

# CUNY Matters

A Newsletter for The City University of New York • Summer 2000

## At a Glance

### 1 New Chancellor Levy Honored by University at Lotos Club Reception

Just a day after his formal appointment as permanent public schools Chancellor, **Harold O. Levy** was honored by CUNY at a reception at the Lotos Club. Leading the celebration were Board Chairman Herman Badillo and Chancellor Goldstein, who recited a very apt poem on the occasion (see page 3).



### 2 Trustees Set to Vote on Distinguished Professors at June Board Meeting

Among the four new Distinguished Professors to arrive from outside CUNY this fall will be **Francis M. Deng**, a renowned Sudanese-born diplomat and scholar who has written extensively on famine relief. Since 1992 he has served as U.N. Secretary General's special representative for internally displaced persons. For more on him and others in the June 2000 class of D.P.s, see page 6.



### 3 The Many Faces and Facets of the University's Class of 2000

When she arrived from Japan in 1989 with about 50 words of English, **Kanuko Okuda's** expertise was in modern dance. The Lehman College graduate is now headed for a Master's at Columbia in social work. For more on her and other outstanding graduates, see page 7.



### 4 Biography of a Flemish Master of Motion (and Devoted Husband)

Paul Oppenheimer is well known on the City College campus, where he arrived in 1967, as a teacher of English and comparative literature. On page 11 the Editor of *CUNY Matters* interviews him about his "other" life as an art historian and his recent biography of **Peter Paul Rubens**, *Rubens, A Portrait: Beauty and the Angelic*.



## From Free Academy To City University

**M**ay 7, 1997 marked the 150th anniversary of the passage and signing of the legislation that made the Free Academy of New York a reality.

To celebrate this landmark date, three archivists from Baruch College, Brooklyn College, and City College—**Sandra Shoelock Roff**, **Anthony M. Cucchiara**, and **Barbara Dunlap**, respectively—agreed to pool their efforts and curate a traveling exhibition that would highlight the people, events, students, and times which led to the creation of the present City University of New York.

Interest in the creation of this exhibit was great, and support came from the PSC-CUNY Research Foundation, the H.W. Wilson Foundation, the presidents of all the CUNY campuses, and the Baruch College Fund. Initially opening at Baruch College on May 7, 1997, the array of memorabilia traveled to several other CUNY campuses over the next two years.

Beginning with items documenting the early history of the Free Academy, the exhibit then expanded on such central topics as the increasing higher education of women, the growth of the city, student life, student publications, the municipal colleges in wartime, athletics, and the growth of the municipal college system in New York. The curators traveled to each of the CUNY campuses in search of artifacts, meeting with archivists, librarians, and many administrators and urging the importance of preserving documents revealing their institutional past.

**B**elieving the exhibit should leave a more lasting memory, the three curators eventually began to entertain the idea of publication. This spring the idea became a reality, with the appearance of *From the Free Academy to CUNY: Illustrating Public Higher Education in New York City, 1847-1997* (Fordham University Press).

Interim Chancellor Christoph Kimmich provided a challenge grant for the project, and this was met by contributions from former Baruch Interim President Lois Cronholm, former City College President Yolanda Moses, and former Brooklyn College President Vernon Lattin. The PSC-CUNY Research Foundation also contributed, as did the Baruch College Fund. (For more information about the

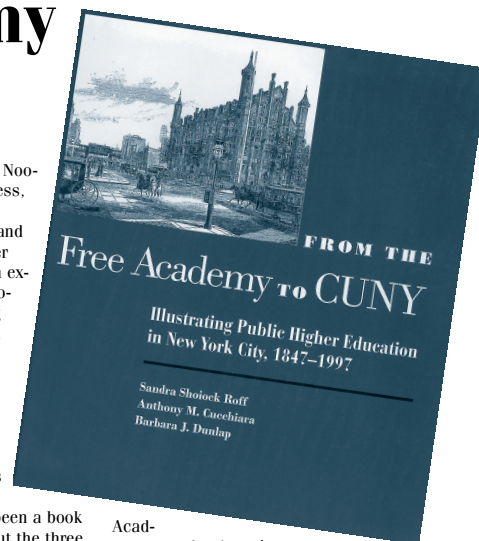
book please contact Margaret Noonan at Fordham University Press, 718-817-4780.)

The book tells of the growth and development of municipal higher education in New York City with extensive text and many fully annotated illustrations, commencing with the tiny Free Academy and its first class of 149 students, and ending with an overview of the largest urban university in the country. Activities both inside and outside the classroom in the last 150 years are defined by the same subject areas as the original exhibit.

Each chapter could have been a book in itself, but the three authors have sought to make their book an engaging, colorful overview of how the municipal system of public education emerged, developed, and took its place in the life of New York City as well as the nation. Featured here are just a few of the 120 historic photographs included in *From the Free Academy to CUNY*, along with captions adapted from the book's informative annotations.

**T**he Free Academy has seldom been free from controversy since Townsend Harris first proposed it in 1846, and as it grew into a series of campuses and later a university, new issues surfaced due to changing economic, social and political forces. "We hope," says Sandra Roff, "this volume will spur additional studies, using the published and unpublished sources available, as well as the rich array of archival resources available at many CUNY campuses."

The Free Academy's first president from 1849 to 1869, Vermonter **Horace Webster** (1794-1871), pictured above, brought with him strong ideas about the centrality of mathematics to higher education, as well as a keen desire to instill discipline—the latter no doubt a consequence of his having graduated at the head of his 1818 class at West Point, where he taught mathematics until 1826. He even established a demerit system at the



First President: Strong on Math



Doctoral Pioneers Flanked by Bowker, Rees

Academy to maintain order among students. Webster also instructed the senior class in moral philosophy. He had a humane side, however, and the students affectionately referred to him as "Pop" Webster.

**T**he first CUNY Ph.D. candidates received their degrees in 1965 from Chancellor Alfred H. Bowker (below, left) and Dean Minna Rees (far right). The following year the Graduate School and University Center occupied redesigned quarters at 33 West 42nd Street, a building erected on the site of the old Aeolian Hall. Rees provided the leadership and vision that spurred the development of doctoral programs soon after the municipal and community colleges were federated into the University. The City University became official when Governor Nelson Rockefeller signed the establishing bill on April 11, 1961.

Like other CUNY colleges established in the 1950s and 1960s,

**The Free Academy Building**, above, located on the corner of 23rd and Lexington Avenue, was designed by James Renwick Jr., a promising young architect about to be awarded the commission for St. Patrick's Cathedral. He took Belgian and Dutch town halls as his prototypes, with the windows being derived from King's College Chapel at Cambridge.

Gaslights, a warm-air heating system,

*Continued on page 8*

## LaGuardia Prepares for Mellow Presidency

**O**n April 24 the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. **Gail O. Mellow**, a leading educator on the national community college scene, as president of Fiorello H. LaGuardia Community College, beginning on August 1.

Mellow, whose M.A. and Ph.D. in Social Psychology are both from George Wash-



ington University, comes to the Long Island City campus from a three-year presidency at Gloucester County College in New Jersey. Prior to her move there, Mellow served at LaGuardia as a senior administrator responsible for curriculum and pedagogy in 1996-97.

Earlier, Mellow served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Rockland Community College, as Acting President and Academic Dean at Quinebaug Valley Community-Technical College in Connecticut, and as Director of the Women's Center at the University of Connecticut.

Mellow is currently chair of the American Council on Education's Commission on Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, and she is also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Association for Higher Education. A frequent speaker on and author of articles on community college issues, Mellow is also the co-author of *Healing Technologies: Feminist Perspectives and Double Jeopardy—The Precarious Status of Women of Color*.

## Trustees Round Up Texan for Kingsborough

**A** prominent educator from San Antonio with three degrees earned at the University of Texas at Austin was appointed by the Board of Trustees on April 24 as president of Kingsborough Community College, beginning on July 15. Dr. **Byron N. McClenney**, who succeeds the College's venerable, long-serving leader, the late Leon M. Goldstein, will bring nearly 30 years of his own presidential experience at community colleges to the Manhattan Beach campus.

Most recently, McClenney was president for 14 years at the Community College of Denver, which has one of Colorado's most ethnically diverse student bodies. While there he developed a nationally recognized system for developmental education, fostered numerous training collaborations with the local business community, and conducted extensive fundraising while helping to create a successful alumni association.

His six Denver campuses served 10,500 students; the Kingsborough campus serves more than 15,000.

Prior to arriving in Denver, McClenney, whose master's and doctorate are both in education, also served as president of Parkersburg Community College in West Virginia and the Alamo Community College District in Texas.



In addition to sitting on several educational commissions and blue-ribbon committees (notably President Clinton's Steering Committee for America Reads/America Counts), McClenney has authored or co-authored many articles on community college management and governance.

## Master Plan Approved by Trustees

**A**t its May meeting, the Board of Trustees approved a comprehensive long-range Master Plan on the organization, development, and coordination of the University, a multi-year blueprint to transform CUNY into the premier national model for urban higher education.

Board Chairman Herman Badillo and Chancellor Matthew Goldstein said the Plan, which was submitted to the New York State Board of Regents for approval, builds upon the University's renewed focus on high academic standards and expanded educational opportunities.

The plan appeared one year after a mayoral task force led by Vice Chairman Benno C. Schmidt, Jr. described the University as "an institution adrift." Badillo stated that CUNY is now "a University on the move." Among the examples of reform and renewal at CUNY, Badillo cited the appointment of Dr. Goldstein as Chancellor, changes in remedial and admissions policies, a new exit test from remediation, the expansion of "College Now" to the ninth grade in public high schools, and the recent naming of four new college presidents.

Chancellor Goldstein said, "We are committed to providing highly valued opportunity throughout the University system. With the adoption of this Master Plan, CUNY is deliberately choosing a course that rests on raising and sustaining higher standards for all students."

**T**he Master Plan calls for developing new academic programs, increasing the ranks of the full-time faculty, redefining core curricula, expanding the use of the Internet and rebuilding the University's physical plant. Highlights of the plan include:

- Establishing a "flagship environment" with highly selective colleges and a University-wide Honors College. This will foster national prominence in targeted undergraduate liberal arts and science programs as well as professional and graduate programs, including such areas as foreign languages, teacher education, photonics, structural biology, new media and computer science.
- Increasing the current slightly more than 50 per cent of courses taught by full-time faculty to 70 per cent.
- Creating a new partnership between the University and New York City public schools that focuses on preparation of high school students for college study and the recruitment and training of talented people for teaching careers.
- Improving teacher education, raising admission standards, improving recruitment, offering scholarships and stipends, and establishing a technology link between CUNY and the New York City Public Schools for "smart classrooms." This will include video conferencing with master teachers who are implementing exemplary programs in their classes.
- Advancing at least \$355 million in capital construction over the next four years to rebuild the University's capital plant at all senior and community colleges.
- Expanding CUNY On-line, a consortium of 10 CUNY colleges that offers courses over the Internet.
- Creating the Digital Library Initiative, a multi-year, University-wide project that will provide state-of-the-art telecommunications, improve library instructional laboratories, and create a digital core collection to increase the number of reference and research resources.

The Master Plan also calls for initiating a University-wide review of academic core requirements. Approximately 40 speakers testified at a hearing on the Plan sponsored by the Board on May 15. Chancellor Goldstein scheduled two forums on June 15 and 16 to provide additional opportunities for further input and discussion.

The full text of the Master Plan can be easily accessed at the CUNY Web site ([www.cuny.edu](http://www.cuny.edu)) by clicking on the Web page ticker at "CUNY Approves Master Plan."

## Gizis Interim Hunter President



**D**r. **Evangelos John Gizis** assumes his third interim presidency at the City University—this time at Hunter College—on July 15. He was recommended for the position by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and appointed to the post by the Board of Trustees at its April 24 meeting, succeeding the departing President, David A. Caputo.

Gizis, whose fields are food science and biochemistry, has been Hunter's Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs since 1998, and for the two previous years he was its Vice President for Administration.

Prior to arriving at the College, Gizis served in several top positions at Queens College, including Deputy to the President and Dean of Administration from 1977 to 1985. Gizis began his City University career at Hostos Community College, where he rose to Dean of the Faculty and served, in 1976-77, as its Acting President. In 1985-86 he also served as Acting President at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

## Near Sweep of Women's Forum Awards

**E**ach year the Women's Forum presents several Educational Awards to encourage mature women in their pursuit of career-enhancing undergraduate degrees. Residency in New York City, a full year of college attendance, and current registration for at least 6 credits are required for eligibility.

On June 15, the Forum, currently celebrating its 25th anniversary, granted a record eight Educational Awards, and seven went to CUNY students. The honored scholars (and their campus and corporate sponsors) are: **Waltrudis Buck** (Hunter, Loews Hotels), **Ngzi Ugochi Eronini** (Lehman, Tupelo Capital), **Adrienne Ivory** (Queens, Merrill Lynch), **Joanne McDonough** (Lehman, Goldman Sachs), **Susan Mirti-Fusco** (Kingsborough, Chase Manhattan), **Maria Milagros Ortiz** (Lehman, Ryland Homes), and **Vonita Yvonne Vaughn** (NYC Tech, Time Warner).



# CUNY Law School Network Aids Public Interest Lawyers

By Dorothy M. Zellner

**W**hen Fred Rooney, a member of the 1986 inaugural graduating class of the CUNY School of Law, received a job announcement in the mail in 1998 for the position of Director of the School's newly-created Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN), it struck a chord.

The new project, the announcement read, would provide resources, support, and mentoring to new lawyers who wished to establish viable solo- and small-firm practices in underserved communities. And communities poorly served by the legal profession are numerous: according to the American Bar Association Commission on Non-Lawyer Practice, in 1995 as many as 70% to 80% of low-income persons were unable to obtain legal assistance, even when they needed and desired it. The ABA also estimated that conditions were not too much better for moderate-income families, 61% of whom could not find their way to the justice system in 1994.

Since his graduation, Rooney has become familiar with the tribulations experienced by lawyers who choose public-interest practice. First he worked at a Legal Services organization, earning so little that he actually received public assistance benefits for his family. Then he hung out his own shingle for low-income clients in 1987, choosing for his base of operations a Latino neighborhood of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. "When I first opened my office, everyone expected me to know everything. I didn't!" Rooney had to "re-invent the wheel" each time he was called upon to deal with a new need of his soon-burgeoning practice, which was sustained by significant sums of borrowed money that took him years to repay.

He longed for a community of mentors and for a network of peers with whom he could interact.

Rooney's career choice was, if not inevitable, certainly predictable. He had, after all, attended CUNY Law, which since its founding in 1983 has made a commitment to public interest law its prime focus. The School's motto—which is tellingly not in Latin but plain English and which is taken very seriously on the Flushing campus—is "Law in the Service of Human Needs."

After a few rocky years, he not merely survived but developed a thriving practice, which now employs four attorneys and seven paralegals. The firm's work, which consists mainly of family law, bankruptcy, real estate, workers compensation, and social security cases, was honored in 1994 by the Pennsylvania Bar Association's "Pro Bono Award." As time passed, Rooney himself developed a specialty in international child abduction. This heart-breaking expertise was called on recently: Rooney was summoned by several television news programs to comment on the case of Elián Gonzalez.

With 13 years of experience in his own small practice, Rooney saw the Community Legal Resource Network directorship as the perfect way to "return the kindness" of those mentors who had assisted him. He

saw that CLRN could help other lawyers avoid what he had gone through and help them create financially viable and professionally satisfying lives.

Rooney got the job. Since October 1998 he has divided his time between New York City and Bethlehem, where he plays a scaled-back role in his firm.

**T**he idea for the network was conceived in 1995. The then newly-appointed Dean, Kristin Booth Glen, invited members of every CUNY Law graduating class to her home for a series of dinners, and she heard, over and over, of their need for mentoring and support to survive in their practices for the underserved. Glen and Susan Bryant, Director of Clinical Education at the Law School, reached out to three other law schools whose mission they believed to be similar: the University of Maryland, Northeastern, and St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.

After two years of brainstorming and discussion among the four schools and George Soros' Open Society Institute (OSI), the new CLRN consortium received an OSI grant of \$1.6 million to set up a demonstration model that would support law graduates in community-based practices, facilitate a rethinking of the role of community lawyering, and challenge legal educators and students to work for wider access to the justice system. "Most law graduates," says Rooney, "never hear from their law schools until they're asked for money." He lauds Dean Glen for her visionary concept of "longitudinal" legal education. This, he says, is "truly revolutionary."

Each school agreed to experiment with a different aspect of the project. Maryland's CLRN created Civil Justice, Inc., a demonstration law office to model "best practices" aimed at unmet legal needs. Northeastern developed two CLRNs, one for domestic violence, the other for economic development. St. Mary's version, called the People's Legal Assistance Network, initiated an Internet network that provides services to small, isolated South Texas towns.

**C**UNY's Legal Resource Network started with 28 lawyers in three "practice groups." Now there are 45 members in five groups. These are organized according to professional focus: family law, immigration, employment discrimination (a special three-month program mentored by CUNY Law Professor Merrick Rossein), and two general practice groups.



Center for Legal Resources director Fred Rooney, left, and CUNY Law's immigration specialist Miguel Negron, standing in front of his Bay Shore office.



CLRN's Immigration Specialist Miguel Negron, CUNY Law '94, runs a very successful practice with offices in Manhattan and on Long Island. He was profiled on the front page of the

*New York Law Journal* last April under the headline, "Indigent Clients Feel Welcome at this Firm." Negron remarked in the article how scrupulous his poor clients were about paying their bills, though they sometimes take a long time and their "payment" sometimes takes the form of barter. "I have never had to hire a collection agency."

CLRN helps its members avoid the usual starting-from-scratch hassles of office management, and it has also hired a part-time librarian and an e-mail network to assist them in legal research. Mentors with many years of experience are also available to work through more complicated problems. The head of CLRN's mentoring program, for example, is Kenneth I. Greenstein,

who was a partner at Nixon Peabody and has 40 years of experience specializing in environmental law and public financing.

The groups discuss many management issues, such as efficiency, billing, and how to place a "fair and reasonable value" on their work. As Rooney says, "You can't ask a person to engage in pro bono service if they can't pay their Con Ed bill."

Early in his Bethlehem practice, Rooney

obtained a contract with a local hospital to assist people with AIDS. For nominal reimbursement, his firm helped prepare wills, guardianship arrangements, and powers of attorney. Arrangements like this have carried over into CLRN, which is always on the lookout for ways Network members can augment their incomes while expanding service to low- and moderate-income clients.

For example, Rooney and Negron set up a

partnership with Baruch College last January to provide low-cost legal services one day a week to students who need advice on immigration-related matters. Fees of \$50 per hour (considered extremely reasonable in a profession where it is not uncommon for lawyers to charge \$250 or more an hour) are paid from student government funds. Since the service began in February, nearly 75 students have taken advantage of this assistance. Rooney has written to all Directors of Student Affairs and student government leaders in the CUNY system, hoping to set up a similar service on all campuses. He reports that members of CLRN general practice groups also hope to set up educational meetings at all CUNY campuses to provide general information about various areas of the law.

Rooney hopes that CLRN, which he expects ultimately to have 200 CUNY grad members, will be an "incubator" for experiments in other modes of legal work. (Rooney and CLRN can be reached at [rooney@mail.law.cuny.edu](mailto:rooney@mail.law.cuny.edu) or at 718-340-4451.)

**A**t the heart of the program is Rooney's hope that "we've made a positive impact on our members so that they can continue to serve underserved communities." He has seen members grow and their self-confidence improve as their economic base has improved. He is convinced that "the program saved people from giving up [on the law], since the pressures of being a solo attorney are never-ending."

"The common theme that runs among all of us," Rooney reflects, "is our commitment to 'serving human needs,' and, somehow or other, we're going to do it." ♦

## Shakespeare on Public Interest Law

*Plate sin with gold,  
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;  
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.*

King Lear

## Play Ball!

**A**t a long-planned reception at the Lotos Club on May 18, the University honored **Harold O. Levy**. He is seen here with Board of Trustees Chairman **Herman Badillo** and CUNY Chancellor **Matthew Goldstein**. The mood was particularly celebratory because, by coincidence, Levy had graduated from interim to permanent Schools Chancellor the day before. Knowing of Levy's penchant for verse, Goldstein marked the occasion by reciting a poem by Marge Piercy titled "To be of use." Its opening lines doubtless struck the audience of 150, which included many educational leaders, as capturing the Levy style since arriving at 110 Livingston:

*The people I love the best  
jump into work head first  
without dallying in the shallows  
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.*



Photo, André Beckles.

# Fifth Black Writers Conference Hosted by Medgar Evers College

By Fred L. Price

President Edison O. Jackson of Medgar Evers College struck the apt Biblical note in his opening address at the Fifth National Black Writers Conference (NBWC), held on March 30-April 2 on the College campus, when he said, "In the beginning was the Word." Citing the gospel of John to a record-breaking 1,200 participants from across the country and as far away as Germany, Japan, Britain, Canada and the Caribbean, Jackson proudly asserted that the sacredness and power of "the word" were ever-present among African Americans.

"As the drum spreads 'the word' in African civilizations," he said, "the NBWC fosters spirited dialogue among panelists and a worldwide audience regarding the contributions and current state of writers throughout the Diaspora."

"The Impact of Literature by Black Writers on Culture and Values in America" was the theme of this year's event, hosted by Medgar Evers and coordinated by the Department of Literature, Languages and Philosophy. Discussions ranged from the role of the Internet as the "great revolution" in 21st-century publishing, providing unparalleled marketing opportunity for black authors to the impact of rap artists and "performance poets."

Noting that publication by black writers is at an all-time high, panelists nevertheless warned that we should not be seduced into believing that this greater presence means all is well. Too many deserving writers still struggle to get published, they contended, and there continue to be serious questions about the control and representation of the writer's work, the responsibility of the writer to the community and, vice versa, the responsibility of the community to the writer. Panelists pointed out that, for African American literature truly to flourish, more blacks must buy, control, review emerging works, and use the new technology to tap into new audiences.

All previous National Black Writers Conferences focused on the responsibility of the writer to the community. This time, poet Sonia Sanchez turned that axiom on its head, challenging the community to assume some responsibility for the success of its writers. "Every time a black person publishes a book, we should go out and buy that book," the celebrated poet Sonia Sanchez urged. "In fact," she declared, "there should not be a few best-selling



black authors, but all of us should be millionaires." She asserted that good literature is the creator of sound social values, and she challenged her audience to support its writers and thus insure freedom and voice for blacks in society.

Among the panelists raising similar issues were asha bandle, Bebe Moore Campbell, Maryse Condé, Stanley Crouch, Manthia Diawara, Junot Diaz, Trey Ellis, E. Lynn Harris, Terry McMillan, Walter Mosley, Ishmael Reed, Tim Reid, Sapphire, and John A. Williams.

The NBWC embodies the dream of the Conference's founder—novelist and former Medgar Evers writer-in-residence John Oliver Killens—to create forums for discussions on issues and trends in black literature. In the 1960s, Killens organized one-day writers' conferences at Fisk and Howard Universities. When he came to MEC in 1983, he sought to expand this dialogue. Though he died just four years later, his ideals and impact remain.

Killens was a mentor to many African American writers and poets who have received national acclaim, among them Walter Mosley, Sonia Sanchez, and Ishmael Reed, all of whom participated in the opening panel discussion, moderated by Keith Gilyard, a former MEC faculty member. Maya Angelou and Terry McMillan were also students of Killens, as well as the Conference's director, Dr. Elizabeth Nunez. Nunez, a professor of English at MEC, is the author of three novels, including the critically acclaimed *Bruised Hibiscus*.

This year's NBWC also included a round-table with some of the country's top editors, including Cheryl Woodruff, Senior Vice

President for the One-World imprint at Ballantine/Random House, which helped to fund the Conference reception. Standing-room-only readings and performances were also presented at three collaborating institutions—the Public Theater, the Brooklyn Public Library, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. At the Schomburg, cultural critic Kalamu Ya Salaam enthusiastically ventured that performance poetry is "bigger than hip hop." He told the audience "the page and the stage are not enemies" and "young writers, poets and rappers are still evolving, and are voracious readers."

Funding for the Conference came from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Nathan Cummings and the Reed Foundations, and it was enhanced by the participation of *QBR: The Black Book Review*, the Open Book Committee of PEN American Center, the Harlem Writers Guild, and the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. Further information on the NBWC can be found on the Web at [www.blackwriters.net](http://www.blackwriters.net). But—while it was acknowledged that the

voice of the hip hop generation was undeniably creating a new series of black "classics"—panelists cautioned that black writers thrive only when each generation seeks to be attuned to the literature(s) of neighboring generations. The struggle over the years has been for African American writers to be taken seriously in *their own* voices—but, they reminded the audience, not to the exclusion of listening carefully to the voices of others.

Though black writers seek to influence popular culture, they do not wish to be labeled or to have their work judged derivative. Citing the pivotal impact on the literary scene of the work of the young 19-year-old poet Phyllis Wheatley, for example, panelists pointed out that words, not wealth, allowed Wheatley to gain freedom—and an international reputation as a writer.

The audience agreed, many of them passionately expressing their views on the importance of "being heard" and echoing the famous Biblical declaration President Jackson chose for his opening address. In fact, they compared writing to giving testimony in church: writing as a way to reveal one's most private thoughts and, finally, as a spiritual experience.

John Oliver Killens would have been very pleased. ♦



## CHANCELLOR'S MEMORANDUM

### On the State and City Budgets

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein responded to the State and City Executive budgets in a May 11 memorandum posted on the CUNY Web site.

On the State Budget, Governor Pataki and the Legislature have provided critically important funding in order to help us implement University and college priorities. The true beneficiaries of the substantial gains and improvements made are the students of the University. They will be the recipients of qualitative enhancements in their educational experiences at CUNY. They will repay this investment many times over through their contributions to the City, State, and the greater society.

On the City Budget, I am especially heartened by the proposed new support by Mayor Giuliani for strengthened collaborations with the public schools, building on the assistance provided in recent years by the City Council.

At the end of the overall process, we will be able to continue reinvigorating the ranks of faculty while moving in the direction of a flagship environment. As we work to further strengthen CUNY and its constituent colleges, I want to express my personal appreciation for all the work of our elected officials, trustees, presidents, faculties, students, alumni, and friends of the University who helped obtain these budgets.

To access the full memorandum on the Web site ([www.cuny.edu](http://www.cuny.edu)), click on the ticker at "2000-2001 State and City Adopted Budgets." To access a detailed analysis of the State and City budgets prepared by Interim Chancellor Sherry Brabham, click on "Enclosure" at the end of the memorandum. ♦



Elizabeth Nunez is rewarded for both her literary and organizing efforts by Dr. Maurice Henderson, president of the National Black Writers Tour, left, and Max Rodriguez, founder of the QBR. Photo, Tony Akeem.

## RESEARCH MATTERS

# Bringing Art, Technology into 3D Focus

The Office of Research Development at the CUNY Research Foundation asked Lehman professors **David Gillison** and **Robert Schneider** to report on a major graphics/imaging consortium at Lehman College.

Lehman College's Fine Arts Building was designed by the eminent architect Marcel Breuer, whose work clearly descended from the Bauhaus style. This style represented a union between art and technology, and it is thus very appropriate that the Bronx campus's Fine Arts Building is now the principal site for a remarkable new academic research initiative joining art and technology: the **Computer Imaging and Graphics** program (CIG).

In 1996, several of us on the Lehman faculty from the departments of Art and Math and Computer Science began to collaborate in research on an advanced computer graphics and imaging program on campus. The nexus we had in mind—between computer science and studio art—would be unique for both disciplines.

The result was CIG, which rests on the belief that, as art and technology converge, there is a pressing need to rethink the way classes are prepared for the field of computer imaging. CUNY graduates eager to enter the burgeoning fields of new media can no longer graduate thinking they are just art or just computer science students. Indeed, many students who take this "narrow focus" approach find that once they reach a certain level of expertise, they are at a distinct disadvantage.

Lehman's Computer Imaging and Graphics initiative is designed to give students a broad understanding of the humanities, the arts, and relevant aspects of computer science. They take courses in art



Shown here are two examples of work produced by CIG students. Edward Henery's work, titled "Claw," was based on the claws of a Raggiana bird of paradise and used the Power Animator program. Chrysselle Martinez created "Couple," a rendering based on Brancusi, with the Maya program.

history, studio art, calculus, computer programming, three-dimensional modeling, animation, multi-media and web design. For graduation, seniors take on either a special project, or an internship with an appropriate company.

At present, four full-time faculty are engaged in CIG (a fifth and sixth are anticipated this fall): George Chaikin (Art and Math/CS), David Gillison (Art), Robert Schneider (Math/CS), and Terry Towery (Art). Five adjuncts are also participating. Funding and support for the program has come from the National Science Foundation, the Graduate Research Technology Initiative, Lehman College, and CUNY's Computer Information Services office.

From the outset, CIG faculty have pursued an interdisciplinary research path by

periodically teaching joint classes. We two, for example, began by sharing courses in 3D imaging and the World Wide Web. Since then, other art faculty have joined in a teaching exchange. Last year, in a move evoked by the enthusiastic response from students taking the Computer Imaging program, a Lehman scientist whose specialty was quantum physics was asked to work with a Lehman studio artist whose focus was art and natural history. The course they taught was on environmental sculpture.



One of the core concepts guiding CIG thinking has been that the worlds of art and media must inevitably focus on three-dimensional imaging. Even where the end product of this multi-dimensional approach is merely two-dimensional, having the ability to see a scene in three dimensions allows its creator remarkable freedom. Being able to move the "camera"

in a 3D scene means that time can be added to the coordinates of space. This ability to create animations is now so advanced that it is no longer easy to see what is computer-generated and what is mechanically modeled.

This ability is not limited to Hollywood and films like *Jurassic Park* and *The Terminator*, since 3D imaging is now being used throughout manufacturing, the arts, and society in general. Among the other driving forces propelling innovation in 3D modeling and animation have been Hollywood and NASA. The most recent aircraft built by Boeing, the 777, was designed entirely at 3D imaging work stations. Increasingly, starting more than 15 years ago, automobile makers have employed 3D modeling programs in design and manufacture.

Prosecutors are now presenting complex scenarios using 3D animation programs to allow juries to understand their reconstructing of events in criminal trials. One piece of software in particular, Maya, is so good that a group of defense lawyers recently requested that its use be limited or "dumbed down": they did not want jurors to mistake animations for actual video footage.

It is not only manufacturers and research scientists who have seen the future, however. Visual artists are now increasingly able to exploit the new software in their work. Many commercial artists now build magazine covers using 3D software, and, with the dramatic fall in prices of software and computer hardware, they are now also creating work on 3D workstations.

Clearly, with the arrival of fast cable and DSL modems, Web software manufacturers, who in the past were content with 2D imagery for their Internet applications, are now turning to 3D and are rebuilding their web applications to exploit web protocols such as Virtual Reality Markup Language, or VRML. For these reasons, we at Lehman have made 3D modeling and animation the end focus of our Computer Imaging and Graphics program. •

## DISTANCE LEARNING FOR FEDERAL WORKERS

# Kingsborough Marches on Fort Totten

With only a few sessions left in her Kingsborough Community College accounting course last fall, Professor Margaret Conway thought it was about time to give her class the personal touch. So she actually walked into the room on the Fort Totten military base in Queens where her students had been meeting.

She was a bit surprised at how comfortable they had become with her virtual presence. "I thought they would prefer being taught in person. As it turned out, their class personae were fairly consistent," she said, in response to her actual and virtual selves.

Conway was teaching the first course in a new Kingsborough program that provides distance learning to civilian and military personnel at Fort Totten. Its accounting and business law courses are being transmitted to approximately 20 Federal employees via interactive video-conferencing technology that employs video cameras and computers to allow people in different locations the face-to-face interactions they would perform if all participants were in the same room.

Kingsborough's video-conferencing room is located in the College's Media Center Library, and its hardware consists

of three video cameras, five video monitors, "beetles" (hand-held remote controls for the screen), and a 42-inch monitor or "smartboard" that is used as an electronic blackboard. The classroom at Fort Totten has two monitors.

Professor Michael Rosson, the Director of the Media Center, prepared faculty on the best ways to adapt to the new technology. "I think instructors in this environment have to be comfortable," he said. "Students as well as teachers have different styles of learning."

In the video-conferencing room, professors must remain within the range of the camera's gaze. A document camera pro-

jects printed material onscreen, and professors are also able to download visual sources from the Web, DVDs, and videos. A "smartboard," representing a large computer monitor, can be used as a blackboard and for presentations created by PowerPoint software. The monitors allow teachers to watch themselves teach as well as observe the reactions of students in the off-site classroom.

Besides the professor, the only other person in the room is a technician. The technician aims the camera appropriately, adjusts the volume, monitors the feedback, and is on hand to remedy any technical problems. When a student asks a question, he or she can press a "look-at-me" button on a remote-controlled "beetle," and the camera will zoom in, bringing their faces close-up.

Conway recalls how she adapted her teaching style to distance learning, describing, for example, the occasional difficulty caused by a slight delay in the



Professor Amy Haas making her presence felt for government workers at Fort Totten.

transmission of conversational exchanges via the monitors. "You can't have overlapping conversations." In spite of the difficulty of reading nonverbal clues, however, she felt she got to know her students. "In distance learning, as in any classroom situation, there are some students who dominate a discussion, and some who will avoid it," she said.

"It takes some adjustment," said business law Professor Norman Adise. "I like to observe the reactions of my students, and the monitor reduces the size of a student, so it makes reading a student's body language harder. But with experience, I'm sure this can be overcome." He noted that the students have adapted very well. "They pick up things very quickly and I cover more topics in less time."

Professor Amy Haas, who teaches accounting, noted that a distance learning course is more structured and requires more planning. Documents have to be ready for the professor to present onscreen. "I like walking around a room and looking over a student's shoulder to see the work being done," she remarks. "However, the camera does give me a view of all the students at once."

The personnel at Fort Totten are pleased with how video-conferencing saves people time, money, and energy. Warren

Continued on page 9



**T**hat the City University is nothing if not even-handed will be superbly demonstrated this fall, when **Paul Horwich** comes from University College in London to join the faculty of the Graduate Center's Philosophy Program.

But first, recall Oscar Wilde's observation, in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, that "the truth is rarely pure and never simple." Among philosophers these days, two views of truth have been debated: the inflationary and the deflationary. Earlier this year philosopher Michael Devitt arrived in the Program as Distinguished Professor, and he counts himself an "inflationist." As Executive Officer for Philosophy, however, he was delighted to urge the hiring of Horwich, whose 1990 book *Truth* (now in its second edition) represents the



**New CUNY Philosopher Horwich in the Foothills of India**

only sustained defense of the opposing deflationary view. This, Devitt explains, "is the view, roughly, that, although 'true' is a very useful predicate, it does not refer to a substantive, explanatory property." (Remember: *never simple*.) Truth, clearly, is in for a tussle at 365 Fifth Avenue.

Horwich, though a native Britisher, received his advanced degrees from Cornell and taught at MIT from 1973 to 1994. His affinity for breathtakingly large topics has also been demonstrated in his earlier books *Probability and Evidence* and *Asymmetries in Time*, the most important work on time, Devitt says, since Reichenbach's *The Direction of Time* (1956), one of the classics of logical positivism. His recent book *Meaning*, also deflationary in its approach, just appeared and is expected to generate considerable controversy.

**H**orwich is one of four extramural and five intramural candidates for the position of Distinguished Professors that, as *CUNY•Matters* went to press, were awaiting final Board of Trustees approval at their June 24 meeting. The honor carries with it an added \$21,850 annual stipend. Including this "class of June 2000," there are now a total of 115 active D.P.s at the University.

Coming to the Graduate Center's Program in Spanish and Luso-Brazilian Literatures from Dartmouth, where she served as Department Chair and held an endowed chair in Spanish, will be **Lia Schwartz**. The Argentine native is renowned in the field of renaissance and baroque Spanish literature, and she is especially well known for her expertise in the genre of satire and for books and essays on the poetry of Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645). Schwartz was also elected to the presidency of the International Association of Hispanists in 1998 (CUNY hosts its annu-

**DEFLATING TRUTH, SOLVING 4,000-YEAR OLD PUZZLE, REASONING REMBRANDT & OTHER STELLAR PURSUITS**

## Distinguishing Features: Nine New Top Scholars

al meeting this coming year).

Fluent in five languages, Schwartz studied at the University of Buenos Aires, Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, and received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Her familiarity with New York City is considerable: she maintains a home here and taught at Fordham for nearly two decades, beginning in 1971. CUNY Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Louise Mirrer, herself a Hispanist, notes that Schwartz's "background in classics has provided her an unusual grasp of the Spanish Golden Age. Her presence will add further luster to CUNY's highly-ranked program in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian studies."

The Graduate Center's Political Science Program is celebrating the fall arrival of the renowned international scholar and diplomat **Francis M. Deng**. Currently a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute, where he has focused on conflict management, human rights, and the role of law in nation-building, Deng has also served, since 1992, as the U.N. Secretary General's special representative for internally displaced persons.

A native of Sudan, Deng earned his law degree, with honors, at the University of Khartoum, studied at King's College, Cambridge, and eventually received an LL.M. and a J.S.D. at Yale. He has served as Sudan's ambassador to Canada, the U.S., and the U.N., as well as Sudan's minister for foreign affairs. Deng is the author or co-author of 27 books in fields ranging from law, anthropology, political analysis to fiction and poetry. Among his titles are *Tradition and Modernization* and *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis in Internal Displacement*. Deng has also taught courses regularly at Columbia and Yale Law Schools, enjoyed several prestigious grants (Ford, Rockefeller), and has received several professional awards and honorary degrees.

**From Rice University in Houston, Richard**

**Wolin** will bring to the History Program at the Graduate Center a reputation as one of the leading authorities on modern European intellectual history. According to History Program Executive Officer David Nasaw, Wolin's principle focus is "the political history of ideas. This is not so much the history of political theory, but the political implications of the work of leading 20th-century European philosophers." What Nasaw calls Wolin's "impressively high level of analytical rigor and sophistication" will be on view

in his next book, which appears from the Princeton press this fall, *Heidigger's Children: Philosophy, Anti-Semitism, and German-Jewish Identity*. Just completed is a study titled *The Seductions of Unreason: The Persistence of Counter-Enlightenment in Modern Thought*.

Notable among Wolin's prior books are several other Heidigger studies and *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption*. He is a frequent contributor to several periodicals, notably *The New Republic*, *Dissent*, and *Common Knowledge*. A graduate of Reed College in Oregon, Wolin earned his Master's and Ph.D. at York University in Toronto. He has taught at Rice since 1983, rising from assistant professor to holder of the D.D. McMurtry Chair in History.

**Amitav Ghosh**, who has been a Visiting Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at Queens College this past year, becomes a permanent presence this fall. Known around the world for his fiction, journalism, and human rights activism, Ghosh cuts a wide swath among languages, cultures, literary genres and disciplines. A speaker of Bengali, Hindi, Arabic, and French, in addition to English, Ghosh has taught anthropology, sociology, and creative writing or served as a fellow at universities in Delhi, Charlottesville, Cairo, Calcutta, and New York City.

Forthcoming this year is Ghosh's most recent novel, *The Glass Palace*, and his international reportage includes *In an Antique Land and Dancing in Cambodia & At Large in Burma*. His novel *The Calcutta Syndrome*, is soon to be filmed by the Oscar-winning director of *Mediterraneo*. He has been a regular in such journals and periodicals as *The New Republic*, *Kenyon Review*, *Granta*, and *The New Yorker*. Ghosh was born in Calcutta and eventually earned a D. Phil. in anthropology at Oxford University.

Lehman College's new D.P. is professor of mathematics and computer science **Victor Pan**. A specialist in the areas of design and analysis of algorithms and several methods of computation (polynomial and matrix, algebraic/numerical, and dense structured matrix), Pan arrived on the Bronx campus in 1988. Among his nearly 170 research papers are several on solving a polynomial equation, a four-millennia-old problem having important practical applications, particularly in computer algebra.

Pan served as Senior Researcher at the Institute of Electronic Control Machines and the Academy of Science in Moscow from 1965-76, then immigrated to the U.S., where he became a citizen in 1982. He has over the last 20 years sojournd as visiting scientist or professor at such



**Lehman's Pan, Math Leader**

major research sites as the IBM Research Center, Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies, the University of Pisa, Stanford, Columbia, and Berkeley's Computer Science and Mathematics Institutes. His research has attracted a remarkable amount of grant support: since 1989 he and his research teams have received no fewer than 11 PSC-CUNY awards, and since 1980 he has participated in seven NSF grants.

**A**fter studies at Syracuse University, Oberlin, NYU's Institute of Fine Arts and Columbia University, **Leonard J. Slatkes'** interest in Dutch painting took him finally to the University of Utrecht, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1962 with a dissertation on Dirck van Baburen (c. 1595-1624), a Dutchman who painted in Utrecht and Rome. Since he arrived on the Queens College campus in 1966, the new Distinguished Professor of Art has

become an internationally recognized expert on 17th-century Dutch and Flemish painting, especially those who worked in the style of Caravaggio. He is frequently sought for his opinion on works from this period by Sotheby's and Christie's auction houses, as well as dealers and collectors.

Individual artists with whom he is particularly identified are Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Georges de la Tour, and several of his current works-in-

progress concern the diaspora of the caravaggesque style. Doubtless the grandest project on his palette is a study and catalogue raisonné of Rembrandt's entire painted oeuvre, and he has a very specific date for its completion: July 15, 2006, the 400th anniversary of the artist's birth.

Ask Queens College historian **David Syrett** what he thought about the recent submarine film thriller *U-571*, and you could get a very detailed answer. Among several books on naval history by this new Distinguished Professor—who, like Leonard Slatkes, arrived at the College in 1966—are two on the subject: *The Defeat of the German U-Boats: The Battle of the Atlantic and The Battle of the Atlantic and Signals Intelligence: U-Boat Situations and Trends 1941-1945*.

But it is principally for his several books and numerous articles on American and British naval history in the 18th century—with particular focus on the Revolutionary War—that Syrett has established his leading reputation (especially in Great



**Ghosh, Writer on Cultures, at Queens College**



**The Graduate Center's New Hispanist Schwartz**

*Continued on page 12*

## Stirred (Not Shaken) By Ford and Mellon

Not long ago, a question on the mind of **Lia Lynch** was whether her martinis should shaken or stirred. Bartending was her job while maintaining a 4.0 GPA at Hunter College as an honors English major. Now Lynch is facing a more momentous dilemma: which of two prestigious fellowships for graduate study—from the Ford and Mellon Foundations—to accept for her doctoral studies at Princeton, which begin this fall. A high school dropout from the Bronx who worked at a variety of jobs before earning her GED, Lynch, who is of Puerto Rican heritage, became fascinated at Hunter “by the representations of the colonial mentality in the late Renaissance.” She intends, while at Princeton, to explore how British literature of this period “reinforced the established racial and social hierarchies that continue to affect people of color.” Lynch is seen here being interviewed at her June 2 commencement by *New York Times* reporter Anemona Hartocollis.



Photo, Daniel Shure.

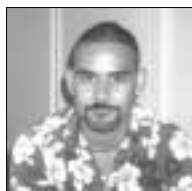
## Vacation in Trinidad? Soca to You

The new Marriott Renaissance Plaza in Brooklyn is just one block from the New York City Technical College campus. Not surprisingly, the hotel and the College have been in cahoots: some City Tech grads work there and the College Foundation’s “Best of New York Award” dinners have been held there. Last year J.W. Marriott Jr., the Chair and CEO of Marriott International, was honored, and this year, on May 24, Kweisi Mfume, president of the NAACP was fêted. Still, the thoughts of **Colin Mohammed** are thousands of miles away, in his native



Photo, George Lowe.

Tours, in collaboration with the government of Trinidad and Tobago that, he and his cousin hope, will ride the crest of the island’s rapidly expanding resort industry. Mohammed gained his experience for the project by helping to start up such a Web site for New York City (bookonlinenow.com). “My experience, he says, “is that Internet shoppers prefer to finalize all arrangements now. SocaTours.com will enable them to plan every facet of their visit to the islands.” Mohammed leaves the impression his summer will not be spent lying on a Trinidadian beach sucking brew.



## Island-Hopping Demographer

Originally from the Island of Tonga, an independent monarchical Kingdom in the South Pacific, **Leonaitasi Kuluni** entered the CUNY BA Program in 1998 and this June received his cum laude with a dual area of concentration in International Affairs and Demography. Kuluni was

## TALES OF THE MORTARBOARD

# The Faces of June

granted a scholarship to study at the University of Hawaii (taking courses at Manoa and Hilo), then came to Hunter College as an exchange student. He hopes to return to Tonga and become a researcher or professor after graduate school. Among several independent studies Kuluni pursued while at CUNY was a demographic study of the Tongan population in Hawaii. He also researched the worldwide Fijian diaspora and completed an internship at the Fijian mission to the U.N. Of the CUNY BA he says, echoing countless previous graduates of the Program, “its self-directedness, interdisciplinary nature, and versatility have made my graduation a possibility.”

## A Dancer Leaps into Caring

After arriving from Tokyo in 1989 with 50 words of English in her vocabulary, **Kanuko Okuda** danced for four years with several New York companies, eventually becoming coordinator and principal dancer of the Omega Liturgical Dance Company at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. While there she met and cared for many dancers and others with HIV—and her world expanded. Deciding she needed “more knowledge and skills in help-



ing people,” Okuda came to Lehman College, where she graduated this June with a degree in social work. She has been accepted with advanced standing as a Master’s candidate at Columbia and hopes to work with cross-cultural families within the immigrant population. “Emigration is a destabilizing factor,” she says, “that can trigger certain forms of mental illness.” She is seen here on stage before her career change and on the Lehman campus after.

## Touching on Midas

**Michel Kama Galante** is understandably fascinated by his ethnic backgrounds: his Sephardic Jewish father, a doctor, met his Japanese mother, a nurse, when they were working in San Francisco. He is finding himself particularly drawn to his family’s musical heritage. “I’m feeling a strong attraction to the dance and music of Okinawa, the home of my grandparents.” Galante, a piano and composition student with a 4.0 GPA, received his Master’s in music from Queens College on June 7. He is seen here with composer/conductor Tania Leon after a recital at Brooklyn College (part of an all-CUNY tour Galante organized). Though the piano has been important in his life, his focus has increasingly been on composition—mainly chamber and orchestral pieces. Currently, he is working on a cantata based on the King Midas legend. Galante is eager to point out that he has been phenomenally fortunate to study with three distinguished City University composers: the eminent doyenne among women composers, Thea Musgrave; Bruce Saylor, the prolific composer, especially for grand public occasions (papal visit, presidential inauguration); and Academy Award-winner John Corigliano.



## Valedictorian on Bass

Three years ago **Pamela Margid** came to a fork in the road. Unlike Yogi Berra, she made a choice: to devote more time to her double major in English and History at City College and absent herself from the Pon-toons, a successful group for which she was an accomplished bass player (see above). The decision proved brilliant: Margid, whose GPA is 4.0, became the Valedictorian of the Class of 2000 and has received the most prestigious graduate fellowship offered by Cornell, where she will study under Pulitzer historian Michael Kammen. In addition to honors in history, Margid has won several awards and scholarships while at CCNY, including two General Tremain Prizes in Civil War History and the Cromwell Prize, the College’s top history honor. She is shown here delivering her hail-and-farewell at CCNY’s commencement ceremonies.



## “Come, a passionate speech” —Hamlet

Displaying admirable shrewdness and loyalty to their down CUNY students, the last three Chancellors have several times gone to an obvious well of eloquence for their speechwriters: the English Program at the Graduate Center. Over the last decade, five doctoral candidates have served in the position, and, in a splendid coincidence, four of them received their Ph.D.s at the Center’s commencement ceremony on June 1. **Marybeth McMahon**, now serving in the office of the President of Georgetown University in Washington D.C., wrote her dissertation on Willa Cather. **Elizabeth Rosen**’s focus is on the interactions between literature and the law (she is



No photo by André Beckles

an attorney and taught law for several years before beginning her graduate studies). Her dissertation compares the concept of nature in early American law and literature. The dissertation of **Peter Taback** examined the American middle class’s response to the atom bomb in the writings of Trilling, Cheever, Bellow, Mailer, and DeLillo. Chancellor Goldstein’s current writer is **James Werner**, who earned his degree with a study of the influence of the literary type of the *flâneur*, a strolling urban observer, on Edgar Allan Poe. The Editor of *CUNY Matters* sought to arrange a photograph of the four but was firmly rebuffed, the speechwriter’s code of anonymity prevailing. Also present on June 1 was the first speechwriter, Dan Porterfield, who received his CUNY English Ph.D. several years ago and went on to write speeches for Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and, as he does now, direct public relations for Georgetown University.



By Maria Bennett

Magdalena Ramirez pushed a stray lock of wavy, chestnut hair from her forehead nervously and fanned herself, despite the fact that it was thirty degrees or so and the streets outside were awash in a bone-chilling rain. It was Saturday, April 15, however, the day of Hostos Community College's **Second Annual Multicultural Children's Literature Festival**, and she was hell-bent on getting it right. "La-dies and gen-tle-men, I would like to pre-sent to you. . ." she rehearsed her introduction slowly and deliberately in a corner of the College's main lobby, in between stints of welcoming participants with an irrepressible grin.

Ramirez was one of 16 student volunteers assisting conference organizer, Professor Rosemary Benedetto Stimola. Highlighting the event, titled "Reading the Millennium: Controversy, Censorship, Choices," were six workshops and a keynote speech by the famous Southwestern poet and author Pat Mora.

The 200 participants were treated to exhibits featuring a dazzling array of the latest children's books from publishers such as Harcourt Brace and Cinco Puntos Press. A senior editor from Lee & Low Books, Louise May, gave up a rare free

## SECOND ANNUAL BOOKFEST AT HOSTOS

### Controversy, Censorship In Children's Literature

Saturday morning to share her enthusiasm with the educators, librarians, parents, and students on hand, noting: "We're delighted to offer books for children that reflect contemporary multicultural issues."

Since everyone has been made aware of the issue of censorship in children's literature via the Harry Potter books (certain religious groups objecting to their supernatural content), the conference theme could not have been more timely. Keynote panel presenter Carolivia Herron, looking like a glorious *santera* in her long white cotton dress, spoke of her own brush with the powers of political correctness after the publication of her *Nappy Hair* ignited heated debate: "My book started as part of a lecture at Harvard dealing with the epic tradition in African-American literature, and the *Nappy Hair* story sprang from a story-telling contest with my uncle. People loved the story and told me to publish it, so I did. But, curiously, the only people who protested the book were people who

had not taken the time to read it. It's really not about the hair—it's about the sheer poetry of our tradition." Greeted by thundering applause and a huge bouquet of irises and daisies, she mused, "I wonder if I'll ever be asked to speak in Mississippi?"

Her ideas were echoed by Bobby Byrd, who founded Cinco Puntos Press in El Paso, Texas, and who was also at the center of controversy when funding for his company's book, *The Story of Colors*, was pulled by the NEA after it was discovered that the book's author was Subcomandante Marcos, the Chiapas revolutionary. "It's really just a story about how the gods created the world, and thought it was boring without colors. It's a traditional Mayan legend, and it's imperative that indigenous peoples maintain these stories. It's a children's book, but kids' books are for the whole society." The



Thumb's Up for Children's Lit

Keynote speaker at the conference, Carolivia Herron, striking a classic pose.

book's story line is illustrated with the loveliest abstract artistry, which was likened to Picasso by the *School Library Journal*.

Byrd's co-panelist, Barbara Kiefer, Professor of Children's Literature at Columbia, concluded with her definition of a censor as "someone who thinks he alone can recognize

evil and should protect others from it." She urged all to consider the power of literature in the development of a child's consciousness: "Books help kids to entertain ideas they never thought of before. They show feelings rather than facts, and let readers explore possibilities, illuminating the human condition. Books don't teach, they reach, and students have a right to read them."

Continued on page 12

CUNY History, continued from page 1



The Height of Luxury, 1848

and drinking fountains made the building very modern for 1848. Real slate blackboards and cherry-wood desks with stools that had backs impressed the first students as the height of luxury. Total cost for the building and its furnishings came to \$68,000 (\$2,000 under budget). This photograph was taken around 1900.

When Charles Rogers Bowker (at right) died in 1933 at the age of 85, a long obituary in the *City College Alumnus* stressed his lifelong empathy for the problems and ideals of students. He began what would become a distinguished career in publishing by launch-



From Bloody Angle to Presidency

ing *The Collegian* at the Academy, and in 1866 pioneered the establishment of the first democratically elected student council on any American campus. The strict disciplinarian President Horace Webster was not amused.

Bowker was also instrumental in garnering a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa for the College of the City of New York (as it officially became in 1866). Webster was elected the chapter's first president and saw to it that Bowker's application for membership was blackballed!

The College of the City of New York's second president, Alexander Stewart Webb (below), was, like Horace Webster, a West Pointer (class of 1855) and teacher of mathematics. Civil War heroes were popular choices for college presidencies, and Webb won his military fame as a brigade general of volunteers during the battle at Gettysburg. He and his men occupied the "Bloody Angle" and withstood Pickett's charge on July 3, 1863. Wounded himself, he saw half his men killed. General Meade, his commanding officer, wrote that his bravery was "not surpassed by any general on the



The Perils of Student Activism

field." Webb served as College president for a astonishing 33 years, from 1869 to 1902.

As around the nation, students on City University campuses rose in protest against America's military-industrial powers and, later, against the war in Vietnam. On October 19, 1967, a

*New York Times* headline read "Brooklyn Students Battle in Peace Protest . . . 40 Arrested on Campus." The melee erupted over the presence of two navy recruiters on the Brooklyn College campus. Later, in the spring 1970, came the Kent State shooting, and campus demonstrations proliferated. Typical of these mass public protests was one at which Jane Fonda, below, one of the antiwar icons of the time, addressed students on the South Campus of City College. The old Finley Student Center stands in the background.



Political Attitude: Jane Fonda in Protest at City College

Medgar Evers College was housed in a variety of temporary facilities before achieving a permanent campus. The College admitted its first class in 1971 and from 1869 to 1902.



Brownstone & Storefront U

was administered from the Crown Heights brownstone, above, for several years. It was named for the civil rights activist Medgar Wiley Evers, who was killed in 1963. During its early days, the College was located in eight different sites, including the former Brooklyn Preparatory School and three storefronts near the intersection of Bedford and Nostrand Avenues. ♦



**E**motional, inspiring, unforgettable—such as a talk on Buddhism, textiles, and a philosophy of dying given by **Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick** last March 31 at the Graduate Center.

The professor of English at the Center—who has made public and written about her long experience with cancer, which was discovered to be incurable three years ago—offered a three-tiered presentation: as she talked, she showed slides from her recent travels through Asian countries; she also presented an installation of her fiber art, in the form of a dozen or so large stuffed figures hanging from the ceiling, clothed in different kinds of cloth, paper, felt, and *soie mariée*, in varying shades of indigo blue. Sedgwick did not talk about the slides, which were mostly of statues, prayer flags, and temples (I particularly remember a bronze deity wearing a pink cap, and five beautiful squares of green fabric flying against the sky), but rather let them drift by as she spoke.

The lecture connected her interest in fiber art with her deepening interest in Tibetan Buddhism—a “wild and woolly” strand of that religion, she says—and with her own experience of the “bardo of dying.” She noted how the experience of an alien, Eastern culture suddenly becoming very personal to her corresponds to her suddenly intimate relationship with her own mortality.

Sedgwick explained that the bardo (Tibetan *bar*=in between + *do*=suspended, thrown) is the space between contracting a terminal illness and death itself. Given the present state of medicine and the nature of certain illnesses like cancer and HIV, this space can be quite an extended one, as there are no “cures,” only early diagnoses. Sedgwick writes in a short handout for her talk that the bardo of dying (like other bardos, such as rebirth, falling asleep, or dreaming) is “electric with spiritual possibility as well as with pain and loss.”

The hanging figures Sedgwick created represent aspects of her experience in the

A BUDDHIST “ART OF DYING” (& DYEING)

## In the Bardo with Eve Sedgwick

**Maggie Nelson**, a doctoral candidate in English at the Graduate Center, reports on a moving lecture by a renowned CUNY writer on literature, gender, and sexuality—and cancer patient.

bardo: “the disorienting and radically denuding bodily sense generated by medical imaging processes and illness itself” on the one hand, and “the material urges to dress, to ornament, to mend, to re-cover, and heal” on the other. She ranged widely, comparing Buddhist thought with critical theory, pedagogy, and psychoanalysis, pointing out how these are all different ways of knowing that can sometimes collapse into “things known.”

**I**n talking about the forms of academia, Sedgwick related the habit of taking down others’ arguments with the need to cover up or call attention to the patchiness of our own. Further, she connected this habit with the larger problem of how, in the face of real dread, anxiety, and self-doubt,

we cast around frantically for identity.

Sedgwick spoke from a podium in the rear as we in the audience faced the screen. This increased the effect of her voice coming from a strangely suspended place and evoked a sense of meditation rather than scrutiny. The large stuffed bodies dangling in the room both obscured and framed one’s vision. When I tried to look at Sedgwick, for example, I would see her torso, but a translucent blue shawl hanging from one of the figures covered her face.

Latecomers bumped into the figures on their way to sit down. The effect was both comic and eerie, as the swinging figures seemed both alive and also lifeless, even lynched. This play between the animate/inanimate relates to the Buddhist

precept that all living creatures and objects—rocks, flowers—have souls, and that the supreme goal is enlightenment of ALL beings, not just humans.

**I** feel tempted to call Sedgwick’s discussion of her illness “brave,” but that word, often used to declare triumph over or denial of fear, doesn’t seem quite right. Is there a word for the kind of bravery that incorporates fear, vulnerability, and radical doubt? Perhaps the better word is “generous.”

Sedgwick reminded us that, in Buddhism, human being-ness is a privilege in that it is a good place from which to make spiritual progress. Throughout “In the Bardo” I was overwhelmed by her generosity in revealing what making use of this privilege might feel like. To conceive of death as a moment of “potent opportunity” demands a reorientation and retraining of our minds. As she points out, this practice prepares us for the moment of death, even if we suffer a more abrupt bardo—say, we are thrown through a car window and killed instantly.

Sedgwick’s emphasis is on how to respond in a crisis—how to develop a mode of being in the world in which kindness, open-mindedness, and liberation come naturally to us. Such a practice is, as she put it, “hard, chancy, and important.” The intention of “In the Bardo” is clearly stated: to celebrate “coming to loving terms with what’s transitory, mutable, even quite exposed and ruined, while growing better attuned to continuities of energy, idiom, and soul.”

At one point Sedgwick noted in passing that all the guidebooks to Asia she read forewarned travelers to be sure to give and receive gifts with both hands. Her lecture was given in such a spirit, and it was an honor to be present for it. I thank her with both hands. ♦

Several of Eve Sedgwick’s figural compositions in fiber hanging were installed in the common area of the English Program for her talk.



*Distance Learning*, continued from page 5

Rose, a marketing analyst for the U.S. Army Reserve, points out, “It takes over an hour to commute from Fort Totten to Kingsborough, so this is really convenient for people who work.” Without the hassle of a long commute, he found that he was “more focused in class, and at the same time, more relaxed.”

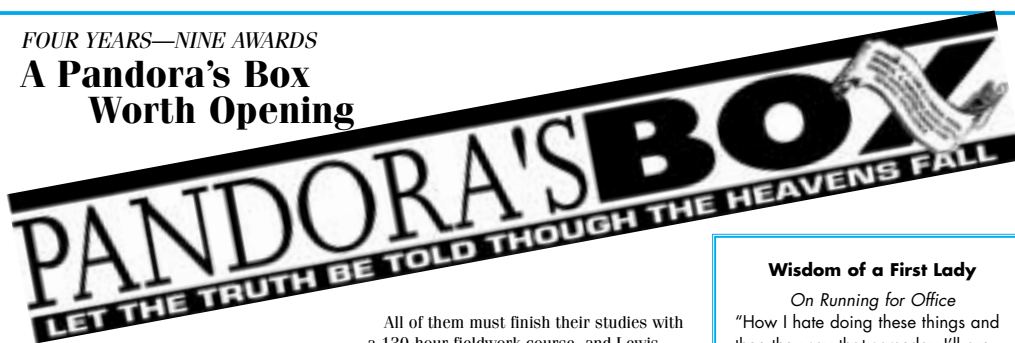
**A**fter class is over, professors communicate with students via phone, fax, or e-mail, and assignments can be handed in the same way. Office hours are limited to an hour, but a student who misses a class can go back and review a videotape. The College keeps a master copy and sends copies of the classroom discussion to Fort Totten.

In the past, courses taught off-site tended to attract mostly adjunct faculty. It is expected that full-time faculty will be more often in the virtual classrooms of distance learning.

“It’s beneficial to both students and teachers,” Conway sums up, pointing out that she learned much about new digital technology in the course of teaching the Fort Totten course. “It has made my professional life more rewarding.” And she adds, “Not only is it new and exciting for the faculty, but it gives us the opportunity to reach out to a population we haven’t been able to reach before.” ♦

FOUR YEARS—NINE AWARDS

## A Pandora’s Box Worth Opening



**A**dministrators in the early 1970s must have thought *Pandora’s Box* was only too apt for the masthead of York College’s rambunctious student newspaper, with its headlines screaming at the top of their voice.

However, since 1986, when he became the paper’s advisor, Professor of English Glenn Lewis has worked with his usual 35 to 40 students—either English majors emphasizing journalism or journalism minors—to turn the *Pandora’s Box* newspaper into a very serious place.

“I’ve been emphatic about letting nothing go in that is substandard. If it takes ten rewrites, so be it,” Lewis says. His writers and investigators, he adds, “are not learning to be student journalists; they are learning to be professional journalists.”

All of them must finish their studies with a 130-hour fieldwork course, and Lewis has consistently placed York’s students in many of the leading media internships in the metropolitan area. And most of them have achieved careers in journalism.

Such rigor has been reaping spectacular recognition for *Pandora’s Box* lately. Most recently, *Pandora’s Box* won the first-place 2000 Mark of Excellence Award of the Society of Professional Journalists for Best All-Around College Newspaper in the Northeastern U.S. It also won this year’s first place award from the American Scholastic Press Association for schools with more than 2,500 students.

So abundant has the good news been—no fewer than nine awards for excellence in the last four years—that the paper just might think of changing its name. *Cornucopia* would certainly be appropriate. ♦

### Wisdom of a First Lady

*On Running for Office*

“How I hate doing these things and then they say that someday I’ll run for office. Well, I’d have to be chloroformed first!” —Eleanor Roosevelt to Lorena Hickock, 1935

*Graduation Advice*

“Don’t dry up by inaction but go out and do things. . . . Don’t believe what somebody else tells you, but know things by your own contacts with life. If you do that you will be of great value to the community and the world.” —ER to graduates of the Todhunter School for Girls, 1938

(from John Jay College historian  
Blanche Wiesen Cook’s *Eleanor Roosevelt*, volume 2)

## An Exaltation of Poets

If you were in City College's Aaron Davis Hall on May 16, your chances of being struck by a flying metaphor or simile were about 100%. For students from more than two dozen New York City public schools were gathered there for the College's 28th annual **Spring Poetry Festival**, an all-day efflorescence of verse that has come to be known as the city's "Woodstock of the Spoken Word."

This gathering of metropolitan poets from seven to septuagenarian was organized by CCNY's Poetry Outreach Center, and its featured speaker this year was former Queens College Professor of English and award-winning poet Marie Ponsot, the subject of a feature in *CUNY Matters* last fall. Speaking of the Center's director Barry Wallenstein and his colleagues, Ponsot enthused a few days afterward: "They are doing wonderful work, and the range of talent I heard was remarkable."

Professor of English Wallenstein makes no effort to conceal his pride over the participants in this one-of-a-kind event in the city: "The Poetry Festival celebrates the freed voices of the young people in our public schools. At every grade level, in every borough, these kids have natural creativity."

In morning sessions, poets as young as three 2nd-graders from P.S. 50 read their poems, followed by middle school and high school contingents. In the afternoon, after greetings from CCNY president Stanford Roman Jr., city-wide



Tanya Thurman, top prize-winner at the Spring Poetry Festival, is a student at Susan Wagner High School.

high school poetry awards were given—19 honorable

mentions, four foreign-language poetry awards, and five top prizes.

Then, in a veritable maelstrom of metrics, faculty, alumni, invited published poets, and students shared the microphone from 2 to 5. Among these were CCNY's own award-winning poet and director of its Creative Writing Master's program,

Marilyn Hacker, as well as Cornelius Eady, Elaine Equi, and Wayne Koestenbaum. The Festival is sponsored by the College's Division of Humanities and English Department, and is also supported by several local foundations and the CCNY Alumni Association.

Featured here is a poem by one of the prize winners, Sara A. Newland, a student at Hunter College High School. ♦

### On Discovering the Victoria's Secret Closeout

Warm afternoons we ran down Columbus like four sticky ribbons of melting ice cream. Thirteen, and we had just discovered underwear, its colors, its dangerous smell. Holding our newfound flags to the light, we sat under the racks and swore our allegiance, watching fat women walk by with legs tinted turquoise. We were the queens of the city, our matching Maidenforms glowing so bright, we thought ourselves the source.

—Sara A. Newland



## Star-Crossed Graffiti

The good citizens of Verona do not mind at all if tourists choose to believe the balcony shown at right is the very one from which a real-life Giulietta Capelletti wondered wherefore art her Romeo Montecchi. The dubious site memorializes the famous tale of "death-marked love" invented and refined by several Italians named Masuccio, da Porto, and Bandello (and much later ripped off by the stage's greatest thieving magpie). Never mind that, in Shakespeare, Juliet appears at a window, not a balcony. Below the balcony stands a bronze statue of Juliet, her breasts worn smooth by strangers' hands, and the storied walls have been visited by the magic markers of couples not yet stymied by fate.



### Maria Terrone

has, since 1990, been Hunter College's Director of Public and Community Relations, but for much longer has been writing poetry. Most recently, she had work published in *Poetry* and was honored in 1998 by the poetry magazine *Wind* with its Allen Tate Memorial Award.

One of Terrone's poems was published on the important Web site for poetry WebDelSol ([www.webdel-sol.com](http://www.webdel-sol.com)) as an "Editor's Pick" in 1999.

It is titled "The House of Juliet" and records with wry, bittersweet humor her observations during a visit to the site of what the Veronese call "la più famosa storia d'amore del mondo." ♦

### The House of Juliet

Of questionable authenticity and taste sneers the art guide to Verona. But love's pilgrims don't care. They spring eternal in the courtyard of the medieval *palazzetto*—an empty tomb except for me and some bored guards. The action is all down there. From her mullioned window I watch the play, the blithe extras jostling for a chance to rub the pure, untarnished breast of bronze Juliet, graceful as a dancer on her pedestal stage. Here come the young Romeos, lips caressing the mouths of cell phones. Broken off from a tour group's knot, two Asian girls weave towards her, hair streaming like black banners above the silk sails of their jackets. An old woman steps up and pats the breast as if wise to the ways of rising bread. Not done yet, her cupped palms say, forgetting the end and its taste of ash. Her husband's shaky hand spirals in slow motion, a last wish he can't stop making. After every homage, the crowd cheers, a faith in love natural as breath, and I too sigh for love's outpouring: all the undying declarations, the bright, heart-to-heart names written over cobble and brick, trash can and telephone, blanketing these walls almost to the balcony, where they lie together, a field of buds forever suspended in April.

## Changing Tires, Sampling Broadway: CUNY at the Whitney Biennial

City University students who this spring took up the Whitney Museum of American Art's offer of free admission—which extends to December 31—would have seen works by two of CUNY's own in the "Biennial 2000" exhibition that closed on June 4.

Pictured here is "It's So Hard to be Green," the work of **Chakaia Booker**, a City College M.F.A. from the class of 1994 who describes herself as a narrative environmental sculptor. Her medium here is the old automobile tire, which, she explains, is most versatile in helping her to express her African American heritage. "The designs and patterns of tires are abstractly African," Booker says, in their blackness, in their tread patterns, which "are similar to



African motifs used in fabrics. . .and the patterns of body decoration," and even in their symbolism: "We spin our wheels smooth. . .the circular form also implies how we keep going around in circles,

still bound; still chained to old ideas, attitudes, behavior." And in the seemingly never-ending burning of tires once ignited Booker also sees a suggestion of "the smoldering internal fire of Africans" and "the smothering, the killing of creativity, of spirit through the stranglehold corporations have on us."

Also shown here is a screen capture from a Web installation titled "Sampling Broadway" by Professor **Annette Weintraub**, Director of the Robinson Center

for Graphic Arts and Communications Design at CCNY. Her project created a series of virtual urban spaces inspired by cross-sections of New York City that intersect its great thoroughfare, Broadway. "Elements of the real, historical, and imagined Broadway emerge in a series of visual narratives and QTVR (QuickTime Virtual Reality) spaces reconstructing five different specific locations."

Weintraub explains. "This project is an experiment in developing multi-layered environments on the Web. Each QTVR region creates an environment inhabited by multiple overlap-

ping audio narratives, ambient sounds, texts, and QuickTime movies."

For a future issue of *CUNY Matters*, Weintraub promises an overview of the remarkable graphic feats being performed at the Robinson Center, which in 1999 received approval for a B.F.A. in Graphic Arts and Communication Design, as well as highlights of the astonishing diaspora of its graduates into numerous major corporate media positions. ♦





## OTHER LIVES

# Illuminating a Quest for Beauty

**T**his occasional feature in CUNY•Matters introduces a staff or faculty member whose extramural accomplishment or avocation is strikingly different from his or her "day job" at the University. **Paul Oppenheimer** perfectly exemplifies the species. He arrived at City College as poet-in-residence and comparative medievalist in 1967 and has served there since as professor of comparative literature and English. But then, last fall, he revealed an entirely new identity—that of art historian—when his *Rubens, A Portrait: Beauty and the Angelic* appeared from Duckworth, in London. The Editor met with Oppenheimer in early spring in Central Park, near his apartment, to discuss the project and discovered that this biography was the natural result of one of his firm beliefs: "boundaries between the disciplines are artificial and actually prevent understanding." (If you know of a likely candidate for a future "Other Lives," let the Editor know.)



**F**irst, some not-so-trivial questions. In what city was the world's first carillon constructed? The invention of what substance, apparently first used by the Fleming Jan van Eyck in the early 15th century, revolutionized the power of painters to represent light? Finally, what was the profession of the man who, about 1230, invented the sonnet form?

If you take my word for it that the answers to these questions become pertinent in the course of *Rubens, A Portrait*, you will have one good reason for agreeing with its author that he has produced a "rather unconventional" biography, drawing as it does from very far-flung materials. Rubens, for instance, doesn't get born until page 83—in 1577, the same year, Oppenheimer tells us, that Shakespeare was studying his "small Latin and lesse Greeke" in Stratford. And the book's conclusion, aptly labeled "Apotheosis," offers an elegant correspondence between the Rubens style and Albert Einstein's "unveiling of the fact that all mass has energy, as all energy carries mass."

Context clearly means much for Oppenheimer, but he is quick to say that his unconventional attack was due in large part to his subject: "Rubens was a spectacularly unconventional man" and was possessed of a "rambunctious, brilliantly outreaching mind."

Oppenheimer's superlatives suggest Rubens was, as a polymath, virtually in the same league as Michelangelo or Leonardo Da Vinci. "He was the best-read artist who had ever lived—had amassed a huge book collection for that time." He was a learned classicist and read deeply in diplomacy (he often performed diplomatic and espionage services across war-torn 17th-century Europe). He followed the sciences closely, especially optics, and may have counted Galileo among his friends. Oppenheimer, in fact, argues strongly that the soon-to-be-controversial scientist is included in one of Rubens' self-portraits.

"He could also have been a fine writer, to judge from the 250 letters that survive; they make fabulous reading." He was capable of five languages, but wrote mostly in the international language of diplomacy then, Italian. Finally, he was a very good businessman and became, as Oppenheimer says, "one of the richest artists who ever lived." He built a massive house that still exists. It was painstakingly restored, surprisingly, during the Nazi occupation of Antwerp and is now a Rubens museum.



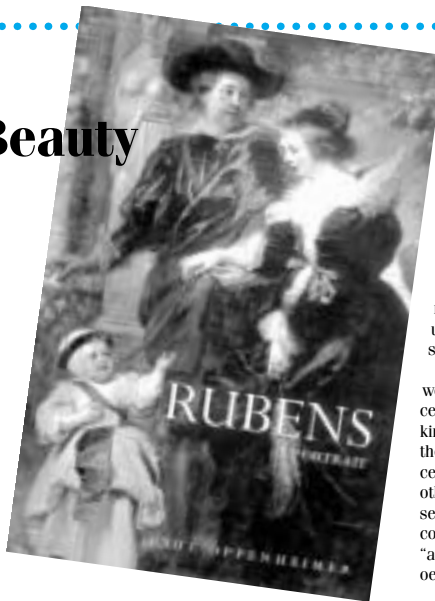
And the first sentence of the introduction certainly rivets attention: "When Peter Paul Rubens died in 1640 at the age of 62, he was unquestionably the most popular artist in the world."

**B**ut why Rubens, fascinating though he clearly is? I ask and get three replies.

The first takes Oppenheimer back to a London lunch, with his editor at Duckworth idly asking, "What would you like to do next?" He says he mulled a little and blurted out, "a biography of Rubens," and the editor said "go do it!" "Afterwards, I was flabbergasted and horrified," he recalls, realizing a gauntlet had been flung down and that years of reading about and around Rubens now had to be organized and chiseled into prose.

More atmospheric, perhaps, was Oppenheimer's memory of his seminal Rubens moment, which took place when he was nine years old. "My father took me to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and I remember being unable to take my eyes off those giant, plunging pictures of horses, deer hunts, and buxom women. Subconsciously, I recognized that those pictures were *moving*, while everything else seemed static."

Finally, though, one cannot help feeling that the turn to Rubens and his career-long quest for an understanding of beauty grew out of a deep need to address something completely different from Oppenheimer's previous book, which was *Evil and the Demonic: A New Theory of Mon-*



*Above, one of the Met's great possessions: Rubens' huge portrait of himself and his wife Helena strolling in his Antwerp garden with the artist's namesake boy, Peter Paul (born in 1637), safely leashed. At about the same time, the doting husband made Helena his inspiration for all three goddesses in a Judgment of Paris; a detail from the painting, now in the Prado, is seen here. Also shown in detail, below, is the first of several appealing Rubens self-portraits, this one circa 1605 (Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne): Oppenheimer argues that the figure at left is Galileo, well before uttering his heretical astronomical ideas.*



*strous Behavior*, now available in paperback from NYU Press.

He is quick to agree that the segue was natural, indeed inevitable, since he believes that beauty, not goodness, should be the precise counterpoise with evil. In this previous book, Oppenheimer says he attempted to "analyze evil as a form of behavior rather than as a religious or philosophical question" and to discuss evil—which reaches beyond the mere criminal or even genocidal—in order to discover the environments in which evil is able to thrive.

He employed examples from painting (the works of Goya and Renaissance images of the Tower of Babel—evil often entails the falling apart of language), film (Orson Welles' *The Trial* and *A Touch of Evil*, also some Clint Eastwood westerns), drama (Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Macbeth*), and evidence from law, history, and psychology (notably the Nuremberg trials).

From all of which Rubens served as ideal, ennobling relief. "For Rubens the

experience of beauty knew no proper bounds," Oppenheimer writes. "Garbage, cockroaches, and mould could appear beautiful if one found oneself leaping free of context."

**S**till, taking on Rubens was daunting. And not only because he had been the subject of 17 biographies (three of these appearing in the last dozen years). Oppenheimer also candidly grants, in his introduction, that Rubens' reputation is now "in a shambles." He's "profoundly unfashionable" and "miserably out of synch with the times."

I ask why. "We're prejudiced against fat women," for starters, and "Rubens is perceived as a subservient propagandist for kings. Rembrandt the democratic; Rubens the royalist—that is the common misperception." Oppenheimer argues strongly otherwise, even venturing that "the quintessence of Rubenism is democracy." He also considers ill-advised the perception of an "absence of intimacy" in Rubens' extant oeuvre of about 3,000 works.

And Oppenheimer might well think the time is now ripe for Rubens' great theme. The *Wall Street Journal* recently reported on the debate as to how many wars are now being fought on the planet (views range between 24 and 30...down from more than 60 in the early 1990s). We should embrace Rubens now, Oppenheimer suggests, because his great theme was "the political energy of peace," and he adds that "no artist has delved as deeply as Rubens into the psychology of war and peace."

This is epitomized in Rubens' spectacular ceiling for Inigo Jones's neo-classical Banqueting Hall in London, near Parliament. It is the most beautiful architectural space I have ever encountered, and so I found exactly right Oppenheimer's remark that the room "seems the white immaculate brain of heaven." The ceiling's nine panels, he says, are a "great celebration of the possibilities of harmonious union between nations and cultures." This certainly has the ring of pertinence.

I ask how Oppenheimer would make a case for Rubens if given one shot at a lecture hall full of CUNY undergraduates. He extemporizes a perfect gambit for our film-besotted age: "The paintings of his near-contemporary, Rembrandt, always move in the direction of a frozen slice of life—toward the still photograph. Rubens' slices of life always lead on somewhere else—they're movies. Rubens was, to use a term of Picasso's, painting's first cinematographer." (Oppenheimer also contrasts Rembrandt and Rubens by observing that the former was a great professor of darkness, Rubens a professor of light.)

**O**ppenheimer is reluctant to anoint a favorite painting, even among the dozen or so in the New York City area—though he does warmly allude to the Met's "marvelous landscape" *A Forest at Dawn with a Deer Hunt*, which, he writes, shows Rubens' "eagerness to meet nature untamed" and explore the "shadowy no-man's-land between civilization and the wild."

And he clearly counts as brilliant and illuminating Rubens' several versions of *The Judgment of Paris* that span 40 years. In the last one, painted just before Rubens died and now in the Prado in Madrid, Oppenheimer has discovered one of history's most charming feats of uxoriousness. For here Rubens made his beloved second wife, Helena Fourment, his model for all three of the rival goddesses Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena. She is also fea-

*Continued on page 12*

## Alzheimer's Association Honors Trustees Chairman Badillo

**A**t a black-tie benefit on June 7, CUNY Board of Trustees Chairman **Herman Badillo** received the New York Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association annual Humanitarian of the Year Award. He is seen here with actress and recording star Lainie Kazan, who emceed the event at the American Museum of Natural History. Also honored were the author Kenneth Lonergan and actress Eileen Heckart, who just closed a much-praised run of *The Waverly Gallery*, a play about an Alzheimer's patient. The local chapter of the Association serves nearly 200,000 people with Alzheimer's, their caregivers, and family members.



**Childrens Lit.**, continued from page 8

**A**fter small-group workshops given by local educators covering topics involving literacy, Internet use, and multicultural offerings for K-8 classes, came lunch and then a quick walk through the book displays, which offered such titles as Alice Walker's *Finding the Green Stone*, a sensitive tale about a boy's coming of age, and Brian Swann's *House with No Door*, a collection of African riddle-poems. The favorite of all, however, for 10-year old Selina, daughter of Hostos student Wilfredo Dubon, was the festive artwork from students at Jane Adams and Grace Dodge High Schools adorning the lobby walls: "Maybe when I grow up, I'll make pictures like that, too!" she enthused.

"Two per cent of children's books are by or about Latinos," Mora noted, and then asked: "What does it mean to grow up reading books that don't have people like you in them? And what does it mean when people die and stories die with them?" She then urged the creation of "collaborative learning communities, where students can feel safe and we can affirm these books that have so much to do with our future." With many a smile and *abrazo*, the day ended with a raffle of display books to a group of happy librarians, a reception and book-signing in the elegant Hostos Art Gallery, and a lifting performance of "Peter and the Wolf" by the Bronx Arts Ensemble.

And Magdalena Ramirez's introduction? Every consonant found the right place. ♦

**Other Lives**, continued from page 11

tured in the Rubens family portrait Oppenheimer chose for his book jacket—one of those "moving pictures" he first saw at the Met as a nine-year-old.

Oppenheimer's *other* other lives should also be briefly mentioned. Earlier this year he became, for the first time, a novelist with the appearance of *Blood Memoir* (Marsilio), about a hypnotic woman who creates a "geography of desire" in present-day New York City. And for several exchange professorships in London and Germany, in the 1990s, Oppenheimer has assumed the disguise of a professor of German (he has translated the adventures of Till Eulenspiegel). At this moment, however, he is a political scientist, his current project being a book on the possible resurgence of nationalism in contemporary Germany.

**A**nd now down to serious business. The first carillon? In Antwerp, Rubens' home base from the age of 10. What substance enabled painters to capture light on canvas more brilliantly? Turpentine, which allowed the application of successive glazes. And the first poem in sonnet form? It was apparently produced (one hopes not during billable time) by a lawyer named Giacomo da Lentino who was attached to the court of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, King of Sicily.

Perhaps Shakespeare's deathless line—"Let's kill all the lawyers"—will be quoted more judiciously from now on. ♦

## QUEENS READINGS SEASON

**T**he 25th Evening Readings' season at Queens College kicks off on October 18 with a celebration of Arthur Miller's 85th birthday led by Frank McCourt, Grace Paley, and Peter Matthiessen. Filling out the season will be Norman Mailer, Susan Sontag, John Updike, Derek Walcott, Edward Albee, W.G. Sebald, and A.S. Byatt. For season tickets, which sell out fast (one for \$40, two for \$69), call 718-997-4646.

**Distinguished Profs.**, continued from page 6

Britain, which is preeminent in military scholarship). A book of his that focuses on the Seven Years' War, which pitted



**Queens Naval Historian Syrett on Board New Jersey**

Great Britain and Prussia against France, Austria, Sweden, and Saxony in an effort to topple Frederick the Great (1756-1763), is forthcoming. Syrett, who earned his B.A. and M.A. from Columbia and a Ph.D. from the University of London, has also just completed an 800-page magnum opus on the Royal Navy's world-wide operations during the Revolutionary War.

When asked if a photo of himself on a naval ship might be available, Syrett replied, "No. . . I never go near them!" Syrett, incidentally, comes from strong CUNY stock: his father Harold C. Syrett was an interim president of Queens College and president of Brooklyn College.

A principal investigator for no fewer than five current research projects in the



**Hunter Neuroscientist Luine**

areas of neuroendocrinology, aging, and behavioral genetics is professor of psychology **Victoria N. Luine**, Hunter College's newest D.P. After working for 13 years in the neuroendocrinology laboratory

at Rockefeller University (where she has maintained an association), Luine came to Hunter in 1987, and for the last 10 years has participated in the Hunter Center for Gene Structure and Function and the Graduate Center's Biology and Biopsychology Programs.

Funding from the NSF, National Institutes of Health, and several major foundations has enabled Luine and her colleagues to pursue research on the influence of gonadal and adrenal hormones on central neurotransmitters, on the characterization of the aging process in the brain and the deleterious effects of stress on mem-

ory, and on the manipulation of mice genes to model aging and dementia. Luine received her Ph.D. in pharmacology from SUNY Buffalo's School of Medicine.

**E**arlier this year, in January, the Board of Trustees approved four Distinguished Professors: the aforementioned **Michael Devitt**, **Raquel Chang-Rodríguez** (City College, Foreign Languages and Literatures), **Fred Naidor** (Graduate Center, Chemistry), and **Neil Smith** (Graduate Center, Anthropology). ♦

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