk Scholars: Fahd Ali, Rohini Bhat, Mamie Caton, Jennifer Duchon, Antonia Essallenne, Robert Maitta, and Elissa Rubin. ♦

SOME NOTEWORTHY 1997 GRADS

How to Succeed in College by Really Trying

Mortarboard tassels dangled over the happy brows of several out-of-the-ordinary City University graduates this commencement season. Featured in a *New York Times* story on octogenarian and even nonagenarian college graduates around the country, for example, was **Edith Volin Ruth**, who, at 81 and a great-grandmother, received her Hunter bachelor's degree in art history.

Unable to afford the tuition for a remedial math course early in the Depression in 1931, Ruth bided her time doing secretarial work in a law firm, then married and raised two children. Her reason for returning to school later in life is as straightforward as a Mandrin: "I love learning." In fact, she has now signed up for graduate courses at Hunter: "I'm having so much fun I'm never going to stop," she vows.

At 75 a relative youngster by comparison is **Florence Klein**, a CUNY Baccalaureate Program honors grad whose studies at City College were nipped in the bud by the Depression. After a lifetime in business with her husband, Kleig was drawn by a personal experience with cancer into the study of the psychology of life-threatening illnesses and extensive comparisons of different approaches to support therapy. She is now taking her *magna cum laude* degree in human services into counseling and lecturing on patient empowerment.

Among the usual end-of-college tasks for John Jay College's **Gila Exordia** was choosing a graduation present for her father **Raul Exordia**. When he came to the United States from his native Guatemala, he left behind his wife, three children, and dreams of being a lawyer. Reunited with his family in Queens in 1994, at the age of 50, Exordia joined his daughter as a student at John Jay, maintaining a full-time

job and a 3.3 GPA. This June they received their diplomas together.

So did Lehman honors graduate **Stalin Costa** and his mother **Maria Lapis**, though she had to crash the ceremonies to do so. Her degree was from Bronx Community College, and its commencement took place at the same time as Lehman's. But miss a son's graduation? (President Fernandez welcomed her warmly.)

Among the graduates of Queens College is one of the newest political savants on the metropolitan scene, **Irene Baker**. A political science student, Baker managed the only successful insurgent campaign for the State Assembly in 1996, helping Anne Carozza win the 26th District in Bayside. Voted tops among 140 interns in Albany, Baker has also interned in Washington and now works full time in the Queens office of Congressman Thomas Manton.

This June **Christine Crowdell** continued the family business of earning College of Staten Island degrees. She is the fifth Crowdell to earn one—preceded by her father and three brothers. She'll continue her studies at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences at NYU this fall. Also graduating from CSI, with a 4.0 GPA in accounting, was **Daniel Rindsberg**, who ran the family's promotional products company while attending classes. Now working for Arthur Andersen, he hopes to attend a New York area law school.

Rosalyn Blumenstein started her course work frighteningly and very early, when she ran away from home at 13 after her mother's suicide and fell into the shadowy world of 42nd Street Before Disney. Now a recovered addict, Blumenstein has garnered several scholarships and awards, and took a CUNY BA Program degree with a concentration in the psychology of addic-

tion. She is now working as Director of the Gender Identity Project of the Lesbian-Gay Community Services Center. Her fellow CUNY BA diplomatist **Ashin Intaka** is a former monk from Burma, who will deploy his concentration in religion as head of the American Burma Buddhist Association. Another CUNY BA should have little trouble taking the leap into the real world with her *summa cum laude* in Spanish studies. **Elba Haggerty**, a native of Quito, was a paratrooper in the Ecuadorian army and parachuted exactly 425 more times than former President Bush.

The first college graduate in her family, **Karen Hunter-Waithe** made up for lost time with a triple major in physics, math, and the Thomas Hunter Honors Program at Hunter College; a 3.8 GPA; and an NSF Fellowship. So much for the "secretarial sciences" she studied before leaving Barbados 15 years ago. The winner of a string of prizes and scholarships, including a Mellon that saw her through the painful death from cancer of her husband during her sophomore year, Hunter-Waithe plans to attend MIT, where she has already done semi-conductor research, and earn a doctorate in electrical engineering.

Featured in *The Wall Street Journal* was the unusual change of career from *grands jetes* to grand totals marked by the graduation of accounting major **Xuande Huang** from Baruch College. The 31-year-old former ballet dancer with the Canton-based South Performing Arts Company came to the U.S. four years ago bearing a fascination with the behind-the-curtain aspects of administering a dance company. At Baruch Huang pirouetted to a 3.99 GPA and was the class valedictorian at its June 5 commencement. He's already working at KPMG Peat Marwick. ♦

OTHER LIVES*

A Dean Tends His Pomerium

As a youngster, Stephen Rosser had every right to become a black sheep. After all, he was a preacher's son twice over; his father was a Baptist minister and, in pioneering fashion, so was his mother. Instead, he says, he did what Virginia Baptists are famed for doing: He sang and sang and sang in church choirs all around the state.

A professional singer since his college days at the University of Richmond, Rosser is also University Assistant Dean for Human Resources. In recent years he has traded his Tidewater hymnal for considerably more venerable vocal fare. Specializing in medieval and Renaissance vocal music, Rosser is a ubiquitous tenor on the local and international early music scene, notably as a 10-year member of Pomerium, the well-known 15-voice *capella* ensemble founded in 1972 to explore the virtuoso music of Renaissance chapel choirs. (The group's name, from the medieval Latin for "garden" or "orchard," derives from the title of a 14th-century musical treatise.)

When Rosser is not supervising per-

sonnel and coordinating reports for Board of Trustees meetings, he is very likely to be found rehearsing his part in one of the masses or madrigals of the period with the intricate threading of vocal lines worthy of old lace...works from composers such as Du Fay, Josquin, Lassus, and Ockeghem.

He also performs widely with Lionheart, a male vocal sextet of which he was a founding member in 1993. Its name derives from St. Ignatius of Antioch, the Upper West Side Church where the group has been in residence (the martyr met an unfortunate end involving lions). Rosser has participated in several recordings with both groups, as well as with Concert Royal and The Western Wind. Lionheart's latest CD is titled "My Fayre Ladye: Images of Women in Medieval England."

Asked if a particular performance or church setting lingers in mind, the tenor immediately thinks of the day his father died. But the flying buttresses in this "church" were designed by Mother Nature. "Lionheart was on tour in California's Sonoma County last May," Rosser recalls. "Since you don't sing six-part harmonies with five voices—and since my father had

always encouraged my hobby of gardening—I decided to stay amid the redwoods and sing rather than force a cancellation and fly home. We happened to be singing a requiem mass, *Pierre de la Rue's* for Philip the Fair of Spain. It was very moving for me."

Rosser ventures that Palestrina is his favorite composer, so he is naturally looking forward to Pomerium taking part in a 400th Palestrina anniversary extravaganza as part of the Lincoln Center Festival (July 20 and 27). Planned for next February at Lincoln Center is "Ave Maria: An Exploration of Chant." Rosser also sings at the Cloisters and, in what has become a much-admired Christmas tradition, before the great medieval creche at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

By contrast, Rosser's participation with Lionheart in a 200th anniversary Schubert concert at Carnegie Hall will seem almost modern. The group will sing from manuscripts of the composer that have never before left Vienna.

Does the tenor have a theme song? A *kyrie* or *Gregorian chant*, you might think, but no: "There is a wonderful pop song by Dorothy Fields called 'It's Not Where You Start, It's Where You Finish.' It always makes me teary, and I don't understand why...it's an upbeat song! Barbara Cook does it wonderfully on a recent CD." ♦



Lionheart singers, from left, John Olund, Lawrence Lipnik, Stephen Rosser, Richard Porterfield, Jeffrey Johnson, and Kurt-Owen Richards. Photo by William Wegman, whose *weimaraner Chundo* makes a septet.

★

A new occasional feature of *CUNY Matters*, "Other Lives" will spotlight a City University student, faculty member, administrator, or other staffer who has "a world elsewhere" and pursues an unusual avocation or second career. If you know a member of the CUNY community who might be appropriate for a future "Other Lives," contact the Managing Editor.

Sesquicentennial Exhibit Begins Grand Tour at Baruch

Sandra Shoiock Roff, Associate Professor at the Newman Library, Baruch College, reports on a historical panorama of the City University that she curated in collaboration with Professor Anthony Cucchiara of Brooklyn College and Professor Barbara Dunlap of City College.

On May 7, 1847, the New York State legislature chartered a Free Academy for the purpose of extending the benefits of education gratuitously to persons who have been pupils in the common schools of the...city and county of New York." This charter was the root that grew into a system that now embraces 10 senior colleges, one technical college, six community colleges, a law school, and a graduate school.

One hundred and fifty years later, on May 7, 1997, alumni, students, faculty and administrators celebrated the birth of publicly supported higher education in the United States with the opening of an exhibition at Baruch College. The collection of memorabilia will eventually travel to every CUNY campus and highlights the rich history of the City University in images and artifacts reflecting curricular and extracurricular activities on its campuses over the decades.

Its narrative begins in 1847, when New York City had a population of 500,000, many of its residents being newly arrived immigrants. Education represented the door of opportunity for these New Yorkers and their offspring. At that time, New York City provided a free education until the age of 14, with further schooling available only to those able to afford private academies or tutors. Collegiate instruction was limited to Columbia College and the University of the

City of New York (later New York University).

The opening of the Free Academy offered unprecedented opportunities to its first class, which consisted of 149 young men between the ages of 13 and 15. The memorabilia now on view gives some insight into the life of these early students. A page from an 1851 admissions register lists the occupations of the fathers of the students enrolled. These included dry goods merchant, bookkeeper, mason, ship joiner, clerk, flour merchant, hatter, and banker.

The earliest photographs of Academy graduates date from 1858. William M. Banks became an importer and banker, for example, and James Godwin taught at the College. William K. Hallock chose medicine as his career and attended the wounded during the Civil War. Early exams, graduation pictures, and assorted ephemera provide additional glimpses of the first two decades of the Free Academy, and additional memorabilia take us through the Civil War, the change in name from the Free Academy to the College of the City of New York in 1866, and the move to the uptown campus in 1907.

With the Free Academy successfully established and thriving, a movement gained momentum to grant women as well as men the opportunity for higher education. In 1870, the second municipal college, the Normal College for Women, opened its doors.

The original mission of the College was to prepare women for teaching careers, but by the turn of the century, the curriculum had expanded and women could then obtain an A.B. degree. This meant expanded career and educational opportunities for those women attending what became Hunter College (the new name came in 1914).

Memorabilia highlighting the early years of the Normal College includes individual photographs of students as well as group photos of early academic clubs, class pic-

"Open the doors to all—let the children of the rich and the poor take their seats together and know of no distinction save that of industry, good conduct, and intellect."

—Townsend Harris,
President, New York
Board of Education, 1847

tures, and assorted pictures from the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association (started by 19th century alumni). Early exams, a middy blouse from the turn of the century and other artifacts are displayed. As the century progressed, Hunter women moved to rural Jerome Park in the Bronx. A scrapbook kept by pioneers who explored the new campus is of particular note.

The municipal college system continued to grow, and by 1930 Brooklyn College became the third campus in the system. Early construction photos, a freshman beanie, and pictures documenting the war years are among the artifacts representing this period. An assortment of documents and objects illuminate the story of other institutions joining the system. There are

letters from Staten Island mothers who appealed to legislators for a municipal college in their borough, an early class scene from what later evolved into John Jay College, and early literary publications from an assortment of colleges.

The evolution of a municipal system of higher education includes the story of how the two-year campuses laid the groundwork for providing a wide array of vocational opportunities for New Yorkers. The first was the New York Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences, which opened in downtown Brooklyn in 1946. This was followed by community colleges in all of the boroughs, which are all represented in the exhibit.

With the creation of the City University of New York in 1961, another phase of institutional history began. A Graduate School was established, and with the renewed quest for social justice in the 1960s, colleges were opened to help serve the special needs of communities around the city. This part of the CUNY story is filled out by a variety of student publications and photographs.

The City University, like the city itself, is evolving and changing. Indeed, they are inseparable; the civic, professional, and cultural life in New York City is unthinkable without the contributions of the scholars and alumni of CUNY. Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds stated at the conclusion of the exhibit: "After a full century and a half of offering educational opportunity to all the people of New York, our nationally recognized faculty, our committed staff, and our dedicated students all point the way to a continued record of high achievement."

The exhibit can be viewed at Baruch College through September whenever the Newman Library, at 151 E. 25th St., is open. ♦

Student Personnel Conference Convenes 24th Annual Meeting

By Michele Primavera

Coordinator of Retention Programs,
Queens College

With its silver anniversary on the immediate horizon, the annual CUNY Student Personnel Conference took place on Hunter's Brookdale campus on May 16. As always, student services professionals, faculty, and students gathered to exchange ideas, share information, and network with their peers from other CUNY campuses. The event is designed to encourage professional growth for members of student services teams and to provide an opportunity to discuss strategies that enhance student success.

Some 26 workshops and roundtable discussions were offered, as well as the chance to confer with exhibitors from the Educational Testing Service, *College Bound Magazine*, and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

"World of Information: Searching the World Wide Web," presented by Madeline Ford of Hunter College, was one of the most popular workshops. This interactive session was offered twice, in fact, giving many the opportunity to surf the Web. Ford provided tips for creating folders for bookmarked information so that related materials could be filed together. She also assisted members in the use of various search engines and discussed the differences among these engines. For instance, she mentioned that Alta Vista categorizes its search results in order of importance and relevance, hence making the review of materials more time-efficient. Participants also found her translation of Web abbreviations very helpful.

The "computer shy" and those who had experienced information overload by semester's end opted to attend "Games and Inventories: How Affective Growth Leads to Cognitive Development." Prof. Jorge Fuentes, SEEK Director at Hunter College, called by one participant "a dynamic speaker," based this presentation on his book, *Freshman Orientation and Development Workbook* (1996). Each of the games and inventories has been designed to address affective needs associated with individuals' stages of development. One game consists of asking a group of students to imagine themselves as 16, 42, and 65 years old and then answer the "if you had three wishes" question three times, followed by group discussion of their responses.

The collaborative nature of the games, Fuentes explained, gives students an opportunity to form a connection to the instructor and their peers. This connection, according to Vincent Tinto, Alexander Astin, and other retention specialists, fosters student per-

sistence throughout the college years to graduation. Workshop participant Riva Stein stated that the games and inventories were not only fun and engaging, but they easily translated into group discussions of students' developmental needs.

Another workshop nurturing student connections was "Getting Students to CLIQ with Their College: An Alternative to Freshman Seminar." Presenters Karen Goodman, Petrolina Martin, and I discussed College Life Introduction at Queens (CLIQ), which encourages student participation in campus events through the use of a formal co-curricular program. Queens College began this effort last spring as an alternative to traditional Freshman Seminar courses. It incorporates academic skills, career development, health and cultural programs, and sponsorship of speakers, poetry readings, and concerts. Other members of the Queens student services team presented workshops on the use of support groups for African-American males, training peer advisors at an urban-commuter campus, and mentoring international students.

Afternoon workshops offered information on a variety of topics, including "Issues and Concerns of Advising International Students," presented by Lehman's Russ Schoumaker and Hunter's Indira Chandra. The impact that recent immigration legislation will have on our students with F1 study visas was discussed, along with concerns about the growing numbers of undocumented, out-of-F1-status students currently in the CUNY system. Members of the group discussed their responsibility to the "undocumented student" and how to assist this group in their conversion to legal status.

Many of the workshops revolved around special student groups, like those on wel-



Angelo D. Pappagallo, speaking; Marilyn Chernin; and Vanessa E. Green, all from Kingsborough Community College, offered a panel at the Student Personnel Conference on how to develop campus themes that create a positive academic environment. Photo, André Beckles

fare or other forms of public assistance, for example. Yvette Remice Thomas of York College and Marc Cohan from the Welfare Law Center conducted a presentation on "The Rights of Students on Welfare: Strategies for Staying in School." The purpose of the workshop was to provide current information about workfare rules and

regulations and its impact on CUNY students receiving welfare benefits.

The session "Identifying Barriers to the Success of Non-Traditional Female Students" also presented information about public assistance recipients, notably a case study and literature on the College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE) program. The Human Resources Administration and CUNY Research Foundation co-sponsor this vocationally oriented academic program for students on public assistance. The interactive workshop also allowed participants to discuss impediments to success and strategies that staff and students can use to skirt them.

Other strategies for success were discussed in the presentation of LaGuardia's Matthew Joffe, "Students with Learning Disabilities: We Can Help Make Success Happen!" Joffe not only provided clinical definitions of learning disabilities but also demonstrated in vivid terms the difficulties encountered by LD students. The peaks and valleys of LD profiles were discussed, along with the need for proper testing, diagnosis and prescription of drugs. Examples of specific classroom situations and interventions were noted, such as showing students how to take notes or organize a bookbag. Additionally, participants learned about counseling this population and helping them verbalize their thoughts and feelings.

Between workshop sessions, conferees participated in a roundtable discussion of "The Future of Counselors within CUNY." An exciting development emerging from this discussion was the formation of a CUNY Council of Counselors. This group will meet regularly to discuss issues affecting the role of counselors and their impact on the professional lives of counselors. Because contract negotiations have reached a critical point and faculty status for counselors hangs in the balance, action must be taken immediately. All questions should be directed to LaGuardia counselors Jean Buckley-Lockhart at (718) 482-5258 or Kyoko Toyama at (718) 482-5276.

Brookdale's rotunda, a large, bright area completely surrounded by windows, offered a perfect setting for the closing ceremonies, a presentation of awards and a reception. The awards, given to three individuals for excellence in the student services profession, are named in memory of Dr. Susan Moskowitz Grand. Dr. Grand joined the CUNY system in 1970 as a counselor at Kingsborough Community College and spent the remaining 12 years of her life in student personnel work at Medgar Evers College.

Dr. Patricia M. Sinatra, Director of Freshman Programs and Scholarship services at John Jay College, received the Outstanding Student Development Professional Award. With more than 20 years of experience working with diverse student populations, Sinatra has long been an energetic advocate for students and a well-known student affairs professional.

The recipient of the University Administrator Instrumental in Promoting Student Services award was also given to a member of the John Jay team. Dr. Roger Witherspoon, currently Vice President of Student Services, has worked for nearly three decades in the CUNY system as a teacher, counselor, and administrator. In his accep-

A Call For Faculty Development Grant Proposals

The University Faculty Development Program, administered by the GSUC Office of Academic Affairs, annually awards several grants for one-day colloquia, one- or two-semester-long seminars, and multi-campus faculty development activities conceived to address faculty needs and University priorities, promote improved teaching and learning, and encourage scholarship.

Exemplary of the proposals funded by the Program were these programs from the 1996-97 cycle: The History of Mathematics and Science and Its Uses in Teaching; New York City: A Region at Risk; Writing for Publication; Queer Pedagogy: A Colloquium on Sexuality and Curricular Transformation; Women, Community, and Public Voice: Creating Linkages; An Electronic Writing in the Discipline Colloquium; Models of Community and Labor Organizing Today.

A maximum of \$4,000 is granted for colloquia and one-semester seminars; \$8,000 is the maximum for two-semester seminars. The deadline for applications for Spring 1998 is Sept. 30; the deadline for Fall 1998 will be early next April. For further information or application forms, write or call the Office of Research and University Programs, Room 1848N, The Graduate School and University Center, 33 W. 42 St., New York, NY 10036; 212-642-2151.

tance speech Witherspoon urged the practice of what one preaches. "We tell our students they must have goals, but as student services professionals we often don't set goals for ourselves." While also urging close attention to "those students who are least prepared," Witherspoon noted that "the biggest problem now is lack of continuity in staff. There is way too much turnover of student services professionals... People are discouraged from prolonged careers because they are juggling too many tasks."

The final award, designated for a community leader who has promoted student affairs initiatives, went to the Honorable Larry B. Seabrook of the 33rd District, New York State Senate. Although his legislative duties delayed him from reaching the rotunda in time to receive his award, the audience was reminded of Sen. Seabrook's strong commitment to the mission of higher education. As a graduate of Kingsborough Community College, John Jay, and finally CUNY Law School, he has been a long-standing, energetic champion of CUNY since his election to the New York State Assembly in 1984.

Thanks for the very successful 24th running of this important sweepstakes for a vigorous City University Student Affairs program should go, in particular, to the Hunter College team of Myrna Fader, Kristina Testa, Claudia Flanagan, Maria Rodriguez, and our hosts on the Brookdale staff. ♦

The Changing Light at Stonington

The poet James Merrill specified that after his death, his long-time residence in coast-hugging Stonington, Conn., should go to the village, which decided it should be used for philanthropic purposes. **Scott D. Westrem**, a medievalist in English at Lehman College and the Graduate School, is this summer completing a sabbatical year as the second Merrill Scholar to occupy the exotically furnished house. The results of a lifetime of collecting by the world-traveling poet arrayed through the house synchronized beautifully with Westrem's research on medieval cartography. A great admirer of Merrill, Westrem brought with him a keen familiarity with his poetry and reports on the sometimes surreal experience of allusions going bump in the night.

A nor'easter was raging the Saturday night last autumn when I moved into the house on Water Street. I lugged my belongings into my new quarters, first through the dining room, with its arresting paint job ("a witty/ Shade, now watermelon, now sunburn"), then across a Chinese carpet with a peculiar design ("limber, leotarded, blue-eyed bats") in the living room.

Reaching the study, which is concealed behind a bookcase, I put my computer on the long desk and my books on some empty shelves. The broad Victorian building, dating from about 1885, was actually swaying in the wind. I walked into the little closet to find a place to stow my files, and that's when it hit me: I picked up an object, which perhaps had been dislodged by the storm from some upper recess. It had bits of masking tape stuck to its corners, and the surface was speckled with candle wax.

I knew instantly that this was the "Heavy cardboard sheet" with "the letters A to Z/ Spread in an arc" in iron blue ink above the "Arabic numbers, and YES and NO" of the Ouija board that had fueled some 17,000 lines of poetry by James Merrill. An occult instrument, perhaps, it was what the poet calls his "covenant/ With whom it would concern," and it became the means by which he both communicated with spirits from the past and captured the conundrum of modern life.

As a graduate student I had read the sprawling work—*The Changing Light at Sandover*, from which the lines just quoted come—unaware that this sculpted, quicksilver verse treated cosmic themes through the medium of an actual piece of cardboard that Merrill laid out on an existing "milk glass tabletop" in his dining room. And that's when it hit me that I had not just moved into James Merrill's house. I had walked into his poetry as well.

When Merrill went on vacation to Arizona in the winter of 1995, he did not expect to die of a heart attack there. He had, of course, long since drawn up a will, and in it he left his house to the Village Improvement Association (VIA) of Stonington. The VIA, in turn, decided that a fitting way to honor Merrill's memory, and to emulate his famous patronage of other writers, would be to choose someone with a creative or scholarly project to live and work



The poet James Merrill, above, in the study of his Stonington, Conn., house; below left, Prof. Scott Westrem on its deck.

for a year in space virtually unchanged from when Merrill lived in it. That first tempestuous night, as I reassembled my computer on his writing table, I was also struck (and not for the first time) by my unexpected good fortune.

In my application to the VIA, I made the true and full confession that I am not a poet but a teacher and that I am moved less by late-20th-century literature than by that of the Middle Ages. I also admitted that I did not plan to compose "chronicles of love and loss," as Merrill described his work, but rather complete book-length projects on medieval travel, geography, and cartography, an enterprise made possible by a CUNY Scholar's Incentive Award I received through Lehman College.

I also suggested in my application that a man who had given his poems such far-flung titles as "After Greece," "At Mamalapuram," and "Overdue Pilgrimage to Nova Scotia" and who had brought back scores of *tchotchkes* from his travels to exotic places might appreciate knowing that he had opened his door to someone trying to reconstruct how Europeans viewed the world five and more centuries ago.

For whatever happy reason, I was chosen. Autumn, winter, and early spring constitute a single season in Stonington: cold and damp. The village, hopping during the summer, dozes between Labor Day and Memorial Day. It is thus an ideal place to do concentrated work. Before moving into the house, I had spent three months in European libraries examining medieval manuscripts; on the upper floor, with its spectacular view over Long Island Sound, a vista Merrill wrote into an occasional poem, I have been turning data into prose.

I have edited and translated a German monk's Latin account—candid, observant, unusually tolerant—of his experiences as a pilgrim in Egypt and the Holy Land in 1335. Also completed is a study of a fictional travelogue by a Dutch priest who, unencumbered by the Americas, claims to have

datations, signs of his endless quest for a perfect language of expression.

Other books revealed Merrill's verbal playfulness. On the title page of *The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas*, he wrote, "HOT LADY'S MAN," an odd act of literary criticism, I thought, until it dawned on me that this was an anagram of the author's name. Still other titles testified to Merrill's famous generosity. One well-known writer inscribed a copy of an acclaimed book, "To Jimmy, Without whom this would still be a manuscript."

On a recent evening, I entered the living room to find that a guest had migrated to the window seat. From the "clear central pane" of glass at his back, "A huge red sun flowed positively through/ Him," just as Merrill had described the phenomenon in his poem "The Friend of the Fourth Decade." I had never seen the room lit quite like that, but with the advance of spring comes the setting sun's move to the north along the horizon. The geocentric universe of the Middle Ages lives on!

The scene—a transitory one, for the sun is always on the march—struck me as emblemizing the privilege of being allowed to live for a year in a poet's personal world and to see things in different lights. Or should I hew to Merrill and say "changing light"? While eager to return to my CUNY classrooms, I know I will miss the view out to sea, the village's elegant Greek Revival houses, and the lugubrious foghorns—but not the pistachio green bedroom floor.

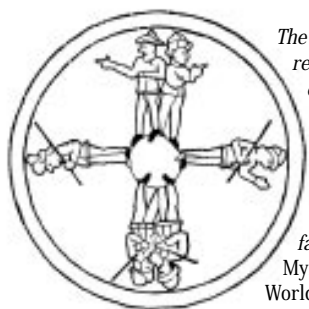
The Ouija board, the marginal afterthoughts, the description of the sunset...all this, plus countless other sudden aperçus I experienced this year, cannot explain James Merrill or his work. But they are abiding signs of his curiosity, wit, vision, and singular magnanimity. In "The Tenancy" he wrote,

If I am host at last

It is of little more than my own past.

May others be at home in it.

He was then speaking metaphorically about his poetry, but his words might just as well have come to me in his dining room, via the Ouija board. ♦



The earth represented as concentric circles, with two men setting out back to back and walking until they meet face to face, from Caxton's *Myroure of the Worlde* (1481).

circumnavigated the earth in the 1390s. In addition, I have been writing a study of European images of the world between 1100 and 1450 that is based on geographical treatises, maps, and fiction of that period.

A condensed version of this third project was the subject of a lecture I delivered in the Stonington Free Library—public readings and occasional tours of the house being all the Merrill Scholar/Writer-in-Residence is expected to do for the village, and in my case a way for CUNY to reach beyond the five boroughs. It does not take long to recognize that Stonington is inhabited by intelligent and curious people, but I did not expect that a one-hour talk on medieval cartography would pack the library, elicit such stimulating questions, prompt the VIA to put on a reception based on medieval recipes, or inspire one villager to bring his own copy of a Ptolemaic printed map from 1541 so that I would have something besides slides to talk about. The community is obviously ideal for any writer.

After a long, sometimes tedious day of editing and trying to imagine myself in the distant past, however, I often found irresistible the urge to eavesdrop on James Merrill and the more recent past. How better to do so than browse through his library, shelved everywhere around me. Some books are literally his: 15 volumes of poetry (two of them collections), two novels, plays, essays, and a memoir. And the margins of his personal copies dance with penciled emen-

Scholar Athletes Honored

On May 13 the CUNY Athletic Conference held its 11th annual Award Ceremony at Baruch College to honor students who have combined outstanding abilities on field, court, and classroom with notable community and campus leadership.

Pictured at right is CUNYAC's Executive Director Ted Hurwitz and BMCC basketball player and Trinidad native **Jenifer Edwards**, a Community College Athlete of the Year. Edwards, an Accounting Major with a 3.8 GPA and holder of an Arthur Ashe Sports Scholarship, led the Panthers to a 32-1 season. To the right of Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds is Senior College Athlete of the Year **Cathy Luksa**, a Hunter softball player who ends her four-time CUNYAC All-Star career ranking in the top 10 in 12 statistical categories. Far right is **Juan Coronado**, a Lehman pitcher who hurled a no-hitter over the College of Staten Island at Yankee Stadium. The Dominican Republic native got "on base" with the Dean's List every semester at Lehman and hopes to take his biology degree to a local medical school.

At rear, right, is Kingsborough Athlete of the Year, tennis star **Artem Gonopolskiy**. A native of Kaliningrad in Eastern Russia, his unbeaten streak in both singles and doubles is now two years old. At rear, left, is **Stanley O'Neil**, who was earlier this year seriously injured during an assault after a basketball game at Madison Square Garden. O'Neil, who was honored as Freshman Athlete of the Year, hopes to return to the Hunter basketball team and his studies in the fall. Photo, André Beckles.



In Business with *Out at Work*

By George Edwards

Junior journalism major, Hunter College

As they contemplated the vast, snow-capped mountains of Utah last February, Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson could honestly think, “we’ve come a long way.” The two faculty members in Hunter College’s Communications Department had begun production of their documentary *Out at Work* in a large union hall basement in lower Manhattan, and now they were garnering rave reviews at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival.

Their hour-long study follows, over a period of four years, the lives of three people who encounter difficulties at work because of their homosexuality, and Gold says it was warmly received by the Sundance audience. “We arrived in the knee-deep snow not quite knowing what to expect, but once inside we found ourselves among a large group of social-change documentarians. Their studies ranged from such subjects as tax resisters in Vermont, women and poverty, murderers of homosexuals, and children of drug-addicted mothers. It was simply fantastic to be in such supportive and politically alert company.”

The critics were happy too, notably *Variety*’s Dennis Harvey, who found the pacing of *Out at Work* “sharp” and thought it afforded “an inspiring human dimension beyond blunt agitprop.”

Out at Work first introduces us to Cheryl Summerville, who had been a competent cook for three and a half years at a Cracker Barrel Restaurant in suburban Atlanta when she was fired out of the blue. “Failing to comply with normal heterosexual values” was the reason given for her termination. Ron Woods is an electrician at Chrysler and dedicated union man in Detroit. He had heard of Cracker Barrel’s anti-gay corporate policy and was outraged. When he learned the chain was planning a restaurant in his area, he organized and led a protest. A local newspaper featured him—and his sexual orientation—on its front page. The publicity resulted in a year of warding off physical and verbal harassment from his co-workers.

Finally, closer to home, is Nat Keitt from the Bronx. As his lover of 12 years, David, became more and more debilitated by AIDS, Nat, a clerk librarian at a Bronx branch of the New York Public Library, went into nearly \$50,000 of debt paying for the costly medication that kept him alive because David wasn’t covered by Nat’s health plan.

All three experiences show how discrimination can flourish in the workplace unbeknown to customers, patrons, and clients. Gold and Anderson unmasked the true face of discrimination in a way that makes it difficult to overlook pockets of blatant bigotry against homosexuals on the job.

The original spark for their project came in 1992, during a conference sponsored by District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees for lesbian and gays who identified with labor and union issues. Gold and Anderson were there as part of “Labor at the Crossroads,” a monthly public affairs program on labor which airs on CUNY-TV. During their taping, something

unexpected happened.

“People would walk right up to the camera,” says Gold, “stare right into the lens and say ‘I was fired when they found out I was gay’ or ‘I fear for my life because I’m an electrician and I’m scared that someone could hurt me on my job.’” One person after another told of intimidation and attacks by co-workers. But then the astonished film makers also began to hear utterly contrasting stories—remarks like “I’m out on my job, I’m way out.” The spectrum of comments caught the two by surprise, and they realized the issue needed to be explored further.

Gold and Anderson had worked together on several other projects, notably a docu-



Producer/directors Tami Gold (camera) and Kelly Anderson (sound) on location with New York Public Library employee Nat Keitt, who is featured in their documentary *Out at Work*.

mentary called *Juggling Gender* on performance artist Jennifer Miller, who has a full beard. (This probing look at the deconstruction of gender was part of MoMA’s “Women Make Movies” series in late May and was aired on Channel 13 in late spring.) But *Out at Work* was their first full-fledged joint venture. Professor Gold has produced an extensive collection of work focusing on labor and social issues. Her previous projects include her labor classic, *Signed Sealed and Delivered*, which follows workers at one of the Postal Service’s largest processing facilities over a two-and-a-half-year period; a 20-minute video on feminist philanthropy called *Why Women’s Funds*; and *Prescription for Change*, a study of the role of women in the nursing industry.

Anderson, an instructor, has worked on short films for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and in 1994 completed the first-ever documentary on gays and lesbians in Cuba, *Buscando un Espacio*. She also directed “Labor at the Crossroads” for three years, exploring labor issues ranging from health care to strikes.

Discrimination in the workplace is a fundamental issue for Gold. “It’s about selling our labor power, being able to be proud about how we do it, and the right to make a living. Your human rights, your civil rights—to me everything begins at work.” As she and Anderson began to sift through the material they had accumulated, the issues started to come into focus: benefits for domestic partners, unions, and physical harassment on the job. Their next step was to find people who had experienced discrimination who would talk.

In 41 states it is perfectly legal to fire employees from their job because they are gay. After her dismissal, Cheryl Summerville went public and, thanks to burgeoning support from Atlanta’s large gay and lesbian community, received very wide publicity. Some attention was exhilarating, like being featured on “Larry King Live.” Some, inevitably, was ugly. Cheryl’s teenage son was harassed and physically assaulted at school; When school authorities said they could not guarantee his safety, she refused to grant further interviews.

But Gold and Anderson very much wanted to tell Cheryl’s story. To convince her of their sincerity required a collaborative effort between the film makers and the Atlanta chapter of Queer Nation, of which Cheryl was a member. “It took us over a year,” says Gold. Hooking up with Ron and Nat proved less difficult. Showing an in-

instinctive awareness of media vital to any activist, Ron Woods immediately responded to the film makers’ interest. Nat Keitt’s relationship with the project was a natural, since he was one of those who initially stared into the Gold-Anderson lens at District Council 37.

Each tells their story in their own words, slowly drawing the audience closer to workplace realities for homosexuals. Getting to know Cheryl, Ron and Nat intimately

comes first; the “cause” is there but, as the *Variety* critic observed, it’s subliminal.

The film makers also succeed in conveying similarities between the gay and labor communities. On the surface, it appears there is no common ground, but Gold points to another famous intersection of corporate and queer America to suggest otherwise—the mid-70s boycott of Coors beer. The Teamsters in California were in a fierce battle with Coors over the unionization of its drivers. The gay community was in an uproar over Coors’ corporate history of hostility. Only when the late gay activist Harvey Milk recognized the potential of combining both forces did any positive change occur. Milk organized a successful boycott of Coors products in gay bars throughout San Francisco. The combination of the two communities was strong enough to defeat Coors on both fronts. It was what Gold calls “a fabulous moment.”

One of the biggest obstacles in producing the project was funding. “There is no money for documentaries today,” Gold says. “It’s very hard just to break even on them. Very few documentaries take off like *Roger and Me* or *Paris Is Burning*. First of all, to get into some depth they have to be long. Second, very few are picked up for commercial distribution. The two I just mentioned and *Hoop Dreams* are wonderful, fabulous films, but most documentaries do not get the visibility of theatrical release.”

The passion of Gold and Anderson comes through in the narrative, and it extends to the impact they want to have on the audience. “I really want to get to people in their communities,” says Gold. “I’m very

committed to small-group screenings, for example, so that people can watch a film and then talk about it. The only way I believe you make change is if people talk about the work. If you show a film in a vacuum, and you don’t talk about it, does it really push you to change your belief system?”

How much change occurs remains to be seen, but *Out at Work* makes it difficult for audiences to regard the film’s main characters with a jaundiced eye. Gold and Anderson establish a rapport with their subjects that makes their hardships impossible to ignore.

And what of Cheryl, Ron, and Nat? This being the real world, the report is “win some, lose some.” Cracker Barrel to date has not changed its corporate policy, and Cheryl has lately been working delivering newspapers. But *Out at Work* leaves Ron on an emotional high. After his local union succeeds in squelching the harassment and Ron gains his co-workers’ respect, he is elected a delegate to the UAW national convention. Once there he spearheads approval of an anti-discrimination resolution, and the delegates vote for it unanimously. Lately, though, he has been protesting entrenched homophobia at Chrysler, which withdrew from advertising on the TV show in which comedian Ellen DeGeneres came out.

Nat’s story is bittersweet. David eventually dies, but not before the City of New York, at the behest of then Mayor David Dinkins, establishes a policy that allows him to participate in Nat’s health plan. Gold reports that at a recent local screening, “The very first question from the audience was for Nat: ‘Have you remarried?’”

Whither *Out at Work* after Sundance? Again, Gold reports, it’s “win some, lose some.” The show was dropped from PBS’ *Point of View* (POV) schedule because some of its funding came from sources with a “programmatic interest” in its content, such as several unions and ASTRAEA National Lesbian Action Foundation.

Anderson was understandably frustrated: “It’s a real blow to independent film-making. None of the funders in question gave more than \$5,000 and most gave less than \$1,000. I feel we’re being punished for doing exactly the grassroots fundraising that independent film-making depends on.” Gold and others wonder why PBS aired a documentary funded by the *New York Times* about its own history. But there is good news: Gold and Anderson have signed a contract with HBO to produce a revised version of the documentary.

Given such difficulties, Gold is especially grateful for the encouragement she received from her colleagues and students at Hunter College over the last 10 years. They have “fed my creative success,” she says. The school’s emphasis on community and public service has often reminded her of her years as a student at Friends World College, a Quaker school in Latin America that also encouraged creative community service.

Her Hunter experience has given Gold, who made her professional debut at 19 with a film on Guatemala, the feeling of “having come full circle.” It has also convinced her how important the interactive relationships of campus life are. As Gold says, “It is important to support the institutions that nurture us.” ♦

Inaugural Cantata for Jessye by Copland School's Saylor

Nothing is left to chance by planners of a Presidential Inauguration. Consider the big musical set-piece, for example. If mid-January weather is exceptionally awful, the ceremony is moved to the rotunda of the Capitol Building, which is not large enough to accommodate a chorus and, as is traditional, the President's own military band. On the preceding weekend, therefore, a music-minus-one-soloist tape is made by the accompanying forces, so that the show can go on in the rotunda with one performer and some good loudspeakers.

Last January, the weather was clement but very cold, and the President's second swearing-in was held out of doors as usual. But the eminent soprano Jessye Norman was allowed to step onto the platform behind Bill and Hillary Clinton at the very last minute, her vocal cords warm and ready for heaven-storming action.

Norman's five-minute-long patriotic aria was memorably sung and would have stopped any other show but an inauguration. And the arrangement for what was in effect a miniature cantata—scored for chorus, military choir, and band—was made by Bruce Saylor, the holder of a Ph.D. in music from the Graduate School and, since 1970, a professor at Queens College in what is now the Aaron Copland School of Music.

Norman was with the Clintons on election night, Saylor explains, and amid the euphoria the President asked her to sing at the inauguration. "She was delighted, but she failed several times to get a Presidential answer to the question, 'What should I sing?' 'Sing what you want,' he kept saying." And so she did, coming up with a carefully thought-out four-part medley.

It would begin with "My Country, 'tis of



Queens College composer Bruce Saylor, left, with his daughters Meredith and Evelyn, wife Constance Beavon, soprano Jessye Norman, and daughter Elizabeth (also present but not pictured was a fourth daughter, baby Lydia). They are gathered in historic Sousa Hall of the Marine Barracks in the District of Columbia during a break in the taping of a soundtrack for the Norman-Saylor cantata "Oh, Freedom! An American Medley."

Thee" (the old anthem alluding to our 18th-century ties to England), then move into the slave song "Oh, Freedom!" (especially apt, since Inauguration Day this year was also Martin Luther King, Jr. Day), on to "Amazing Grace" (Norman knew this was a Clinton favorite), and climaxing with the refrain from "America the Beautiful" that could be whipped into a flourishing, all-hands-on-deck finale.

With her concept roughed out, Norman had good reason, in early January, to think of Prof. Saylor as someone who would be able to do some very fast composing. In 1990 he had done the arrangements, some quite elaborate and involving treble choirs and string orchestra, for the widely circulated video "Jessye Norman at Notre Dame."

And just last summer the soprano called out of the blue with the idea for a Christmas CD she wanted to do "immediately." Saylor had a month to prepare about 20 pieces for all manner of forces. He says his West Side apartment, where he lives with his mezzo-soprano wife Constance Beavon and four daughters, was surreally filled with yuletide tunes during the summer.

A breakneck production schedule for "In the Spirit" made it ready for a big, celebrity-studded benefit on Dec. 4 at Riverside for Balm in Gilead, a Harlem-based charity that delivers services to those with HIV/AIDS in the African-American community.

Fresh from what Saylor recalls as "an unbelievably moving performance," Norman's summons to Presidential duty was hardly surprising, especially since their acquaintance went back many years. They became friendly at the time the native of Augusta, Ga., made her 1983 Metropolitan Opera debut in Berlioz' *Les Troyens* because Saylor's sister-in-law was an assistant to Norman at the time.

Saylor, who studied composition as an undergraduate at the Juilliard School, has many opuses to his credit, including a

chamber opera setting of a Hawthorne story and an opera based on Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending* that was mounted in Chicago in 1994. His knack for working with cynosures has even extended to Pope John Paul: In 1995 he was commissioned to write the music for the grand papal entrance for an outdoor mass on the Great Lawn of Central Park.

Saylor's most recent premiere, though, struck a more elegiac note. About 20 years ago, a friend of James Merrill commissioned a song for the poet's 50th birthday. His work on the song, based on Merrill's "Swimming by Night," drew him into Merrill's poetry and circle of friends, and he eventually composed two song cycles on Merrill poems and incidental music for a stage version of *The Changing Light at Sandover*.

Moved by Merrill's death in 1995, Saylor composed a piano concerto inspired, he says, by "the image of a sick person lying in bed." It carries a title—the same as Merrill's final volume, *A Scattering of Salts*—and each of the three movements is based on a poem from it: "Downward Look," "A Look Askance," and "An Upward Look." The concerto requires treble choirs in the balcony and two prominent trumpet parts and was well received at its world premiere by Musica Viva of New York in April. ◆

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Scholars Symposium, continued from page 6

to Peña's NSF, John Buglione, whose B.A. from Queens is in Sociology and History, will take a James Madison Fellowship to Fordham. Another Queens Fulbright, Richard Goldstein, will pursue a doctorate in psychopharmacology at the University of Wales in Swansea, U.K., with the hope of pursuing a career in neurobiological drug research. Hunter's Dawn Bauer will use her Fulbright to study ethics and religious diversity at the University of Tübingen in Germany this coming year, and her Hunter classmate Thomas Kamerasevic will spend his Fulbright teaching in a German secondary school.

Batsheva Dreisinger of Queens College will pursue her interests in American literature at Columbia while on a Mellon Fellowship, and Queens College computer science major Sylvia Piquet will use her NSF Fel-

lowship to enter the doctoral program at SUNY at Stony Brook this fall.

The number of success stories this year is impressive, but of course not everyone can be among the happy few. Those who aren't can take some consolation from Shaw's observation that when we feel we have lost something it often means that we have *learned* something. The application and competition process is itself a valuable learning experience, as Virginia Slaughter emphasized in her opening remarks at this year's Symposium. "All of you are winners," she said, recalling the inscription carved into the ceiling of her elementary school: "The place where men meet to seek the highest is holy ground (since her school days, she added, 'men' has since been changed to 'people'). What sets you apart is that each of you has chosen to stand on that holy ground." ◆

Student survey, continued from page 2

health services (+13%). Satisfaction fell in nine categories, most markedly in career guidance (-7%), registrar's office (-5%), and admissions office (-5%).

But in other areas there was marked improvement. Access to personal computers rose from 25% to 40%, as did the sense of personal safety on campus: those who feel "very safe" at their colleges moved from 46% to 50%. There is also considerable agreement on a sense of harmony among racial groups on campus (86%) and on the friendliness of fellow students (85%). ◆

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