

CUNY Matters

A Newsletter for The City University of New York • Winter 1998

FEATURE INTERVIEW

Interim Chancellor Christoph Kimmich

On November 24 the City University Board of Trustees appointed Brooklyn College's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, **Christoph M. Kimmich**, as CUNY's Interim Chancellor. Dr. Kimmich, a German native who came to the United States in 1951, earned his history B.A. at Haverford College and a D.Phil. at Oxford University. He has taught at Brooklyn College since 1973 (and at the GSUC since 1975), specializing in 20th-century German political history and foreign policy. He had been Provost there since 1989. Just after New Year's Day, he met with CUNY•Matters Editor Gary Schmidgall to discuss his academic life and share his thoughts on his experience at the University. This interview will continue in the Spring issue and focus on major challenges facing the University.

GS: You were born in Dresden. What were the circumstances of your emigrating?

CK: My family began coming to the United States in the 1930s, but my mother and I did not come until 1951, when I was 12. My father, a draftee, was killed in the war, fighting on the Eastern Front. Both my parents had been teachers in Rudolf Steiner schools in Germany, and I of course was enrolled in one.

GS: That's a special pedagogy like, say, Montessori schools?

CK: Yes, these private schools took a holistic approach to the child's intellectual



Photo, J.T. Miller

and artistic development. They were widespread and still are. My mother taught at one when we arrived in Pennsylvania. In fact, I pass one now on 79th Street on my way to the Central Office. The Nazis, of course, disapproved of Steiner methods and began closing the schools down.

GS: Because they were the opposite of regimental?

CK: Urging children to develop their own curiosity and their distinct artistic expression did not appeal to the Nazis. When the last Steiner school closed, my parents were out of their job.

GS: I was going to ask if some event very early in life caused you to think of teaching as a career, but it was clearly a family matter.

CK: The atmosphere of books, learning, music...although I didn't go to college with the conscious intention of teaching, in retrospect it seems, if not pre-determined, very much headed in that direction.

GS: You chose Haverford for your undergraduate studies.

CK: Yes, for several reasons: it was close by, it was small—450 students, all men in those days—and it had a Quaker tradition, which interested me. I feel enormously indebted to Haverford.

GS: How did you come to receive the two Fulbright Scholarships just after graduating from Haverford?

CK: From my Haverford teachers—one in particular, who had taught at Oxford, Gerald Freund. He influenced me tremendously as teacher, mentor, and then as friend. There's a larger issue here, and that is the consequences that a really influential teacher can have on students.

GS: What was it about Freund that got under your skin?

CK: An enormously dedicated teacher, and a good one...a man of very high standards. He valued quality and sought it out. He crystallized for me how important it is

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER'S 25TH YEAR

All in the Family— Learning on the BCC Campus

By Dr. Nancy Ritze

Director of Institutional Research,
Bronx Community College

I came to the College in 1980, knowing that a degree could help give me choices. That was my dream. When I walked through those gates on University Avenue for the first time...it was one of the most frightening things I have ever done."

These words were spoken by Eddice Fewes, who, like so many Bronx Community College freshmen, enter the University with high aspirations and deep trepidation. At that time she was receiving public assistance and had one big responsibility: "I was looking for a good environment for my daughter Lanell. I visited the BCC Child Development Center and met the directors, Charlotte and Mary Lou. They were angels!"

It was not very long before Eddice and Lanell were established in their respective learning environments. "I'd drop her off at the Center and then go to my classes. In the evening, I'd pick her up. It was just she and I together through the whole thing." Both thrived, Fewes eventually being elected vice president of the College's student government. "I could never have been able to focus on student service and my course work if my daughter hadn't been taken such good care of."

Seventeen years after her courageous stride through those University Avenue gates, Fewes reflected, with more than a little pride showing, on the success she and Lanell are currently enjoying. Making a long story of perseverance short, Fewes recalls moving up the academic ladder simultaneously: "She graduates from junior high school, I graduate from BCC with an associate's degree. She graduates from

high school—with a Regents diploma!—and I graduate from Lehman College with my bachelor's degree."

For both, the momentum is continuing. "I am so proud of my daughter. She can do trigonometry, geometry, and calculus; she speaks and reads Spanish; she plays the trumpet. She is in her second year at SUNY New Paltz, where she made the Dean's list in her first semester. Next summer, she's going to Spain on a partial study-abroad scholarship. As for me, today I have a Master's degree and



Eddice Fewes, left, with her daughter Lanell in June 1995; Fewes received her Lehman College Bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

am a BCC financial aid counselor and Federal Work Study coordinator. I'm about to purchase a home, and I plan to begin a Ph.D. program in September."

Fewes attributes this tale of two successes in large part to the Child Development Center. "Without it, I don't know where I'd be today. I know how important education is, but I also know how important it is to link things together. Child care and education do go hand in hand. It gave Lanell the ammunition to survive out there, and she's doing great!"

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the BCC Child Development Center, the oldest incorporated child care program at CUNY. During this time, more than 1,000 college students and their children have doubly benefited from the direct care and attention given to the young children of parents who are students at the College. The Center was initiated in response to the day care needs expressed by increasing numbers of BCC students who had preschool-age children.

Twenty-two youngsters inaugurated the program in 1972 in a renovated faculty lounge. As it happens, the Center's first and only Director and Associate Director,

In Memoriam



Joseph S. Murphy
1933-1998

Governor Proposes 1998-99 Executive Budget

The 1998-99 Executive Budget announced by Governor George Pataki in January provides stability and assistance to CUNY. The Governor's recommendations include a five year plan projecting \$1 billion in capital support for CUNY campuses. Of that total, \$200 million in capital funding is included for next year.

The proposed operating budget provides an important starting point for further discussions on improvements with the Office of the Governor and the State Legislature during both the 30-day amendment period and the Legislative review.

Tuition rates and student financial aid allocations remain constant. Information on both the proposed capital and operating budgets is available on the CUNY Website (<http://www.cuny.edu>)

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to play a role—be a role model—for students, be inspirational rather than merely “telling things” in the lecture hall. He made his career seem very attractive to me. He also introduced me to the idea of study abroad and to applying for prestigious fellowships.

GS: To wit, the Fulbrights. Was he European?

CK: Yes, a German Jew who fled in the 1930s with his parents.

GS: You stayed on at Oxford for three years and earned a doctorate. Is that unusual?

CK: Yes, most Americans earn a second bachelor's. Oxford's very strong focus on research—much stronger than here, I think—was what appealed to me. I was tired of taking exams and writing short papers, and the Oxonian method of complete immersion in a subject was very attractive. It really is a research degree.

GS: Any fond memories of eccentric dons?

CK: My stories would be no different from everyone else's. I was very happy there. I found the one-on-one tutorial style very enjoyable; indeed, teaching this way at St. Antony's College, I think, settled my career choice. I especially liked the Oxford custom of being permitted, if you were wearing your black scholar's gown, to attend any lecture or seminar at will. And what lectures! — marvelous extemporaneous 90-minute affairs that seemed like a pleasure rather than a chore to the speakers.

GS: Such style is more prevalent there?

CK: I think so...that fluent and yet very learned style I've rarely encountered elsewhere. And that fluency, by the way, carried over into the quality of my students' writing. I became fascinated by the coherence, the drama, the sense of language of their papers. And they thought nothing of it.

GS: What you say reminds me of perhaps the chief pleasure of my year studying at the University of London: reading the *London Times* obituaries, which are a real art form. Beautifully written obits in the *New York Times*, like the recent one for Brendan Gill, are unfortunately all too rare. You seriously invested, at Oxford, in German political history as your field. Was it, as might appear, a question of returning to your roots?

CK: Many influences bore on this. Clearly, one was my father's death when I was very young. Though he only taught for perhaps eight years—he was 30 when he was killed—he was quite celebrated and had a real gift. I have run into people in their 60s and 70s who were students of his and remember him vividly and affectionately. My teaching, I feel, must in some way have come out of a desire to recreate what he achieved.

GS: But you wouldn't emphasize your more general ethnic roots?

CK: I have a distanced view of Germany. I don't consider myself a “hyphenated” American. Still, I think there's much to be learned about Germany's roads taken and

not taken in this century. To this day, Germany is considered very ambivalently by its neighbors. What is it about this enormously industrious, productive people—yet they are both feared and admired, emulated and resented...like no other people? The explosive central location, no doubt, is one reason; its great wealth; Germany always seems to be bursting at the seams; and of course generations of violent history. The nation's strange, cumulative, collective behavior patterns have long fascinated me.



Chairwoman of the CUNY Board of Trustees Anne A. Paolucci, above, greets Interim Chancellor Kimmich; to the right, Kimmich and his wife Flora at a reception given for them at the University Club on December 22. Photos, André Beckles

GS: Have you visited Germany often?

CK: Not recently, but I did research there, notably in Bonn, and still have friends there.

GS: What is your favorite German city?

CK: Favorite...well, I'll say the most interesting one is Munich...for variety, for entertainment, theater, and being close to a very dramatic countryside. My wife, Flora, and I lived for a year in little Göttingen, and that was *not* so great! There was nowhere to go...it was provincial in every way.

GS: Your wife has volunteered to write for *CUNY•Matters*, and when I spoke with her a few weeks ago she mentioned that you met in Germany.

CK: She had a Fulbright for study in Germany and chose to stay on to work in the Fulbright office in Bonn. I was doing archival research there, and we were introduced by a mutual friend. She returned to pursue her Ph.D. in German literature at Yale, so part of our subsequent courtship was by mail. She is from a prominent family of educators in North Carolina.

GS: Yes, I noticed that she earned a *magna cum laude* B.A. from Duke. The other Dr. Kimmich's commitment to education, especially the “continuing” kind, is amazing; no fewer than four advanced degrees!

CK: Yes, the difficulty of two academics

finding jobs within hailing distance of each other...when that didn't happen Flora went back for a law degree at the University of Pennsylvania. She entered public interest law and practiced for some time, but then reverted to her first love, which is foreign languages. She has acquired five of them, the most recent being Latin and Greek, which she learned at the Latin and Greek Institute, a Brooklyn College program housed at the Graduate School. Talk about immersion—this summer program features professors who man a 24-hour hotline! She also earned an M.F.A. in poetry at the College since leaving legal briefs behind.

GS: I studied in Stuttgart in the mid-60s and have not been back in many years, but as I've read the news stories in recent years, I get the distinct feeling I'd find a grimmer, much less ebullient atmosphere. What is your feeling?

CK: The main feature of German society now, I think, is a deep generational conflict. The turmoil of the first 50 years of the century left the older generation with a conforming, don't -



rock-the-boat attitude. The younger generation finds this stultifying and feels ambivalent about the Establishment. And then there is the very sensitive problem of the country's large population of *Gastarbeiter*, a euphemism for a large population of foreign labor, mostly Turks, received during the boom years of the 60s to do work no one else was willing to do.

GS: Yes, in my Stuttgart dormitory and commons, all the menial jobs were done by Turks. These ethnic tensions must present a very touchy problem, given Germany's Nazi past.

CK: They do. Probing them is difficult, but I expect it will also lead to very interesting insights into collective behavior. I find the situation especially interesting because of my own immigrant experience. The fact of my “German roots” does not matter so much to me, but thinking about the effects of one's immigrant status does: going to a far-away place, learning the language, adapting, making choices.

GS: You certainly came to the right University—so many of its students having this immigrant experience.

CK: We mimic the nation itself, I think, which still honors the idea of the integration of all immigrants and rejects the notion of the isolated American. Though I will say that I think immigrants today have a harder time than I did. At Brooklyn College, students often return home to a strong ethnic setting, speaking Russian or Swahili or Chi-

nese. When they return to campus they, so to speak, have to resocialize. They are torn between two worlds. I never had to deal with that; out in Pennsylvania, there were few other immigrants, and so I quickly embraced the majority culture, coming to speak the language in three months.

GS: Another culture you have embraced, if that is the word, is the administrative one. What has that been like?

CK: A mixture of painful, bitter moments, especially with the University going through its contractions and budget difficulties, and exhilarating moments when I can see change for the better...or when something I've cheered for, like the new Children's Studies and Environmental Studies programs at Brooklyn College, became a reality...or helping to create the Freshman Year College, which welcomes students quickly and supportively into college life. When everything you do has the goal of nurturing a community of learners, the gratification can be enormous.

GS: What are some of the small, specific victories of, say, a Provost's job?

CK: Most of the anecdotes of student victories I might recall—acing an exam, getting into medical school, being your family's first college grad—come down to observing a student's sense of accomplishment on his or her own. The privilege of watching that happen is something you can't buy for love or money.

GS: Has your knowledge of the great German diplomats helped to inspire your own administrative style?

CK: In a college, you are dealing with two structures. First, the hierarchical structure of those who work for you, report to you...deans, directors, staff. Then there is the collegial structure, teachers who, except for class duties, almost work for themselves and do their own research. The challenge is to bring the two worlds together into a productive relationship. You have to have encouraging, nurturing, consensus-building instincts.

GS: Bismarck is not apropos, then?

CK: Correct...you have no battalions, no heavy purse, no big stick. Collaboration, mutual support are the way to success. That was my style at the College and it will be my style here. We should not be struggling with each other, but with the problem.

GS: Is one of the problems the perception “out there” of public education?

CK: I'm the product of private education, from kindergarten through the doctorate. It wasn't until 1973 that I came to know a public academic institution, and I was deeply impressed by how much public education has done and what it can do. To a much greater extent than in Europe, public education has made this country what it is. The difficulty, not only in the microcosm of CUNY but everywhere, is that higher education has lost some of the cachet it used to have. There was a time when op-ed pages called on academics. Now it's a free-for-all of talk-show hosts, athletic coaches, celebrities. Opinion-making has become so democratized that we have lost sight of the high level of intellectual discourse that good higher education makes possible.

GS: Is this a sense of our having “given up” on education?

CK: Or of our depending on it too much. Various new social responsibilities have been imposed on campuses—child care, economic development, community issues—which by and large we have been happy and

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Assistive Resources For Disabled Students

By Roberta Adelman

Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities Program, Brooklyn College

I had to get back to school, but I didn't know how," recalls Cheryl Spear, who lost her sight several years ago. But in the end—with the help of Jaws, a Dragon, Sticky Keys, and other exotic learning aids—she found her way not only to campus but to a degree. Cheryl graduates from Brooklyn College next month with a major in psychology.

Easing Cheryl's journey diploma-wards was a remarkable array of devices on the cutting edge of assistive technology. These allowed her to do a statistics problem in 30 minutes instead of the seven hours it used to take. With a professor's hand-outs entered on a disk, special software enabled Cheryl's computer to read them aloud to her. She was able to pursue research projects with very little help from others—scanning journal articles, for example, with the Reading Edge, loading them on a disk, and using voice output to cut and paste her materials into draft form. Only then is a reader needed to help her edit.

Cheryl is one of many students with a disability who enjoys the rapidly expanding array of assistive technology now available at the College's Mamie and Frank Goldstein Resource Center. Last October, she was among the speakers at a special event sponsored by the Center that was attended by Brooklyn College President Vernon E. Lattin, Public Schools Chancellor Rudolph F. Crew, and the Center's most enthusiastic supporter, Stanley Goldstein.

A highlight of the day-long event was a tour of the adaptive machines now available at the Goldstein Center, as well as at the Library and Computer Lab. Guests saw in operation, for instance, one of two screen magnification software systems available at the Center, Zoom Text. This enlarges text

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well-equipped to assume. Still, we have to ask what our mission really is. Are we spreading ourselves too thin? The high school degree is no longer what it once was, and now the college degree seems to have gone the same way. When I first came to the College, I had a good student, a senior, and I asked him what he was going to do when he graduated. He said his degree would get him a promotion. I recognized two things here: his employer clearly did not think his high school had done it for him, but, beyond that, the college degree was also opening doors for him down the line. What this confirmed for me is how we have denigrated the high school diploma and shifted the responsibility onto colleges. But we just can't expect them to shoulder this responsibility and emerge, in some ethereal way, unchanged and as highly regarded as ever.

GS: This will take some thought about the University's mission.

CK: Our missions are plural at CUNY, we can—and ought—to do many things well. My impression, though, is that we are not clear about ourselves, and we should think hard about our missions.

Dr. Gregory Kuhlman, Director of the Brooklyn College Personal Counseling and Career Services Center, with a student at one of the Goldstein Center's Zoom Text computers. Photo, Steve Jordan.



and graphics up to 16 times actual printed size, and text can be viewed a portion at a time and read at different speeds.

Goldstein Center students also have a choice of keyboards. One has large keys with raised Braille; another is flat and only requires a soft touch (Intellikeys). There is even a special keyboard (Sticky Keys) that stores computer commands and allows the user to hit one key in order to activate several commands.

The visitors were impressed with the screen readers and immediately saw how they could be used by students with different disabilities, including visually impaired and those with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder.

The Kurzweil Reading Edge is a reading machine that translates printed text into speech. Books of any size can be scanned and read by the machine. It uses the DECtalk voice synthesizer, which can be asked to speak in one of nine voices: four male, four female, and one child's voice. In addition to seeing computers "speak," the group also saw that the Center's computers can take dictation from what a student says. This is done with voice recognition software called Dragon Dictate, which prints words onto the computer screen as the student speaks into a microphone.

Among the Center's other remarkable learning aids is the Tactile Image Enhancer, a device that generates raised documents

GS: You'll be happy to know that my alma mater, Stanford, has a German rather than a Latin motto, "Die Luft der Freiheit weht" ("The winds of freedom blow"). I guess there is no motto for CUNY as a whole to capture that mission.

GS: By way of conclusion, I want to go back to your remark about being, in 1973 when you came to the University, a life-long product of private education. Looking back, what was the experience of making that transition like?

CK: It certainly changed the trajectory of my life. Brooklyn College was overwhelming, what with the number of students, very challenging...there was a bubble of excitement on campus...none of that somewhat complacent, sons-of-alumni-coming-back-to-Columbia atmosphere. At Brooklyn you had first-generation students with stars in their eyes. Astonishing. That twist of fate in 1973 brought me completely unexpected pleasures. I think, if I'd stayed at Columbia, I would have gone on doing the scholarly thing...and wouldn't be here talking with you.

GS: For which my readers and I thank you. Willkommen und viel Erfolg during your time in the Chancellor's Office. ♦

such as maps, illustrations, or charts and can be felt by visually impaired students. There is also software—Jaws and PW Web Speak—that allows these same students to browse the Web by reading the text aloud.

Thus, students with different disabilities were able to demonstrate how the Goldstein Center's technology enhances their studies. One student has carpal tunnel syndrome, another injured his hand in a work-related accident, and yet another has a learning disability: they all use Dragon Dictate to help them write their papers. One student, like many others with limited hand coordination, uses the special flat keyboard that only requires a soft touch. A partially sighted student does not need a reader to do her tests; she simply reads them using Zoom Text.

The Center is administered by the College's Services for Students with Disabilities Program and currently serves about 250 students. While there is now



Longtime Brooklyn College supporter Stanley Goldstein.

technology throughout Brooklyn College, the Center has the largest concentration of assistive technology and is the prototype for the campus as well as the CUNY system.

The Center was renovated in 1994 as a result of a gift from two alumni, Stanley Goldstein and Edith Goldstein Isaacs, in honor of their parents. It was Stanley Goldstein who made the October celebration possible, and it was his idea to reach out to New York City's public schools to inform prospective matriculants with disabilities about the assistive support they will enjoy on campus.

Goldstein graduated from Brooklyn College in 1959 with a B.S. in accounting. He was a C.P.A. for most of his professional life and was a founder of the firm of Goldstein, Golub, and Kessler—all three, incidentally, are Brooklyn College graduates. For the last 18 years he has been a private investor for small firms. An Alumni Association president for two years, he has just celebrated his silver anniversary as a board

Deputy Chancellor Patricia Hassett Appointed by Board

The City University of New York Board of Trustees named Patricia Hassett Interim Deputy Chancellor at a special Jan. 7 Board meeting, upon the recommendation of Interim Chancellor Christoph M. Kimmich. The appointment is effective Jan. 20.

Hassett has served for more than two decades in senior administrative positions in both public

and private higher education, including, since 1993, the office of Vice President for Finance and Administration of Brooklyn College. Formerly, she was Vice President for Administration at



Fairleigh Dickinson University. In addition, she has extensive experience within the CUNY system, including directorial positions at Baruch College and City College.

"Ms. Hassett brings to the task a strong and long-standing commitment to the University and its mission, broad campus experience, clear intelligence and prodigious energies. She will coordinate University-wide projects, serve as liaison with various constituencies, and oversee select University and Central Office operations and administrative services," Interim Chancellor Kimmich said.

Hassett has a Master's degree from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a Bachelor's from Richmond College, now the College of Staten Island. ♦

member of the Brooklyn College Foundation. He also provided outstanding service to the University as Co-Chairperson of the Higher Education Task Force on Student Activity Fees in the mid-1970s.

Goldstein traces his interest in helping students with disabilities to two life experiences. When he was an undergraduate he came to know a fellow student who was blind. He was profoundly impressed by this individual, who overcame his obstacles, graduated, and succeeded in life. Goldstein explains, "To help students with disabilities is a great satisfaction to me for lots of reasons, not the least of which is that I still believe in the old-fashioned concept of self-help. No people exemplify the virtues of self-help more than those who suffered disabilities and yet persevere and attend college."

His other motivation is more personal. His son, who is dyslexic, went to a college that had a very good program for students with disabilities, but he didn't make use of these services because he felt a stigma was attached. Goldstein has been eager and delighted to help make available—without stigma—a core of disability programs, services, and assistive technology that will level the playing field for collegiate students with disabilities. "They are demonstrating that the human spirit has enormous and enduring power." ♦

Studying the Choreography of Genes

By Peter Taback

While praise has come to Dr. Jill Bargonetti from just about every corner of New York recently—because she received in November a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers—it is the undergraduates waiting to register outside her Hunter College office whose acclaim carries real weight. Bargonetti, the youngest faculty member of the Hunter College biology department, is an emphatically student-centered scientist.

Bargonetti was honored for a breakthrough discovery on the gene p53 and for her belief that a scientific laboratory should be a place for more than just cellular growth. “Science is a group effort,” she asserts. “In the grant application that got me the award, one of the things I wrote was that, through what I was doing, my lab could serve as a national example for a multicultural scientific environment whereby people learned to respect each other in spite of their differences.”

Bargonetti knows that training new scientists is one of her chief responsibilities. So it is no surprise to find her achievements well-known among Hunter's undergraduates. They are at work everywhere in her laboratory. Enticing newly-declared biology majors to find science as compelling as she does is among her long-term career objectives.

“I'm here at Hunter to be a role model, to let people come into the lab and show them what is exciting about science, that it is really enjoyable and that the people who are involved in science are not boring.”

“Them,” for this professor are the undergraduate and graduate students at the College's Center for the Study of Gene Structure and Function, for whom it quickly becomes clear that scientific research is a collaborative process. Collaboration, Bargonetti acknowledges, certainly helped to produce her findings about p53, a gene that produces a protein which can be used to block abnormal growth of cells caused by cancer and HIV. Such breakthrough science is, of course, the main prize in her work, but she has pedagogical ambitions that go beyond mere data.

Students in Bargonetti's lab are expected to work together and share procedural information and results with each other. In her lab meetings, data belongs to everyone, and everyone asks questions. “It's a group effort. A lot of people are uncomfortable dealing with interpersonal skills in the lab; they prefer not to discuss problems. I have a different approach. I

know that not everybody is going to be great friends, but we all work together. We all respect each other.”

Although the lab is very much a CUNY facility, you will not hear the range of languages spoken here that is typical of Hunter's student body. Bargonetti's emphasis on group learning leads her to insist on English in the lab. “I demand that one common language be spoken here because I don't agree with a second language ever being used as an exclusionary measure.”

In other respects, informality is Bargonetti's style. She does not expect students to call her Dr. Bargonetti, though her youth and easy demeanor sometimes bring about unexpected obstacles in the student-teacher dynamic. “I think it's different for them to see me in this position. It's also different for people to have to

learn to respect me.” She is at ease with students, at ease with their occasional failures, and very comfortable—even encouraging—with the inventive few who can modify parameters in search of a new result. “If they're not creative,” she says, “they'll never be able to come up with a hypothesis.”

Bargonetti knows what it's like to conduct cutting-edge scientific research a few floors above the subway. From the Hunter College Elementary School to the Bronx High School of Science, as well as

an undergraduate degree from SUNY Purchase and a Master's and Ph.D. from N.Y.U., Bargonetti has cultivated strengths from nearly every educational system in New York. She even did post-doctoral research at Columbia University prior to taking her present position at Hunter College, where the view from her office of all of midtown Manhattan captures whatever imagination is not engaged in science.

The Central Casting stereotype for a scientist certainly vanishes in Bargonetti's presence. In addition to being an African-American professor in Hunter's Biology program, she is also a former dancer with the Harlem-based Sounds in Motion company who once juggled both careers.

Even now that she is on the faculty of the College and the Graduate School, dance is still very much a part of her recreational life and her thinking. Every scientific maneuver, Bargonetti insists, has an equivalent spatial movement. Those who understand the physical correlation to scientific motion, she believes, have a great advantage. “A dancer has to have good memory skills, has to have good spatial and conceptual ability, because you must remember all of the steps and movements



Hunter College biologist Jill Bargonetti.
Photo, André Beckles

CURATOR FROM QUEENS COLLEGE

Met Museum Welcomes Spring With Luxurious Asian Textiles

Picture here is one of the 60 textile masterpieces included in the exhibition “When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles,” which will run at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from March 3 to May 17. This panel—titled “Welcoming Spring” and embroidered in China during the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368)—will be joined by tapestries, drawloom silks, and “cloths of gold” dating from the 10th to the 14th centuries.

Morris Rossabi, Queens College professor of East and Central Asian history, co-curated this exhibit with James Watt of the Met and Anne Wardwell of the Cleveland Museum of Art. It is the most important display of Asian textiles since World War II. Many of these silks were produced during the era of Mongol rule in Asia, as the pastoral nomads from the steppes prized these colorful brocades and embroideries. “Welcoming Spring,” says Rossabi, “is remarkably large—84 x 25 inches—and complicated, and it offers a charming depiction of a boy riding a goat and many other animals, all against a background of flora, water, and earth.”

Also on view will be a 13th-century cloth of gold featuring winged lions and griffins. (Cloth of gold was a term used by Marco Polo and others for fine pontifical and episcopal vestments and robes of Mongolian emperors.) All textiles have been drawn from the collection of the Met and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

A leading scholar of the interior of Asia, Rossabi was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and conducts research in nearly a dozen languages. He has authored *China and Inner Asia*, *Khubilai Khan*, and *Voyager to Xanadu*, and among his current projects are articles on China's relations with Inner Asia for the *Cambridge History of China* and a CD-ROM on the Silk Route, forthcoming from the Asia Society, and research for a book on post-Soviet Mongolia that has been funded by the Soros Foundation. ♦



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase of the Dillon Fund Gift, 1981.

well. There's a lot of that in understanding biological concepts—being able to visualize what's on the page. If you can't go beyond data on the page, then you won't be able to do science very well.

“Many of the things I wrote about in my grant proposal had to do with gene amplification,” Bargonetti explains. “Clearly, if something is going to be amplified, there's got to be some movement. This is where the dancing comes in.”

In her mind, dance and science meet where precision and creativity intersect. A dancer must be specific. “If you think about ballet or any other dance, everything is very precise. I mean, if your toe is not like this,” her hand gestures a dizzyingly precise angle, “it's not the dance at all.” Similarly, those who fail to meet the rigid expectations of method and language are unlikely to succeed as scientists.

But Bargonetti is quick to point out the

other side of this coin: the absolute necessity of creative thinking. “When you get to the lab bench, everything's set up, and you follow the protocol in the lab book. So far so good, but if that's all you can do, you won't be going much further. You may be a very good technician, that's all.”

For a relatively young scholar, Bargonetti's record at securing support for her projects is exemplary. In an increasingly expensive field, her lack of cynicism about the competition for funding is remarkable. “There are certain things humanity needs, and so there are people out there who say, ‘Look, you have the skills to think about this problem and we need people to think about this problem so we're giving away money for people to think about this problem.’”

“So you think about that problem. That's your job. You're a thinker. If you find resources to deal with a problem, it's very satisfying.” ♦

CCNY's Design Students Board "Crosstown 116"

Professor **Lance Jay Brown**, AIA, of the City College School of Architecture and Environmental Studies, reports on a major CUNY/AIA partnership he is co-directing that will focus visionary design concepts on one of Upper Manhattan's main commercial thoroughfares.

The word "charette" is used by architects all the time, but it may soon be on the lips of everyone interested in the future of one of Harlem's main thoroughfares. A very exciting charette took place on the City College campus last November, but before I explain what exotic architectural performance art a charette entails, let me first describe a remarkable town-and-gown collaboration called "Crosstown 116."

"A model for how a college should function in relationship to the outside world." That is how City College President Yolanda Moses chose to describe "Crosstown 116" at the project's kickoff event on the CCNY campus last September. "Crosstown 116" is a year-long project that originated within the American Institute of Architects' New York chapter; its purpose: to nurture proposals for revitalizing one of Upper Manhattan's most critical river-to-river arteries, 116th Street. Primary funding for this program is a \$109,000 grant from HUD's Office of University Partnerships.

A significant part of this initiative are the standards and goals that emerged from the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, called Habitat II, which was held in Istanbul in 1996. "Crosstown 116," we hope, will test many aspects of the Habitat agenda, such as adequate shelter, empowerment, sustainability, gender equity, environmental justice, and partnership.

We at the CCNY School of Architecture and Environmental Studies (SAES) are particularly enthusiastic about "Crosstown 116" because it will test a unique idea about how best to involve architecture students in their surrounding communities. For the first

time, all of SAES is devoting its energies to a single design context. All 16 of its architecture and landscape studios are working together to create visions for the urban communities served by the crosstown 116th Street as a model 21st-century urban thoroughfare.

During the fall "Crosstown 116" also presented weekly seminars that introduced more than 30 speakers on such issues as affordable housing, transportation, and energy-saving design. These seminars were open to the public and were often standing-room-only. The project has succeeded in bringing together students, local design professionals, and members of the community. At our September kickoff, the AIA's New York chapter President, Robert Geddes, described collaborations like ours as being "as significant for the planning and design professions as the teaching hospital is for health professions."

Forming what Geddes refers to as a "civic triumvirate," the SAES (including the City College Architectural Center) and the very active New York AIA chapter are also working closely with the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ).

The first of the three "Crosstown 116" phases began last summer with the preparation and distribution of a briefing book describing 116th Street as it now exists. Its contents were generated in part by a community event, "Partnership to Save a City: A Harlem Dialogue," that took place in 1996. The briefing book is being used by local citizens, architects, urban planners, landscape architects, and all of SAES's sec-



At the November "Crosstown 116" charette, members of the "Street as Public Realm" team work on their "pin-up" illustrating a series of design ideas, including a "civic node" stretching the length of 116th Street, for a 4 p.m. presentation. Standing by window are Robert Geddes, FAIA, left, and Herbert Oppenheimer, FAIA. Prof. Lance Jay Brown, AIA, leans forward at rear to annotate the composite urban design drawing. Photo, Dorothy Alexander.

ond- through fifth-year design studios. (Copies are available for review by the public, notably through the three Community Planning Boards—#9, #10, #11—that supervise 116th Street, or can be ordered by calling 212-650-8745.)

Phase Two, a Design Dialogue and Workshop—architects call their intense, high-energy workshops "charettes"—took place on the first weekend in November. Working groups at this conference explored these four topics: providing performance facilities for the enhancement of cultural life; the reinvention of public housing; the form of the street and its role as community amenity/organizer; and the structure of community and issues of cultural preservation.

Phase Three will consist notably of an exhibition of photographs, drawings, models and texts of concepts and proposals for "Crosstown 116" created by CCNY and Columbia designers and other local professionals. It is scheduled to open on Feb. 10 at CCNY and run through March 4. A symposium at the United Nations on Feb. 18 will serve to integrate the work generated by "Crosstown 116" into the international context of Habitat II.

Our charette concluded with each of four teams presenting their work to a large audience, appropriately, in landmarked Shepard Hall. Among the concepts floated during the

day was one for reactivating "lost" space around post-war public housing by reintegrating ground plane activities into the city fabric. Another team focused on ways of reinforcing the connections of 116th Street to the east and west of Morningside Park, encouraging commercial development near the East River, and, in the middle, creating a new "node" of public-use buildings between 5th and Lenox Avenues. A third team considered "embedding" performance spaces in the center of existing blocks adjacent to 116th Street.

The volunteer design professionals and community leaders who participated were mightily impressed by the input of the SAES architecture students, and the students, some skeptical early on, gave the extramural visitors high marks for their participation.

At one point more than 20 people were working feverishly to finish the "street group" drawing by pin-up time. The networking and bonding produced at this charette, we think, will bear fruit in the years to come. ◆

PIE: A \$5,000 Slice

City University Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer, left, and Dr. Augustine Pounds, President of the Legal Advocacy Fund of the American Association of University Women, flank the two winners of the Fund's 1997 Progress in Equity (PIE) Award. English Professor **Marina Heung** of Baruch College, center left, and Professor **Dorothy O. Helly** of the Hunter College History Department, won the award for their work as coordinators of the Faculty Development Seminar on "Balancing the Curriculum for Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class." The Award, officially conferred at the reception on Dec. 10 pictured here, also carries a \$5,000 stipend for enhancement of the seminar's future activities.

The seminar's syllabus offers weekly sessions on such topics as "Constructing Exclusion: Race and Ethnicity," "Autobiography and Contemporary Issues," "Women and Work," "Heterosexism and Homophobia," "Disability Studies," and "Sexualities and Reproductive Issues."



Photo, André Beckles

Faculty Development Spring Term Offerings

Spring semester offerings of the Faculty Development Program include one new seminar—"Walk That Talk: Beyond Our Stories About Race"—that will offer the opportunity for inquiry and problem-solving on racial issues, as well as address difficulties teachers have talking about race.

Four seminars continue from the fall semester: "Current Policy Issues in Economics" will focus on such topics as rising health care costs, the widening gap in income, and the impact of job loss in the U.S. The CUNY Logic Workshop will convene those interested in mathematical logic, including set theory, model theory, computability theory, and proof theory. "The Geographic Information System and Spatial Analysis of Urban Problems" will offer monthly lectures on the use of GIS and contextual analyses of urban issues. "Linking Research in Natural Products,

Plant Biochemistry, and Biotechnology" will feature interaction among botanists, chemists, biochemists, and molecular biologists, with the long-range intention of developing a new interdisciplinary research training program.

The Program, under the auspices of the GSUC Office of Research and University Programs, will also present colloquia on these topics this semester: "Enhancing the Content and Methodology of Teaching Sociology," "Planning and Conducting Ethically Responsible Research with Human Subjects," "Faculty Mediation Training: Resolving Conflicts in the Classroom," and "Teaching Native American Studies at CUNY."

Requests for Proposals for 1998-99 seminars and colloquia will be available in late January; Proposals for the fall semester must be received by April 6. For further information call the Office of Research at 212-642-2151.



The Passing of Brooklyn

This picture of Brooklyn's City Hall is symbolic of eventful happenings a century ago. Brooklyn—an incorporated city for 64 years but in existence since 1625—was confronted with various threats to its continued independence. The most visible threat was posed by the Brooklyn Bridge, which was completed in 1883 and suddenly made near neighbors of Brooklyn and New York. But as early as the 1860s, civic leaders like James S.T. Stranahan, a fervent Bridge supporter, and Andrew Haskell Green, a supporter of a strong centralized government, began pressing for consolidation of the two cities.

Opportunists from Manhattan had long been intrigued by Brooklyn's plentiful real estate and 65 miles of desirable waterfront. Alarmists from Brooklyn felt threatened by New York's teeming population of immigrants. Contentious debate ensued, featuring chicanery, skulduggery, and hysteria. Politicians and journalists called for "non-binding" referendums and succeeded in squeezing out a major-

ity vote in all districts in 1894, but barely squeaking through in Brooklyn. After several years of bickering, a bill creating the megapolis made its way through the State Legislature. The final Albany vote, also a squeaker, was in favor, thanks to upstate legislators, and Governor Frank Black quickly signed the bill into law.

It rained on Brooklyn's City Hall on New Year's Eve, 1897. The last mayor, Frederick Wurster, introduced a poem, "The Passing of Brooklyn," and to the mournful chiming of church bells, the City passed into oblivion and became a mere Borough among the others of the outer fringe.

—John B. Manbeck
Kingsborough Community College

Fighting for Queens & Country

This rare photograph shows soldiers of the Hamilton Light Artillery mustering in Flushing just prior to their departure for Washington in 1861. As a conservative community with commercial links to the South, Queens was opposed to the anti-slavery impulse which swept much of the North in the 1850s (Abraham Lincoln lost the county in the election of 1860). But Queens in the end responded to the onset of the Civil War and the effort to resist secession and preserve the Union.

Volunteers filled the ranks of the local 15th Regiment, which was equipped and supported through private contributions. At one meeting more than 40 people donated \$2,000, the equivalent of \$30,000 today.

Like the men in the photo, the Union soldiers were volunteers. A draft was not initiated in the North until 1863; the South, hard-pressed for men, instituted one earlier. Due to compulsory service, a large proportion of troops from poor and immigrant ranks were forced to fight. Their



fears prompted one of the worst riots in the nation's history. The New York City draft riots lasted three days as gangs of predominantly Irish youths attacked African-American New Yorkers and burned several buildings. But the draft was not compulsory for all: you could pay someone else \$300 to fight in your place.

—Richard K. Lieberman
LaGuardia Community College

The Tweeding of New York

The rhetorical question of the caption was attributed to William M. ("Boss") Tweed when he was confronted with the enormity of his alleged theft of public funds. However, the 1871 Thomas Nast cartoon is pure journalistic invention. He never uttered such a self-destructive statement. Tweed was a Democrat, and Nast, his publishers, Harper Brothers, and the editors of the *New York Times*, which published the cartoon, were all zealously of the Republican persuasion. Purveying such stories was politically useful to them.

Since 1871, the stereotype of Tweed as a hallmark of corruption has been repeated by authors, journalists, and media commentators...and has led to a kind of



Tweeding of New York City as a civic den of iniquity. But Tweed was never a "boss," and he was indicted not for theft but for failure to audit county bills. Though he was convicted, sent to prison, escaped to Cuba and then Spain, captured, and sent back to prison, where he died in 1878, some of Tweed's accomplishments were more noteworthy than notorious. He helped to charter and aid such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mount Sinai Hospital, and Presbyterian Hospital. He introduced legislation to build Riverside Drive, widen Broadway from 34th to 59th Streets, embellish Central and Prospect Parks, and incorporate the New York Stock Exchange.

—Leo Hershkowitz
Queens College

CUNY ON "NEW YORK CITY 100" BANDWAGON

University Historians Tu

If it is true, as the educator Blanche Dow wrote over a half-century ago, that "the past is the tense of memory and art and wisdom," then this coming year New Yorkers will be steeped in all three. For New Year's Day 1998 kicked off a year-long celebration of the centennial of the unification of forty municipalities that, on January 1st, 1898, gave us Greater New York (the "Greater" soon vanished, an obvious redundancy). More than 50 of the City's preeminent institutions will be taking part in a vast array of special events, symposia, a traveling exhibition, and a special Web page. A notable highlight of "New York City 100," the official umbrella title for these festivities, will be the broadcast of Ric Burns's latest extravaganza, *New York*, a 10-hour documentary produced by Thirteen/WNET, WGBH Boston, and the New-York Historical Society.

Prominent among the celebrants will be the City University, which is represented on "NYC 100's" Advisory Board by President Frances Degen Horowitz of the Graduate School, President Yolanda Moses of City College, and Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

Clio, the muse of history, has worked long, hard, and in distinguished fashion at CUNY over the decade, with many of its most brilliant historians achieving careers of national significance. Among these, to name but a few, have been Professor Schlesinger, John Hope Franklin, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Herbert Gutman, and Richard C. Wade.

"The road was new to me, as roads always are, going back," wrote Sarah Orne Jewett in 1896, and countless City University historians have succeeded in giving us a "new" City by "going back." On these pages, several currently active CUNY historians offer their views on several intriguing photographs and images drawn from New York's past.

John Manbeck, though a professor of English for 30 years, is the founder and director of the Kingsborough Historical Society and (since 1993) the Brooklyn Bor-

In 1948 the residents of Brownsville, a neighborhood in east Brooklyn, celebrated the opening of the Brownsville Houses, a six-building project constructed by the New York City Housing Authority. The first of several projects built there between 1945 and 1965, it replaced more than one hundred of the area's worst tenements. Local leaders had lobbied for these buildings with hopes of repeating the success of the First Houses on Manhattan's Lower East Side and Brooklyn's Williamsburg Houses and bringing rebirth to their once vibrant but now declining community.

Also known as "Brooklyn's Lower East Side," the neighborhood was built at the turn of the century, largely for Jewish immigrants leaving Manhattan. By 1940, a large number of blacks and Latinos had settled in the area, and the initial mix of residents in the Houses was white, black, and Latino. However, like many other projects in the nation, by 1960 the overwhelming

The First Br



"The study of history issues not in scientific precision nor in moral finality but in irony."
—Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.



Photos: The LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College/CUNY, supplied the pictures of LaGuardia circa 1947 (Fiorello H. LaGuardia papers), the Brownsville construction in 1946 (N.Y.C. Housing Authority Collection), the Civil War soldiers and IRT (Local History Collection).

Facets of City's Past

ough Historian. He highlights the very day “GNC” became a reality. **Thomas Kessner** is now working on *Capital Metropolis*, a study of the city from 1870 to 1900, when it became a world financial and commercial power, but in 1989 he published his classic political biography, *Fiorello H. LaGuardia and the Making of Modern New York*. Adapted from it here is Kessner’s discussion of the subjects—other than the famed comics—La Guardia, the city’s first media mayor, broached on his regular WYNC radio program. **Mike Wallace’s** *Mickey Mouse History* (excerpted in CUNY•Matters in Fall 1996) just received the 1997 Historical Preservation Book Prize. His monumental *Gotham: A History of New York City*, co-authored with Edwin G. Burrows of Brooklyn College, is forthcoming soon from Oxford University Press. Here he highlights an event that shows just how far back the debate over welfare reform goes in New York City.

A recent arrival at the City University is **Wendell E. Pritchett**, the holder of a Yale law degree. His Penn Ph.D. is of 1997 vintage, and it was titled “From One Ghetto to Another: Blacks, Jews and Public Housing in Brownsville, 1945-1970.” Pritchett tells of a crucial moment in the history of public housing in the city. **Richard K. Lieberman** directs the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, a major repository of civic historical treasures, and has authored a major book on the history of the Steinway piano manufacturer. He captions here a rare photograph of Civil War soldiers mustering in Queens. **Joshua Freeman**, who recently came to CUNY from Columbia University, is a major authority on mass transit (his *In Transit: The Transport Workers Union in New York City, 1933-1966* appeared from Oxford in 1989). He highlights another major feat of unification in the City. Finally and most senior (having served on the CUNY faculty for 37 years) is **Leo Hershkowitz**, whose *Tweed’s New York: Another Look* (1977) was dedicated to showing that “Boss” Tweed’s career was not one of unalloyed dereliction. ◆

Brownsville Houses



majority of tenants were black or Latino.

The neighborhood itself changed drastically as well. One major cause was the urban renewal program of Robert Moses. Throughout Manhattan, neighborhoods like the Upper West Side and Lincoln Center were being rebuilt with federal and local government dollars. Tens of thousands of poor, mostly black and Latino New Yorkers were dislocated, many arriving in the tenements and projects of Brownsville.

Brownsville is best known among New Yorkers as the focal point of the 1968 teachers’ strike, which pit the United Federation of Teachers against the Ocean-Hill Brownsville Community Board, which had taken control of local schools under a Ford Foundation program. The strike exposed serious racial tensions among New Yorkers. Brownsville’s early history can teach us much about the ethnic and racial tensions of our city and about the role government policy has played in shaping present-day New York.

—Wendell E. Pritchett
Baruch College

A More Perfect Union

Commuting to Queens was a lonely business in 1917, when the Interborough Rapid Transit completed its number 7 line. Pictured to the left that year is the Rawson Street stop along Queens Boulevard, a block from the present LaGuardia Community College campus.

At one minute past midnight, June 2, 1940, the President of the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation turned over his company’s properties and operations to Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, who in turn put them in the charge of John Delaney, Chairman of the City’s Board of Transportation. Delaney promptly appointed La Guardia motorman No. 1 of the new BMT Division of the New York City Transit System. After posing in a motorman’s jacket and cap the Mayor gave control over to regular BMT motorman John Donnellan, who drove the special train carrying dignitaries from Times Square to Borough Hall. Ten days later, the City took control of the subway and elevated lines run

by the Interborough Rapid Transit Company, or IRT.

Unifying the BMT, IRT, and city-run Independent Subway System (IND) created a mass transit system 554 miles long, with 1,237 miles of track, 6,529 cars, more than 500 stations, and 32,000 employees. In its first year of operation, the unified system carried 2.3 billion passengers, making it the world’s largest, most heavily-used passenger railroad.

Subway unification helped fulfill the promises of consolidation begun in 1898, knitting together neighborhoods from the northern Bronx to Coney Island. It also left a \$310 million debt from the cost of buying privately-run systems, which taxpayers’ money had helped to build. Rather than ushering in a golden age of mass transit, unification led to a half-century of declining services and rising fares, a trajectory only recently reversed.

—Joshua Freeman
Queens College

The First Media Mayor

Nothing so recharged Fiorello La Guardia and expanded the influence of his third-term mayoralty so much as the regular radio broadcasts he initiated early in 1942. The Sunday programs, opening with the Marine Hymn and the Mayor’s favorite salutation, “Patience and fortitude,” attracted as many as two million listeners tuning in to their Mayor’s opinions on politics and life. He is pictured here in 1947, after stepping down as Mayor (his regular broadcast was over WNYC).

From a report on defense-related plans and current war strategies, La Guardia would segue to matters of immediate concern. “Ladies,” he advised in his unmistakable tenor, “I want you please to wear your rubbers when you got out in this weather. If you don’t you may slip and fall and hurt yourselves....We don’t like to ask our doctors and nurses to take care of any more patients, so won’t you please be sensible and wear your rubbers?” Then the chief executive added, “Now about fish...you should take advantage of the low prices this week and buy fish.”

From such fatherly tones he could drop into a more menacing mood. Chin taut and fist pounding, he would scream into the microphone at the city’s “no-good thieving, chiseling tinhorns.” “Cut it out,” he would say, naming a particular loan shark, “cut it out right now. That sort of business don’t go in New York, not while I’m Mayor. Get me?”

The broadcasts sometimes aroused controversy. Once he issued an invitation to “little boys” listening who see their fathers gambling to “please let me know,” promising “I won’t tell anybody that you told me, but I’ll send the police.” This horrified civil libertarians. “The



Communists were the first to set children against their parents,” James Marshall, president of the Board of Education, wrote the Mayor accusingly. When La Guardia saw what he said in print, he backtracked: “I did not ask any boys to peach on their fathers. Whoever said that is a dirty, lousy, stinking, putrid liar.”

For Easter Sunday, 1943, the tone was considerably higher: La Guardia delivered a full sermon, preceded by music from Wagner’s *Parsifal* and followed by selections from Handel’s *Messiah*, praying for a divinely wrought peace wherein “nations will not exploit nations, nor will any nation be in want.” On a winter Sunday he spoke directly to a 16-year-old who had disappeared after getting an unsatisfactory report card from his high school: “When your dad went away, he told you that you were to be the man of the house. He’s coming home in a few days on furlough and you must be home when he gets there.”

—Thomas Kessner, *The Graduate School*

Welfare Reform—19th-Century Style



the 10-acre park, among them 1,200 members of the German Tenth Ward Workingmen’s Association. At that moment, the Police Commissioner and a squad of patrolmen waded into the throng with clubs flailing. The crowd scattered “like wild birds,” except for the German immigrants, who fought back. The New York *Sun* reported that the police made hot pursuit on “horses galloping full speed on the sidewalks.”

Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Paper pictured the event, left, with the caption “riotous communist workingmen driven from Tompkins Square.”

Samuel Gompers later recalled the event as “an orgy of brutality.” The *Irish World* denounced the police as “Grand Bashaws,” but Mayor William Havemayer expressed great satisfaction, and the Police Board characterized the crowd as “a parcel of vagabonds” deserving of “a sound flogging.” In March 1874, Havemayer announced that the level of “destitution and suffering” did not seem to “warrant the interference of the Municipal authorities”—and canceled all public outdoor relief as of the next July.

The Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor applauded the end of welfare. “Charity,” agreed the *World*, “rages like an epidemic,” and to what end? It only gave “impetus to worthlessness and vagrancy” by making “begging more profitable than labor.” “Free soup must be prohibited,” declared E.L. Godkin in the *Nation*, and “all classes must learn that soup of any kind, beef or turtle, can be had only by being paid for.”

—Mike Wallace
John Jay College

Of Superconductors, Magnetic Bacteria, & Quantum Tunneling

By Anne Perryman
Director of College Relations,
Lehman College

Theoretical physicist Eugene M. Chudnovsky asks his students to imagine a world of levitating trains that travel at mind-boggling speeds and “quantum computers” a million times faster than today’s computers. The scientific breakthroughs necessary to make these Star Trek fantasies a reality are the focus of Professor Chudnovsky’s research and teaching: the field of superconductivity and magnetism.

In nature, there is resistance to the electric current that moves through a conductor. “Superconductivity” refers to the property of certain metals to conduct electricity without this resistance. Ten years ago, to obtain this effect it was necessary to immerse superconductors in liquid helium—a very expensive fluid—because at room temperature metal loses its superconducting properties. A Nobel prize came to the German physicists Bednorz and Müller who, in 1987, discovered that certain copper oxide materials would conduct electricity without resistance and at relatively high temperatures.

“The potential applications of these superconducting materials are fascinating, but we are hampered by our lack of understanding of their physics,” says Chudnovsky. “We want materials that will conduct very large electric currents—but large currents create large magnetic fields, and these, unfortunately, destroy superconductivity. If we were able to trap these magnetic fields inside a superconductor, the barrier to practical applications would be removed. I am one of many physicists experimenting with this phenomenon.”

Chudnovsky illustrates the potential of an ideal superconductor to his introductory physics class at Lehman College by placing a small magnet above the surface of a superconducting material. The magnet levitates. “If the superconductor were a road or a rail and the magnet was a jet- or propeller-powered car or train,” he says, “the vehicle could move above that surface at very high speed. Consider also the possibility of power lines made of high-temperature superconductors. There would be no energy loss—and this would be a tremendous savings.”

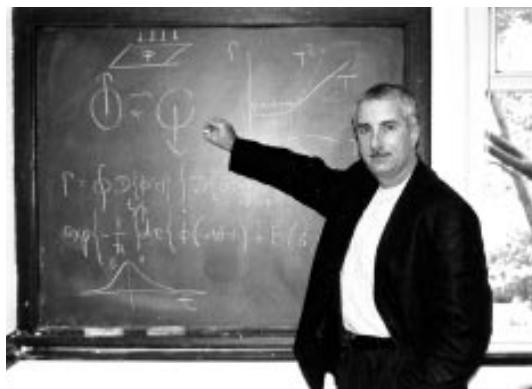
The U.S. Department of Energy has supported Chudnovsky’s research since 1993. Since 1990, he has also been working on projects for the Air Force, the National Science Foundation, and U.S. industries. He has written more than 100 research articles for physics journals and is a Fellow of the prestigious American Physical Society—elected in 1993 for his “seminal contributions to random ferromagnetism, macroscopic quantum tunnel-

ing, and hexatic order in high-temperature superconductors.”

Chudnovsky, whose work has focused on quantum, or subatomic, mechanics (as opposed to the “classical” physics of our so-called “real” world), is internationally known among physicists for his theoretical predictions of the phenomenon of magnetic poles “tunneling.” He explains, “If you look at north and south poles on the globe, they stay still where they are because the globe is a very large magnet. But if you radically decrease the size of the magnet you enter the realm of quantum physics. Here, the poles begin to jump and reverse positions. North suddenly transforms into south and south becomes north.”

“Tunneling” is the physicists’ term for the ability of particles to disappear at one point—say, within a box—then reappear at another point outside the box without going through the box’s wall. Chudnovsky has applied this concept to magnetic poles.

A few years ago, in tandem with Professor Myriam Sarachik of City College, Chudnovsky initiated experimental research in this field that helped lead to the discovery of quantum magnetic hysteresis, a novel physics effect reported by major general science journals such as *Science*, *Nature*, and *Physics Today*. “We think everything in this world has a certain position. I am here and you are there,” he says. On the other hand, “in the world of small particles, there is great uncertainty about position.” Indeed, this uncertainty



Professor Chudnovsky illustrating a law of physics.

has its own constant, the Planck Constant, named for the German physicist Max Planck. Chudnovsky explains, “imagine a particle moving through a small hole in the wall; with a certain probability it can go in any direction. When I go through the door, I go in a certain direction; this is because I am a “classical” not a quantum object. The Planck Constant is extremely small. If it were were large, this would be a very interesting world! You could, for example, be in more than one place at one time—having dinner with two people in different places.”

One application of the “tunneling” phenomenon is the possibility of creating a

Annual Fall Faculty Reception Held in Morgan Library



Photo, Wagner

On November 19, the City University’s faculty members who have won distinguished awards, fellowships, and research grants were honored at the annual Fall Reception, which took place in the splendid public spaces of the Morgan Library. Available for inspection were extraordinary musical manuscripts of Brahms and Schubert, including the latter’s very first published piece and a page from his “Death and the Maiden” quartet, as well as a dazzling selection from the Morgan’s large holdings of centuries-old illuminated Books of Hours, and contemporary documents and newspaper articles on the Alexander Hamilton-Aaron Burr duel. Trustees Chairwoman Anne A. Paolucci and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer spoke to the honorees, among them Distinguished Professor of Physics at Brooklyn College and the GSUC Fred Pollak, right. He was joined by Edward Leight, Managing Director of Brooklyn College’s Office of Research Development.

Pollak garnered two research grants for the development of modulation spectroscopy into an effective screening tool for the characterization and qualification of semiconductor devices. His project will also shed new light on such exotic device structures as heterojunction bipolar transistors, resonant tunneling structures, superlattice optical mirrors, and quantum well lasers.

computer with quantum logic. The small magnetic particles where magnetic poles interchange can become the elements of such a computer.” Says Chudnovsky, “Each element in this quantum computer would not be in a state of Yes or No but in a superposition of Yes and No.” It has been demonstrated by mathematicians that such computers could solve problems thousands of times faster than conventional ones.

Chudnovsky has brought a number of CUNY undergraduates into his research projects over the years. Last year, Lehman students Joyce Williams and Ronald Japersaud worked on the DOE and NSF projects. Anthony Estrada of Hunter College is working on the Air Force project.

Currently, in collaboration with Lehman undergraduate Biology major, Jing Wang, Chudnovsky is doing research on magnetic bacteria for the NSF. “About 20 years ago, it was discovered that some bacteria have small magnetic particles, but no one really understands the significance of these particles,” he observes. “I wanted to study the magnetism but the particles are so tiny. We have to grow a huge amount of culture—and bacteria are hard to grow. If you have too much oxygen, the bacteria die. If the temperature is wrong, they die.”

Wang is growing this culture in Lehman’s Department of Biological Sciences, and last summer she and Chudnovsky took the bacteria to an experimental facility at the University of Barcelona, where they conducted measurements. “We have come up with some interesting results, which may change the current view that bacteria use magnetic particles for navigation,” he says.

He and Wang are writing up their re-

search now and plan to seek additional support for further work from the National Institutes of Health. The potential applications of this research include development of magnetic methods of controlling the growth and division of biological cells.

In addition to his introductory course, Chudnovsky also teaches an upper-level course for Lehman and Hunter physics majors and advanced courses in magnetism, superconductivity, and quantum physics at the Graduate School. Born in Leningrad, he was educated at Kharkov University in the Ukraine, where he received his Ph.D. in theoretical physics in 1973. In the 1970s, his political activities led to interrogation and eight years of surveillance by the KGB. With help from friends, physicists, and Western politicians, the Chudnovskys were able to emigrate to the United States in 1987. After a year at Tufts University, he joined the Lehman faculty in 1988. His wife Marina is now dean of students and a teacher of social studies and Russian at Bronx High School of Science, just a block from the Lehman campus.

“The administration at Lehman has been very supportive of my research,” Chudnovsky says, “and I enjoy teaching. My students at Lehman are determined and very hard working. Sometimes they even surprise themselves by their interest in physics and natural phenomena, and many of them would make good physicists. But these days so many of our best science students want to become medical doctors.”

He serves on several CUNY and Lehman research panels and is Director of the Program for Refugee Scientists for the Human Rights Committee of the New York Academy of Sciences. He is a member of the Physics

Continued on page 12

Psyching Up for the Internet

Professor **Bonnie R. Seegmiller** of the Psychology Department at Hunter College describes her recent experiences integrating cyberspace resources into her Human Development courses.

I had hoped that the unusual announcement I made at the beginning of my class in Developmental Psychology in the fall of 1996 would be greeted with "Wow!" or "Great!" or "Right on!" Instead, a nervous wave of fidgeting and murmuring seemed to make its way around the large lecture hall. Many of my 275 students were taken aback by what I told them. I suspect that if it hadn't been so difficult for them to get into *any* course or to find another open course to replace mine, my class list might have shrunk considerably.

What was this bracing news?—simply that I would require the class to learn to use e-mail and the World Wide Web (www) as an integral part of their course work.

As I enthusiastically explained the unique opportunity these resources would afford, I heard, from several rows back, a loud, clear voice announce, "I want to learn *psychology*, not the computer!...This computer stuff is too foreign; it's for the future, not for me!" A student not interested in the future, I wondered!

Articulating cutting to the heart of the matter, the voice continued, doubtless speaking for others in the class, "I've made it this far in life without using computers, and I'll make it the rest of the way." The voice, it turned out, belonged to Miriam Wolfson, and you may understand her eagerness to make the most of the present when I add that she was 74 years old at the time. This bright, personable woman, who had returned to get her Bachelor's degree after retiring from a career in accounting, explained to me later that she thought computers were all right for loners. But they certainly didn't suit her gregarious, highly social lifestyle.

Ms. Wolfson immediately became my personal challenge. If *she* could be converted, I felt, getting the rest of the class into "web mode" would be easy. Understanding the high level of anxiety she was probably feeling, I spontaneously told her I personally would give her "private lessons." She acquiesced, and I thought I had won her over. (As she later confided, "I decided to give you a break.")

But before I reveal how Ms. Wolfson fared, let me elaborate on my decision to incorporate the use of e-mail and the www into my teaching, describe how the course unfolded, note some problems I faced, and explain why I continue to consider the Internet integral to my teaching and the students' learning.

A number of reasons motivated my innovation. First, I frequently teach very large classes, and this, of necessity, results in decreased individual interactions with students. Because I consider such interactions crucial to learning, I began to use e-mail as an additional means of one-on-one encounter, and I encouraged students to communicate with me as often as they wished. In effect I was radically extending my College office hours. Importantly, students did not have to disrupt their daily routine and work schedules to make contact with me. I also assured them of a response within 24 hours.

Second, computer literacy must now be considered fundamental to the pursuit of any college degree. A third and related reason for, as it were, wiring my course was the conviction that learning should occur *in context*, through an integration of method and content, rather than in a vacuum or through rote memorization. Although Hunter does provide an excellent basic computer skills course, students often told me they quickly forgot these "skills" because they only learned them "theoretically" and never put them to practical use.

Finally, I felt students needed as much practice in writing as they could get, and this writing must, as it does in the world that awaits them, take diverse forms. Incorporating e-mail and the Internet into my classes provided students with both formal and informal required writing experiences.

There are three major components to my use of the computer in my classes: (1) **e-mail**, (2) **my homepage**, and (3) **searching the www**. How do I start? First, by getting valuable help from Hiroko Miyamoto, formerly of Hunter's Academic Computing office, who has always speedily delivered a superb distribution list for each of my classes. With the extremely competent and generous help of Nancy Larkin (also of Academic Computing) and Nancy Guerrero (Director of Computer Facilities in Hunter's Reading and Writing Center), I schedule approximately ten workshops within the first three weeks of each semester.

Supervised by Guerrero, her assistants, my assistants (Melissa Klein, Cathy Ma-Chu), and myself, these workshops introduce students to e-mail and Internet basics. This, in itself, is a challenge due to the diverse computer abilities of the students, many of whom are almost totally computer-illiterate—and often computer-phobic in addition. Some had never even touched a mouse. Some students, of course, were practiced cybernauts.

I use **e-mail** in several ways: to communicate with the class as a whole; to answer individual questions; to draw their attention to relevant articles—some required, some not—and films; and to provide additional information and clarifications about topics discussed in class. Once a week I pose a related question for discussion, and students use e-mail to ask me questions, find out what they had missed in class, form study groups, and discuss course work with each other, which they seem to enjoy doing. They have found e-mail particularly helpful when studying for exams, since they do not have to wait until the next class to ask a question and need not rearrange their schedules to meet in person. I have also found e-mail discour-

ages the shyness of students about communicating with their professor.

My ever-changing **homepage**, or website, allows students to download a copy of the syllabus (if they need an extra), ponder review sheets before exams, and retrieve information I used to distribute as handouts. Students can also learn about my own research interests through articles I make available at the website.

An Internet project is also required to help students learn more about the Web and search techniques, the wide array of resources pertinent to Human Development, and the skills necessary for research writing (for example, defining questions, stating hypotheses, selecting relevant ma-



Professor Seegmiller, right, in her Hunter College office with her former psychology student Miriam Wolfson. Photo, André Beckles

terials, and preparing a bibliography). This project, of course, involves many of the same steps involved in writing an old-fashioned term paper.

Students must first gain my approval of their topics, which must relate in some way to normal development and be unique in the class. Students are required to conduct a search using numerous search engines (such as Yahoo, Infoseek, and Excite) to gather sufficient material on which to base a paper. They must also turn in a detailed log of all their searches. This enables me to analyze their strategies and make suggestions for more complete searches, while minimizing the possibility of getting papers bought on the net. I also ask for a print-out of relevant homepages they find and visit, as well as a "website bibliography." Although they do not actually write a paper, they perform many of the same steps one would require. Students can also submit multiple drafts of their project for my feedback, until they earn full credit for the assignment.

In addition, they learn much about important topics pertinent to the course—topics like the definitions of child and domestic abuse in different cultures; the effects of cocaine addiction on the fetus and infant during pregnancy; differences and similarities between children raised by heterosexual and homosexual parents; and resources for making decisions about elder care, to name a few.

Clearly, some of the problems students struggle with in doing their Internet projects are like those encountered with any writing assignment. For example, many students choose topics far too broad ("human development," "abortion," "child rearing"). They also experience difficulty

distinguishing what material is relevant, sometimes including everything for fear of leaving something out. Providing them with some instructions about search engines helped them with these problems—for example, that each search engine has its own conventions for entering search terms for Boolean searches and that these conventions are specified on the HELP screen for each engine.

Some students have difficulty explaining and defining their topic because of language difficulties. Because search engines, to be effective, require the entry of precise terms, students are forced to refine their vocabularies and, often, their syntax. Their e-mail communications allow me to rephrase their questions in standard English and correct/enhance their vocabulary.

E-mail and the web continue to be an integral part of my courses. For example, as the Undergraduate Advisor for the Psychology Department, I teach a Peer Advising course. Along with other requirements of the class, each Peer Advisor researches a career in psychology, counseling or social work by surfing the Web, exploring other databases such as psych-lit, library holdings, information from national associations, and interviewing professionals already in the field.

The results of these projects serve as career and graduate school guides to fields such as Geriatric Social Work, Clinical Social Work, School Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Counseling Psychology. These guides are available in the Psychology Advising Resource Library, a collection of materials on reserve under "PSYCH ADV" in Hunter's Wexler Library.

My electronic format is not without its difficulties. One, obviously, is that it is time- and labor-intensive, especially in the days before projects are due and before exams. My "office" keeps some long—and strange!—hours then, but an hour most nights, answering e-mail messages, is a small price for the increased availability and interaction.

Teaching the workshops takes time, too—and patience, I might add. Furthermore, students frequently have to wait for more than an hour to access a computer at Hunter. More computers and more computer support (in the form of real people) are needed to give all our students proper Web feet. Additionally, for projects such as the Internet project I assigned, having assistants to assist in reading and comment on projects would be extremely helpful.

What does the future hold? Despite inevitable problems, I am certainly wedded to the integration of e-mail and the Web into all of my courses. This is not least because those initial grumblings each semester have a way, at semester's end, of turning into "excellent" on student evaluations of how e-mail and the Internet enhanced the course.

Indeed, I would like some day to teach a course in Human Development that is linked to both a computer-literacy and a writing course, just as content courses are linked in writing-across-the-curriculum and ESL classes. Such linkage would provide a naturalistic setting in which students could learn content, writing skills, basic library research skills, and computer proficiency in a practical and (one can always hope!) painless way.

Charlotte Bellamy and Mary Lou Broderick, have both recently retired. They have consistently been at the forefront of child care issues at CUNY and were recently honored by past and present faculty, peers, staff, students and their children at the Center's annual Golden Acorn Awards brunch.

Bellamy reflects that the Center's mission has not changed substantially during her tenure: to offer high-quality, affordable day care to poor, single-head-of-household parents pursuing an Associate's degree. "We want to enable every child to become a confident and caring learner, and to enable every parent to become a better student and caregiver." The Center's guiding philosophy, Bellamy adds, is that "there is not one minute when we are not learning. That includes the children, the staff, and the parents."

The Center, located just off-campus, currently operates three programs. The **Early Childhood Program**, in which children learn through play and discovery, is licensed to serve up to 52 pre-school and kindergarten Monday through Friday from 7:15 a.m. to 6 p.m. A long waiting-list for admission to the program shows that word of its success has spread. Acceptance is first-come, first-served for currently enrolled BCC student-parents. Plans are underway for construction of a new and enlarged state-of-the-art facility. BCC Vice President for Administration, Mary Coleman, predicts

that ground-breaking for the new facility will begin within one year.

The After School Program, which serves up to 78 school-aged children, operates Monday-Thursday from 3 to 9:30 p.m. Here children participate in sports, homework assistance, and other enrichment activities. Finally, the Center supervises a **Family Day Care Network** which involves 42 off-campus licensed family day care homes which currently have the capacity to serve up to 225 students from two months to 12 years of age. The Center also provides eligible BCC students with placement in field work or internship settings.

The Center was initially funded by the New York City Agency for Child Development, but in the late 1970s, as a result of the fiscal crisis, it was one of 49 day care centers to lose funding. Committed faculty, students and staff, however, refused to close the Center's doors. Funds were eventually obtained from a variety of sources ranging from CET A (Comprehensive Employment Training Act) to Con Edison.

Then, in 1983, through the efforts of New York State legislators, funds were allocated to CUNY's community colleges for child care. With matching funds from the City and the support of the City Council, child care again began to thrive CUNY-wide. Currently the Center is also sustained by funds from an array of sources: the Federal Child Care Development Block Grant program, a State allotment for child care at the City University, a State Department of Health food program, a City grant for child care in two-year

colleges, a City Department of Youth and Community Development grant, BBC Student Association fees, parent fees, and in-kind service from the College.

Several studies conducted in recent years by the BCC Office of Institutional Research show an impressive positive correlation between use of the Center's services and academic successes. The



Charlotte Bellamy, center, the recently retired Director of the BCC Child Development Center, with Mary Lou Broderick, right, also recently retired as the Center's Associate Director, and Elba Velez, mother of Danny pictured below. They are seen enjoying the Center's annual picnic.

College's President, Carolyn Williams, observes, "Our students with children enrolled in the Center benefit in several ways. They are free to pursue their own academic studies because they feel comfortable about the nurturing environment for their children. Subsequently, they are enabled to function as substantial role models for their children. This is a classic win-win situation."

Rebecca Martinez, now an accountant, recalls that when her daughter, also named Rebecca, entered the Center 18 years ago, at age four, she spoke only Spanish. One year later, by the time she entered grammar school, she was quite fluent in English. "The Center really came through for me. Now 22, Rebecca is completing her degree in math and statistics at the University of Orlando. The company she works for is so impressed with her that it is paying her tuition, and

they are opening a Georgia office that my daughter will head."

One of former Director Bellamy's favorite family successes is that of Elba Velez and her son Danny. When Danny entered the Center, he was withdrawn and had difficulty socializing, but he was encouraged to participate in a special play group designed to draw him out. By the time he entered elementary school, Danny was placed in a gifted program. His mother went on to earn a business degree at Baruch College and now works at the Center herself. His younger sister Felicia is attending Syracuse University, and Danny is due to graduate from Wesleyan University this spring in religious studies.

Rebecca Encarnacion—who now holds a Lehman College Masters and works at BCC as a college counselor—vividly remembers the impact of the Center on her life. "I was on public assistance. I did not think I was college material. When I lost my baby-sitter, Charlotte and Mary Lou saved my life. My son Justin flourished at the Center. He loves to announce that he graduated from College at four years old!"

As welfare reform has recently become a topic of national interest, former Assistant Director Broderick suggests that the successful BCC model be considered seriously: "We've been doing effective welfare reform for 25 years!"

While the long-term family outcomes of on-site collegiate child care are beginning to become apparent, the direct impacts on the educational attainment of the parents who use the Child Development Center has been clearly documented.

A brief statistical summary (see illustration) shows that our parents/students are characteristically similar to other women with children who attend BCC. They are predominantly single, low-income, and of minority background. More than one-third are public assistance recipients, almost all (95%) are single

heads of household, and more than one-half required remedial reading instruction on entry.

As the figures indicate, the academic outcomes for parents who have used the Center were far better than for other parents who did not enjoy child care. After three years, the Center's student-mothers had significantly higher three-year retention rates (84% for Center parents, 43% for non-Center) and significantly higher three-year graduation rates (16% for Center parents, 4% for non-Center). In addition, Center parents participated in clubs and student activities to a greater extent (21% versus 11%) and completed greater number of degree credits: 53% of Center parents completed 49 or more degree credits, compared to 20% for non-Center parents.

More sophisticated statistical procedures (employing logistic regression analyses) suggest that these higher graduation and persistence rates remain statistically significant even when other important factors—like incoming basic skill level, marital status, welfare status—are held statistically constant. Simply put, participants in the Child Development Center are six times as likely to persist (that is, remain enrolled or graduate) at the College after 3 years, and are four times as likely to graduate after three years as their parent counterparts. Furthermore, these more complex analyses reveal that Center participation exerts a direct, statistically significant effect



Danny Velez, above, when his mother Elba was attending BCC and he was a Center student, and below, at his high school graduation.

on student success as well as an indirect effect on student persistence through social integration.

The overall findings suggest that both structural factors, like the need for

and availability of child care, and socio-cultural conditions, like enhanced social integration, are significant components of educational and occupational attainment among our non-traditional student population.

From her dormitory at SUNY New Paltz, Lanell recalls the good times she enjoyed as a child at the BCC Center. "It was great. It was always fun. And the food was very good." She expects to earn a Masters degree in communications and hopes one day to be a TV station manager. About her mother Eddice she says admiringly, "She always wanted to make her life better. . .working full-time. . .going to school. I look at her as a superwoman!"

The BCC Child Development Center will, we have no doubt, keep such superwomen—and their sons and daughters—leaping upward at the City University. ♦



Comparing Child Care and Non-Child Care Parents at BCC

(All women with children who entered college in Fall, 1991)

	Child Development Center Mothers	All Other Student Mothers
Demographic Data (upon entry):		
• Married	5%	15%
• Public assistance recipient	37%	48%
• Non-native English speaking	38%	21%
• Remedial reading required	53%	45%
Three-year Academic Outcomes:		
• Participated in clubs/activities	21%	11%
• Cumulative degree credits earned		
—more than 48	53%	20%
—less than 12	0%	30%
• Persistence after three years		
—retention rate (still enrolled)	84%	43%
—graduation rate from BCC	16%	4%
Total persistence rate	100%	47%

Goodness had Nothing to Do with It

Several years before Mae West left New York City for Hollywood to become, by 1935, the highest paid woman in the nation, she made it virtually her profession—Madonna-like—to raise eyebrows, hackles, and, finally, the law with daring, quasi-improvisational theater pieces that brought sexual topics and the full range of sexual preferences onto the 1920s stage. Lillian Schlissel, Director of the American Studies Program at Brooklyn College, has just edited *Three Plays by Mae West* (Routledge), their first appearance in print. The first, titled simply *Sex*, premiered in 1926 and featured the 32-year-old West herself as the prostitute Margy LaMont. The play, Schlissel writes, “broke with Broadway moralities and made sin a domestic product.” The next year West prepared to make the city’s thriving gay cross-dressing underworld legit with *The Drag*, its denouement being a drag ball. With frissons and gossip radiating from its tryouts in Paterson, New Jersey, the New York police made a preemptive raid on its predecessor, shutting down *Sex* and two other “sex plays.” Not coincidentally, Schlissel notes, the State Legislature in March 1927 passed a law banning all depictions of homosexuality on the stage. Adapted here from Schlissel’s introduction is a description of the raid on *Sex* and its occasionally hilarious judicial aftermath. (A second trial, in 1930, was evoked by the third play, *The Pleasure Man* of 1928, which had, thanks to the police, a run of one-and-a-half evenings. This trial is also amusingly rehearsed by Schlissel.)

On February 9, 1927, with Jimmy Walker out of the city on holiday, Deputy Police Commissioner Joseph B. McKee ordered a raid on *The Captive*, *Sex*, and *Virgin Man*. The intention was clearly to get Mae West wherever they could catch her. If she weren’t on the stage in *The Drag*, then the police would close *Sex* even though it had been running for almost a year. The anti-vice societies were sending a warning to this burlesque dancer, vaudeville hooper and upstart actress from Brooklyn, daughter of a corset model and a two-bit boxer, that she was not to expect a career as a Broadway playwright.

The police raid itself was like a Buster Keaton comedy. The acting mayor sent a limousine for Helen Menken, star of *The Captive*, a highbrow play on a Sapphic theme, and he sent a Black Maria to pick up Mae West and the entire cast of *Sex*. Everybody crowded into the van and then tumbled out at the 18th Precinct in Hell’s Kitchen. At night court, West gathered her ermines and told waiting reporters that, unlike Menken’s “lesbian play,” the cast of *Sex* were all “normal.” After a night in the Jefferson Market women’s prison, West arranged bail—\$1,000 each for six principals and \$500 for sixteen others named in the complaint.

Menken announced she would have no more to do with *The Captive*, and the court offered to dismiss all charges if West and her company would close their play. They

refused. The show’s producers, Jim Timony and C.W. Morganster, obtained a restraining order against police interference, and *Sex* went on, with a booming box office, until May 21, a week before the obscenity trial began.

A grand jury indictment found that the

company had prepared, advertised, and produced a play that contributed “to the corruption of the morals of youth” and that was “wicked, lewd, scandalous, bawdy, obscene, indecent, infamous, immoral and impure.” The theater of litigation was about to begin.

On May 28, defense lawyer Norman Schloss opened the case for the defense, pointing out what must have been obvious: *Sex* had already run for 339 performances, and it had been seen by more than 325,000 patrons, including members of the police department and their wives, by judges of the criminal courts, by seven members of the district attorneys’ staffs, and by citizens of the city who showed no moral impairment. A Broadway “play jury” had previewed the show, and belated prosecution was unreasonable.

The prosecutor argued with passion that the play was obscene and called a series of detectives who became courtroom actors. Sergeant Patrick Keneally of the Midtown Vice Squad, recited ribald lines from the play, and imitated the walk and gestures of

the “fairies” on stage. Deputy Inspector James Bolan testified that West had performed a dance that “suggest[ed] an act of sexual intercourse.” He added that the play included a scene in which a young man “goes through the business of making love to her by lying on top of her on a couch and embracing the other.” “The language they used does not contain the words ‘sexual intercourse,’” he added, “but the purport and tenor of the business and language is to that effect.”



Schloss, in rebuttal, compared *Sexto A Tale of Two Cities*, to *Hamlet*, and to the Bible.

Timony prayed over his rosary beads. Mae West wore black satin and pretended modest restraint. Barry O’Neill, the leading man, sweated profusely. Newspaper

reporters printed as much as they could, and readers around the city enjoyed the fun. *Variety* published the names and addresses of the all-male jury, every one an upstanding, middle-class businessman.

On public display, the jury took only five-and-a-half hours to reach a guilty verdict. West and Timony were sentenced to 10-day jail terms and fined \$500 each; Morganster also received jail time.

West concluded that time in jail was part of the cost of doing business on Broadway. She had herself driven to prison in a limousine, smiling for photographers, carrying armloads of white roses. She spent eight days on Welfare Island, dined with the warden and his wife, and told reporters she wore her silk underwear all the time she was in prison.

On her release, *Liberty* magazine paid her \$1,000 for an interview, and she donated the fee to establish a Mae West Memorial Library in the women’s prison. Then

she attended a charity luncheon given by the Women’s National Democratic Club and the Penology Delinquency Division of the New York Federation of Women’s Clubs. If the suffragettes could be jailed in a good cause, if Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap could stand trial for publishing sections of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review*, Mae West could do no less for free speech.

Once free, West told reporters her play was “a work of art,” and even if it wasn’t exactly art, she calculated, “Considering what *Sex* got me, a few days in the pen in a \$500 fine ain’t too bad a deal.” Like her prostitute Margy LaMont, Mae West had learned “there’s a chance of rising to the top of every profession.”

After *The Pleasure Man* of 1928, Mae West tried one more Broadway play, *The Constant Sinner* (1931). It closed after 64 performances, and West decided the only money to be made was in Hollywood. In 1932, she blazed across the screen for Paramount in “Night After Night” with her old friend George Raft, who was building a Hollywood career as a Valentino look-alike. She wrote her own dialogue, and her signature one-liners were sharper than ever.

By 1935, she was the highest paid woman in the United States, and William Randolph Hearst, who tried to keep her name out of his newspapers, was the highest paid man. To a hatcheck girl’s admiring “Goodness, what beautiful diamonds,” came the memorable Mae West quip, “Goodness had nothing to do with it, dearie.”

BMCC Chess Team Triumphant (Ben Franklin Cheers)

In 1786 Benjamin Franklin published a charming short essay, “The Morals of Chess,” in which he praised the several “valuable qualities of the mind” the game instills in its players, among them foresight, circumspection, and caution. The final lesson Franklin notes is especially valuable: “Lastly, we learn by chess the habit of *not being discouraged by present bad appearances in the state of our affairs, the habit of hoping for a favorable chance, and that of persisting in the search for resources*” (Franklin’s italics).

If Franklin was right—and he was most of the time—Borough of Manhattan Community College now has good reason to celebrate. For its chess team recently regained its #1 ranking in the nation at the 53rd Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess Tournament, held at Bowling Green, Kentucky, on December 27-29. (In 1994 BMCC became the first community college team to win the tournament, and it won again in 1995.)

One in a field of 27 other college teams, BMCC defeated the University of Illinois to win the championship. Members of the team included Sharif El-Assiouti, John Easton Esjanov, Kasson Henry, and Alexander Stripunsky. In 1995, BMCC won its first championship, defeating Harvard and NYU.

BMCC President Antonio Pérez said of the victory, echoing Franklin, “We congratulate our team members on their victory and thank them for the perseverance that led to their success.”

THE WISDOM OF MAE WEST

“Between two evils I always pick the one I haven’t tried before.”

“Men like women with a past because they hope history will repeat itself.”

“Marriage is a great institution—but I am not ready for an institution.”

“I used to be Snow White, but I drifted.”

“Every man I meet wants to protect me. Can’t figure out from whom.”

“I am proud to be 82 because I know I don’t look it.”

BROOKLYN COLLEGE'S LATE PROFESSOR

Celebrating Allen Ginsberg

In 1973 Queens College English Professor John Tytell traveled to Allen Ginsberg's Cherry Valley farm near Cooperstown in upstate New York to gather material—and green beans—for his definitive history of the Beat Generation, *Naked Angels* (the poet's benevolent advice was to call it *Naked Humans*). The moment was captured by Tytell's wife, the noted photographer Mellon. On October 17, under the auspices of CUNY's Center for the Humanities, directed by Professor Morris Dickstein, several distinguished speakers gathered at the Graduate School to honor Ginsberg, who died last April. He was a Distinguished Professor at Brooklyn College and had taught there since 1979. The audience was also treated to several archival tapes of the poet reading and singing his works. Among the celebrants was Professor Tytell, whose study of another countercultural phenomenon, *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile, and Outrage*, appeared recently from Grove Press. Following here is the moving conclusion of Tytell's tribute:

Our principal spokesman for candor and spontaneity in an age of secrecy and denial, Ginsberg offered his remarks on censorship or psychedelics to Congressional committees or *People* magazine. But Allen's ambition was not only political: because he believed in poetry, he supported a number of poets, accommodating some of them and their families at Cherry Valley. With his "palsied lip," as he put it in a poem on teaching at Brooklyn College, he was still the most passionate reader of poetry since Dylan Thomas...It is no wonder that no poet in our time has been so memorialized—in Brooklyn, Berlin, Barcelona and Calcutta, in San Francisco and Los Angeles, in Central Park and City Island and on Times Square.

Ginsberg was always able to Make It New, as Ezra Pound had urged, and to make his poetry relevant to our general spiritual needs. Both Pound and Ginsberg had the rare capacity to



Photo, Mellon

be both avant-garde and Old Master simultaneously. I find it so charming that, in Venice in 1965, Ginsberg chose to play Bob Dylan and the Beatles for Pound, then 79 and locked in his decade of silence, because he felt the older poet should hear the new sounds. Ginsberg jammed with Dylan and John Lennon just as Kerouac had with Lester Young, because a great poet, as Pound taught, first of all was musician.

"When the mode of the music changes," Allen once told me, "the walls of the city shake." And his life was spent shaking those walls with his own music....Our Zeitgeist poet in a particularly dark time, Allen Ginsberg was the main singer of our generation. The songs he sang for us will continue to be sung as long as we have the voice and the heart to sing them.

Seemiller, continued from page 9

And what of Miriam Wolfson? One of my best rewards that semester was that, at its end, she announced she was actually buying her own computer! Talking to her recently about her experience a year ago, she explained: "Before I actually touched the computer, it seemed a lot more complicated than it really was. Just following the different steps, even though I had them written down in front of me for my ease of use, was overwhelming. But once I got it, I loved it. In fact, the possibilities are almost *too much*."

I know what she means. Almost a year has passed since she conquered her fear of flying on the information super-highway in the sky, and she is traveling more than ever. A serious convert, she has even hired a computer instructor for weekly visits and says that e-mail and the Internet have opened a new world for her.

It may all be about modems, pentium chips, and megabytes of RAM, but it sure looks like good old-fashioned Human Development to me. ♦

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Chudnovsky, continued from page 8

Panel of the National Research Council and the National Board of Directors of the Committee of Concerned Scientists

The professional life of a theoretical physicist requires a good deal of travel. Last summer Chudnovsky attended meetings in Australia and Germany and worked on the magnetic bacteria project with his long-time collaborator Dr. Javier Tejada in Barcelona.

His fondest recent accomplishment, however, was recreational: a 26-mile hike in the Grand Canyon on a hot day in August, after meetings in San Diego and Santa Fe. And he also enjoys flying and has a pilot's license. "Our world is three-dimensional space, but we spend our lives walking on the flat ground," Chudnovsky observes, adding what could well be a physicist's credo, "Flying allows you to move in three dimensions—three-dimensional space is much more beautiful!" ♦

What Austen Craze?

"When I take up one of Jane Austen's books, such as *Pride and Prejudice*, I feel like a barkeeper entering the kingdom of heaven. I know what his sensation would be and his private comments. He would not find the place to his taste, and he would probably say so."

Mark Twain

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