HAILING FROM BROOKLYN and the Himalayas, pursuing passions as diverse as science, education, the written word, service to country or preparing gourmet dinners, the 2009 graduates of the City University of New York represent a stunning diversity of mind, talent, circumstance and heritage. These achievers’ common thread: the drive to succeed, to earn the degree, sometimes against seemingly hopeless odds. Here are seven of their remarkable stories.

1 Balancing Two Lives: Military and Civilian

TESHA CRAWFORD HAS SEEN DEATH in Iraq, as an Army X-ray technician treating U.S. soldiers and Iraqi prisoners. She has felt fear as bombs ripped into the prison compound, known the high anxiety of riding towards Baghdad in a non-bulletproof Humvee. She has coped with long separations from her husband, and interruptions of her college studies.

Yet graduating from City College was her “greatest challenge,” and after 12 years, she has reached her goal. “It has been a long journey,” Crawford, 30, said the day before her last exam, in biochemistry, her major. A day later, she would receive her diploma, keeping a promise she made to her grandmother.

On graduation day, May 29, the reservist fulfilled another pledge — to her country, returning to Army service for three days of training. Early next year, she expects to be sent to Afghanistan.

“It’s hard for a person who’s not in the military to understand that when you’re called up for duty, you do not hesitate,” says Crawford, who plans to serve 20 years, earn her pharmacy degree, and possibly, open her own pharmacy someday.

“I love the Army. I love that I actually am giving of myself,” she says. The Army empowered Crawford, a naturalized citizen from Jamaica. She first enlisted as a CCNY student in 1999, two years out of Evander Childs High School in the Bronx. “I joined mainly for college tuition,” she says.

She also sought the kind of structure she had experienced in her convent-school days in Jamaica.

Crawford trained as a military radiologic technologist, figuring it was a profession that could support her well in the civilian world. She
A burst of academic creativity reflects CUNY’s decade-long expansion of full-time faculty hires and the University’s continuing commitment to graduate as well as undergraduate education.

Charles A. Shorter, president of City University of New York, said: “These outstanding educational leaders have a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to students. They will bring to their respective institutions a wealth of knowledge and understanding and help us achieve our goal of providing inspired leadership that will enhance CUNY’s standing as one of the nation’s great systems of higher education.”

The Choosing College study addresses and conduct short surveys of residents for the sweeping national count, performed every 10 years, that determines how government funds are distributed, legislative districts are drawn and congressional seats apportioned.

“Love it,” Chin said of her second stint with the Census, which has been full time but divided into projects that last an average of two to three months and involve supervising some two dozen people, approving work, supplying advice and supervising and advising crew members. Ten years ago, Chin enrolled herself one of the Census crew members who survey households door-to-door.

“This job, she said, “has helped me learn about other cultures. I’m Chinese and Jamaican. It has helped me learn a lot about my own culture.” The 29-year-old public administration major, who appointed international humanitarian work, noted that her Census job has taken her out of the Brooklyn neighborhoods she knows best — Flatbush and Park Slope — and into Canarsie, Mill Basin, Crown Heights and last time around, Sunset Park, where, she said, she learned about Mexicans and their traditions. “There’s only about a three-block difference between the Hispanic community and this community in Sunset Park,” she said.

On 17 campuses across the city, CUNY has been providing the U.S. Bureau of the Census with classroom space in which to test thousands of applicants for Census positions, and then to train them for the jobs. Since October 2008, 10,000 New Yorkers — CUNY students, staff members and members of the community — have been tested in CUNY classrooms alone, for positions involving address verification, population-counting and door-to-door canvassing, from clerical to supervisory, according to Assistant Regional Census Manager Patricia Gould of the federal agency’s midtown Manhattan office.

Last year, the University assigned campus Census “coordinators,” many of them career college counselors, to help identify the classroom space for the testing and training when it is needed and recruit students for testing. Staci Emanuel, the CUNY-wide Census coordinator, said Census officials have “been happy they’ve been able to have space available to them, because it’s a big part of what they do — to bring people in to test and to train. She referred to the “in terms of employment opportunities, the students have been excited.”

Some 3,500 New Yorkers have been hired for the first phase of Census operations — address canvassing — which was to end in June, Valle said. The positions range from clerical to supervisory, according to Gould, because it’s a big part of what they do — to bring people in to test and to train. She referred to the “in terms of employment opportunities, the students have been excited.”

3 New Presidents Hailed as

Gould is provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at California State University, Long Beach, and an internationally known scholar in the field of French-Canadian literature. Cal State at Long Beach is a major urban comprehensive university and nationally recognized for its academic excellence and diversity. Gould has been responsible for ensuring a high quality educational experience for 31,000 undergraduates and 7,000 graduate students, including 1,400 international students, in eight academic areas.

Matos Rodriguez is the former secretary of the Department of the Family for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a cabinet officer and a member of the Council of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. She has been a leader in education and social services, and she has been instrumental in pushing for educational reform and the expansion of educational opportunities for Puerto Rican students.

10 U.S. Census

MICHÉLLE CHIN, a senior at Medgar Evers College, is a Brooklynite who spent eight years in the Army and has worked for the city’s Human Resources Administration. But her current job — as a supervisor for the 2010 U.S. Census — is giving her even more insight into the people and cultures that populate New York.

Last October, as the result of a partnership between the City University of New York and the U.S. Census, Chin, 29, took a Census employment exam in a Medgar Evers classroom. A month later, after Census officials called her for an interview, she had a job. Chin works as a Census crew leader in Brooklyn, supervising teams of workers who write addresses and conduct short surveys of residents for the sweeping national count, performed every 10 years, that determines how government funds are distributed, legislative districts are drawn and congressional seats apportioned.

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Counts on CUNY Talent

LaGuardia Community College student La'Nette McGill qualified as a Census field operations supervisor in Queens.

CUNY students have been hired for the massive counting operation, because after testing they were not tracked by the Census employment system, according to CUNY and Census officials. But, said Staci Emanuel, "We had a lot of students on the campuses who were interested and their response was strong."

CUNY Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson called the CUNY-Census partnership "a win-win-win. It's a win for the Census operation, it's a win for CUNY students and staff, and it's a win for the city and state."

"We're eager to help CUNY students obtain Census employment to help them pay for their education," the vice chancellor explained. "We strongly support an accurate Census count, recognizing how important that is to receiving accurate federal funding for the city and state."

In a city filled with immigrants, CUNY is uniquely positioned to aid the Census. "We have the most diverse student body on earth, with students coming from 205 countries," Hershenson noted. "The talents of this uniquely great public university should be a resource for the entire nation."

Valle said the CUNY-Census arrangement has been invaluable in other ways, as well. The well-advertised Census tests at CUNY sites "made everybody very aware that the Census was coming," she said, adding that students convey that information back to their families and communities.

The official count starts April 1, 2010, for this decennial (every 10 years) Census. Until then, there is much to be done. From October 2008 until April 2009, Census officials administered tests for non-supervisory jobs — clerks, listers, crew leaders and crew leader assistants and recruiting assistants, Valle said.

"The aim is to produce the most accurate address list possible for the mailing of the Census questionnaires that Americans are asked to fill out and mail in 2010."

"The Census jobs have been lasting from 12 hours and scored 100, they might not get a job."

One CUNY student who ended up with a management position in Queens was La'Nette McGill of LaGuardia Community College, Valle said. McGill "had originally been hired as a recruiting assistant but she took the management test and was promoted to field operations supervisor" in charge of several crew leaders who are themselves supervising teams of listers — the workers who verify addresses. "La'Nette taught the crew leaders, the crew leaders taught the listers and the listers are actually in the field working," said Valle.

Michelle Chin, the Medgar Evers student working as a crew leader in Brooklyn, called the job "a good opportunity. You meet new people you keep in touch with for a lifetime," she noted.

"I wish there was a year-round Census," she added. "I wish there was some way of letting people know it's important to be counted, for the resources to be allocated back into their communities."

The first phase of field operations — the canvassing of addresses — was to end by June 15. The second phase, the hiring of a pool of people to actually perform the count, begins in September. Group living quarters such as nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, hospitals and dormitories will be identified from Sept. 27 to Oct. 27. Valle said Census questionnaires will be mailed to residences nationwide in March 2010 and starting April 1, "the day we take the snapshot of America, the workers will begin to visit households to personally gather information from those who have not mailed back their surveys."

A decade ago, Valle said, 10 percent of the Census questionnaires were returned. "This year we expect 100 percent," she said.
Debut Novel Wins Major Award
Hunter College professor and alumnus Michael Thomas has won the 2009 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for his debut novel *Man Gone Down*, about an African-American man at a key crossroads in his life. Judges called the work — published in 2007 by Black Cat/Grove/Atlantic — a "masterful debut" and "a writer of entrancing voice and startling insight." The *New York Times* Book Review had called *Man Gone Down* one of the 10 best books of 2007. The Dublin award, known as the world's richest literary prize, bestows $100,000 — about $140,000 — to the winning author. Eight writers, including three other Americans, went this year's "short list." The award is presented annually to promote excellence in world literature.

Corigliano Gets Third Grammy
Distinguished professor of music at Lehman College John Corigliano collected his third Grammy at this year's 51st Annual Grammy Awards ceremony. Corigliano's "Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan" actually picked up two 2009 Grammies. Corigliano won for Best Classical Contemporary Composition; soprano Hila Plitmann, who recorded the album with him, won for Best Classical Vocal Performance. Other honorees won by Corigliano, who teaches at The Juilliard School as well as at Lehman, include the Pulitzer Prize in Music and an Oscar for Best Original Score for the film "The Red Violin."

Japan Honors Setsuko Nishi
Setsuko Matsunaga Nishi, professor emerita of sociology at Brooklyn College and the Graduate School from 1965 until her retirement in 1999, was recently honored by Japan's Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays With Neck Ribbon, for her outstanding and lifelong contributions to the promotion of civil rights, sociological study and well-being of Japanese Americans and others. Ms. Nishi is founding president of the Asian American Federation Inc., and a past chair of the New York Advisory Committee of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. A university student in California when Pearl Harbor was bombed, she had to move to an internment camp like other Pacific Coast Americans of Japanese ancestry until she was cleared to continue her schooling in the Midwest. She and her father eventually started a committee that helped people from the camps start over. She is currently preparing her research on that period for publication.

Literacy Leaders Recognized
Tamara Kinsee, lead instructor/staff developer for the City College adult literacy program, has won the 2009 New York Times ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Teacher of the Year Award. The selection committee noted her creativity in integrating civic activities when teaching English, the personal commitment of her students and her collaborative efforts to improve the Literacy Center. Rosemarie E. Parreno, who teaches English as a Second Language at Hostos Community College, was among three Times’ ESOL Teacher Honorees.

Fiterman Hall Evolves From 9/11

EALY EIGHT YEARS after its destruction in the 9/11 terror attacks, Fiterman Hall has been meticulously and successfully decontaminated of toxins, and the Borough of Manhattan Community College building is in the early stages of demolition. A 14-story new Fiterman Hall is expected to rise on the Lower Manhattan site by 2012. The remediation of the 15-story instructional building at 30 West Broadway — which was irrevocably damaged when 7 World Trade Center collapsed on it — was completed at the end of May. The 14-month process involved the painstaking removal of contaminants, primarily asbestos, under a multi-pronged safety plan continuously monitored by federal, state and city agencies including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state departments of environmental conservation and labor, and the city Department of Environmental Protection. The New York State Dormitory Authority (DASNY) is managing the project on behalf of CUNY with the oversight of Vice Chancellor for Facilities, Planning, Construction and Management Iris Weinshall.

At the time of the Sept. 11, 2001 catastrophe, the 1950s-era Fiterman Hall, a $30 million building designed by William Lescaze, was the largest private gift to a community college in the nation. After Miles and Shirley Fiterman donated the office building to BMCC, it underwent renovation to convert it for classroom use, a $65 million project that was near completion when the World Trade Center was attacked. With the loss of Fiterman, BMCC’s instructional space was reduced by one-third.

During the remediation, the asbestos material — which had coated the inner walls — had to be ground down so that hazardous dust would not be created. The process required small tents around the World Trade Center destruction. A gleaming new Fiterman Hall: bordered by West Broadway, Greenwich Street, Barclay Street and Park Place — will immediately follow. The road to the remediation, deconstruction and rebuilding of Fiterman Hall has been long and circuitous, involving the development and approval, by regulators and the Lower Manhattan community, of detailed plans to deal with the environmental and safety issues.

"A good deal of progress has taken place at Fiterman," said Sheldon Silver, Speaker of the New York State Assembly, a leading proponent of rebuilding Fiterman. "We’ve worked with CUNY and the community to do this in a safe, efficient manner.”
A Knight to Remember

E VERY MONDAY during the academic year, two dozen Queens College students gather to discuss journalism: their own. The Knight News, the campus newspaper, comes out every two weeks, and the staff meets weekly to appraise the previous issue and plan the next one.

There’s no shortage of ideas. At one meeting, a staff member proposed a story about the New York City Police Department’s ticketing of students’ cars. Comments posted against a professor on the paper’s website forum could lead to an explosive news story, editor Steven Appel said — or they could be hibesious. For two years, The Knight News has been named one of the country’s best college newspapers by the Associated Collegiate Press. In 2007, it won the organization’s first place in Best of Show — a first for a CUNY student paper and one of many recent honors for The Knight News.

Yet Queens College offers no major in journalism, and few of the paper’s staffers see it as a career.

That includes Appel, elected editor-in-chief by the staff at the end of his freshman year and now one of Queens College’s June graduates. Although he enjoyed his long run in student journalism, he aspires to a career in government.

The Knight News has been published since 1937, but its turning point came soon after Appel became editor, when student government leaders complained about an oppenent’s opinion piece that had run on the editorial page. “They were blatantly trying to censor us,” said Appel. Most of the paper’s operating budget is approved by the student government, but the journalists would not be intimidated. They examined the student government in a front-page article headlined “A Culture of Corruption.” A budget cut followed. “That was the springboard for a lot of the stories we’ve done,” Appel said.

One was Herman Araya’s report that two muggings of college employees in a campus men’s room had not been publicized, allegedly in violation of federal law requiring “timely warning reports” of crimes posing campus threats. Appel editorialized, “We deserve to be informed by the college when our well-being is in serious danger — not only because it is the ethical thing to do, but because the law demands it.”

For his critical editorial, Appel was one of three CUNY undergraduates to receive the first annual Murray Kempton award in October. And The Knight News has gotten nothing but support from Queens College President James L. Muykens. “He sent us e-mails saying, ‘Keep doing what you’re doing, that’s your job,’” Appel said. The paper also was a rousing success on the business side, thanks to Appel’s editorial stand and his business manager Jason Hochberg, who also graduated this spring. In two years, Hochberg brought revenues from $700 to $50,000, which allowed the paper to print more pages, more color and more copies, and to send staffers to national student journalism conventions.

Lots of Letters (LOL)

H ANDY ACRONYMS formed by first letters of words in names of departments, programs, etc. fill our news media, campus memos and corporate brochures. CIA, FBI, FEMA, NASA — the thousands of U.S. government abbreviations alone can make your head spin. Many were introduced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Depression-era administration, perhaps to help jobless citizens feel more comfortable talking about New Deal relief agencies like the Works Projects Administration (WPA). But since FDR’s day, acronyms have kept growing in both number and length to the point that we often can’t remember either the full term or its acronym, according to a recent WNYY radio report.

At the City University of New York (CUNY), the pot of alphabet soup has gotten so large that the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) recently announced the “soft launch” of an Acronym Dictionary, and invites your contributions. About 200 education-related abbreviations already have been posted. Some, like “CUNY,” are actual pronounceable words — which purists say distinguishes true acronyms from simple abbreviations. Other University examples go even further, achieving a gold standard of relevant turns on familiar words like ASAP (Accelerated Study in Associate Programs) and SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge), for example.

To add your comments, corrections and suggestions, check out the CUNY Acronym Dictionary at http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/www/acronym-dictionary.html. E-mail comments and contributions to BCC President Carolyn Williams.

A Decade of Design Awards

C REATIVE DESIGN of annual reports has brought Bronx Community College administrator Claude Grant his 14th national award in a decade. Grant, director of the college’s Business & Professional Development Institute, recently received a gold award from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations for his elaborate design of the BCC 50th Anniversary Annual Report.

Grant has been artistic director for the reports since 1999, writing text and supervising design.

“Claude’s work on the annual reports has contributed to the pride and recognition for the college, and I have been pleased to be able to support his creative successes,” says BCC President Carolyn Williams.

University Hiring Ready to ‘Go Live’

W HEN THE University kicks off its 2009 fall semester, people will begin to see some remarkable transformations in human-resources services that will have been launched during the summer.

As part of CUNYfirst — the wide-ranging effort designed to remake the University’s aging finance, HR and student-services systems — the staff is “going live” with its new recruitment, hiring and appointment processes, known as Talent Acquisition Management (TAM) and Human Capital Management (HCM). Recruiting for all jobs will be done completely online across CUNY campuses. “We’re trying to get as paperless as we can,” says John Ray, communications manager for CUNYfirst (the acronym stands for Fully Integrated Resources and Services Tool).

Everything from the requisition for new staff to the filing of job applications will be done electronically. There will be a University-wide online job library, customized for each college, so employees and applicants can be informed of current job openings. “It’s one of many green, sustainable processes for CUNY,” Ray says. The goal, he adds, is to cut the hiring time at CUNY from 100 days to the national average of 54 days.

By late fall, the University will have created a comprehensive database that will allow all 35,000 employees to go online to check the accuracy of their personal data (such as marital status, address, last degree, emergency contacts), as well as the status of their pay, vacation days and other employee benefits. In addition, the database will enable managers to have much more specific information about employees’ work history and staff-reporting lines across the University. “It will be an amazing profile of all our staff,” Ray says. “It will be the clearest, most accurate data on our staff in the history of CUNY.”

These human-resources efforts are being rolled out in a three-step process, with core HR professionals being trained first, then managers and supervisors, followed by the larger University community. While the HR module is being implemented, CUNYfirst teams also will be transferring next year’s budget into the new Line Item Budgeting module, as well as creating a new course catalog that would enable students — beginning with two “Wave I” campuses, Queens and Queensborough — to register online for their courses in spring 2010.
Continued from front page

was assigned to the 344th Combat Support Hospital based at Fort Totten, Queens. She returned to CCNY in fall 2001; combat training followed. She took a leave from school in 2003, the same year she married fellow CCNY student Rodrick Crawford; she returned to college in 2004, and was deployed to Iraq in 2005 — to Abu Ghraib prison hospital, after the scandal over U.S. troops’ abuse of prisoners there. Crawford recalls her second day at Abu Ghraib: “We had a Marine. He was injured — they ran over an I.E.D. — an imploded explosive device … We tried to assure him that everything was fine. And then, while I was performing the X-ray, his head just felt much heavier than before. I said, ‘Okay, soldier,’ and he was gone. It was my first experience with death. I started shaking, but I had no time to absorb what happened. The next wave of injured Iraqis came in.” During her year at Abu Ghraib, it was “bombed intermittently at least once a day,” Crawford says. When one attack crippled the water supply, U.S. troops cut back to three-minute showers to save water for the Muslim prisoners who had to wash before prayer. “Knowing you were rendering aid,” she says, “bombed intermittently at least once a day,” Crawford says.

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To them, it was mixed feelings,” she says of the prisoners. “They would tell me they were innocent and they didn’t belong there. At the same time, they were not afraid to let you know they would hurt you if they had the chance.” Crawford returned to the States in 2006, then spent time “preparing myself mentally, transitioning from deployment back to civilization.” She was back at CCNY in spring 2007. The support of professors, her husband, mother and grandmother helped her meet her goals. She has also been active in the City College Veterans Association, where vets can discuss concerns from post-traumatic stress syndrome to dealing with people on campus who “tend to have a disdainful attitude towards veterans,” notes Crawford.

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Crawford, who lives in Brooklyn, says her military experience has strengthened the Christian faith she shares with her husband, and boosted her confidence. She quotes poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: “The heights by great men reached and kept / Were not attained by sudden flight, / But they, while their companions slept, / Were toiling upward in the night.”

“I keep repeating that,” Crawford says. “We were taught that in high school and it has always been with me. I came back with the attitude that there’s nothing I can’t do.”

Dorje Rmetchuk’s first steps toward a Baruch College degree began more than 20 years ago with a daring and dangerous 15-day trek across the Himalayas.

2 Climb Every Mountain

“It’s definitely painful when you leave,” he says. But he knew he couldn’t stay in Chinese-ruled Tibet, which was losing a long, bloody struggle to resist assimilation into the People’s Republic. Having spent time in prison for trying to escape in 1988, he also feared for his safety; “Once you are caught, you are always in their eye.” So the next year, with a smuggler’s help, he and a friend slipped from their village with backpacks of food, into the mountains that separated them from relatively safer Nepal. He spent several months in a refugee camp there until an uncle who is a monk settled him into a Tibetan community and got him a job in a tofu factory — a job that changed his life.

At the factory, Rmetchuk met his future wife, Dikiyi Choizom, whose mother owned the company. For nearly eight years, Rmetchuk and his wife lived with her mother, Sukmai Tamangni. The couple had two children. But without refugee status there, Rmetchuk knew he had to move forward for a brighter future.

Because of the factory’s success, Rmetchuk was able to buy a fake passport and come to New York in 1998, temporarily leaving his wife and kids in Nepal. Staying with another Tibetan when he arrived here, his first priority was obtaining his GED, which he did in 2001. He did restaurant work and received money from his mother-in-law every few months, who strongly wanted him to have an education. But he has met many of his goals. “Being able to finish college, I think it’s a big accomplishment,” he says. Now, as a finance major with a BBA degree and insurance industry experience, he also hopes to buy a business. His perseverance has set a good example for his college-bound daughter and high-school honors son. “They are so proud of me,” he says. “My son always tells me, ‘My dad is my role model.’”

“My hope for the future is that I want to be a good citizen,” he says. “I will be happy if I contribute something to mankind and this country.”

That same year, his wife came here. He later enrolled as a part-time student at LaGuardia Community College, and in 2004 transferred to Baruch.

Rmetchuk was granted political asylum, has a green card and can apply for citizenship in two years. His wife and children, who have also emigrated from Nepal, are approved for green cards. “My kids, when they came here, they were happy to see their parents,” he said.

Throughout his educational pursuits, his mother-in-law’s voice has echoed in his mind, says Rmetchuk. “She never had an education in her life. She’d always tell me, ‘It’s never late, even if it’s 25 years. If you don’t start, then it’s late.’ … When I have a challenging study assignment, I think of her. I picture her and I finish it.” She and his uncle, the monk, were denied visas in Nepal to come to his graduation, which was on his 46th birthday.

There is sadness. Rmetchuk hasn’t seen his father and siblings since he left Tibet (his mother died in 1994), and likely can never go back.
4 Filling a Hunger to Learn

By David L.V. Bauer

This past February, I traveled to Liberia to help give workshops to science teachers on how to teach ‘lab classes without labs’ as part of a team from the HelpLibera project. Liberia is a West African nation tucked into the corner as the coast turns from the Gulf of Guinea on the south to face the Atlantic Ocean on the west. It has been six years since a UN peacekeeping force deployed at the end of a 14-year civil war and four years since the election of a new government.

I was traveling with my former high school mentor from Hunter College High School (and Liberian expatriate), Asumana Jabateh Randolph, and with Heidi Baumgartner, a junior at HCHS. We landed at night at Robert’s International Airport and drove an hour and a half to Monrovia, the capital. The house we were staying in, connected to the calculators and allowed them to instantly ‘become’ scientific instruments used in U.S. classrooms) and sensors that connected to the calculators and allowed them to instantly become scientific instruments that could measure things like temperature, pH, conductivity, and oxygen gas concentration. With the calculators, students could make graphs and devise experiments that required readings overnight.

Driving back to the capital early in the morning, I was struck by the crowds of children walking along the side of the road all heading to school. And despite the war-worn roads, there is law and order in the form of a new national police force (people call them in emergencies, which is a pretty good vote of confidence), a vibrant free press, and free primary education.

I’ve not been able to remember a single child I met in Liberia who wasn’t excited about school. Education even trumps food in some cases, as I learned from a student at lunchtime who was balancing a scoop of rice on his ruler. He had only enough money to buy a spoon or a ruler, and found that his ruler could do double-duty at meals.

David L.V. Bauer is a graduate of the Macaulay Honors College at the City College of New York and a 2009 Rhodes Scholar.

5 Checklist of Dreams

By Edith M. Estrella Ramos

Ever since I was a little girl my mother has told me, “Do not let any-one or anything rob you of your dreams.” I have taken every opportunity since then to dream small and big. I always dreamed of attending college because my mother instilled in me that those who do are successful.

My family came to the United States from the Dominican Republic on a visa when I was 7. When I was older, I found out that our visa expired during the process of seeking permanent residence. My mother spent most of her savings acquiring an immigration lawyer, who instead of giving us proper advice, took our money and ran — leaving us with the stigma of being “illegal.”

In high school, I realized the detrimental effect this would have on my college career. I would not be able to apply for much-needed financial assistance. The lawyer who had swindled my family not only ran away with our money, but also with my childhood dream.

I graduated from high school but never took the SATs or applied for college or scholarships. Disheartened, I got a job as a cashier at the local supermarket. My mother remarried, and began the process of an adjustment of status. My stepfather would be able to sponsor me since I still met the age requirement. The process was long and nerve-wracking; it seemed as if I was not going to meet the
20 Scholars Win Major Fellowships

The highly competitive Urban Fellows, National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellows and Jeanette K. Watson Fellows Programs have awarded grants to a combined total of 20 CUNY students and graduates in the latest rounds of nationwide awards.

Urban Fellows
Nine-month fellowships combining intensive seminars with work experience in New York City government were awarded to these five Macaulay Honors College students: Aaron Cohen, Queens College; Cohen majored in urban studies, minored in business and intends to become an urban planner with a focus on transportation systems. Kunchok Dolma, Lehman College. Raised in Nepal, Dolma is the 2009 Macaulay convocation speaker. She majored in English literature and political science, minored in psychology, her future plans include law school. Natasha V. (Stacey) Korolkova, Baruch College. Korolkova majored in international relations and double-minor in mathematics and New York City Studies. She also volunteered at an adolescent center in Mexico. Long Tran, Hunter College. A member of the Thomas Hunter Honors Program, Tran studied political science and public policy topics through a study-abroad semester in Costa Rica. Catherine Zinnel, Hunter College. Zinnel created a major in community identity and development. She has researched social change in South Africa and equal access to education in India. She will pursue a graduate degree in urban planning.

NSF Research Fellows
Five University students are among 2009’s first Research Fellows (this year’s fellows are being announced in installations due to “the complexity of the current budget situation…” the agency said). Initial winners are: Amy Cohen, Hunter College, astrophysics; Chinvon Powers, Brooklyn College, cognitive psychology; Christopher Negron, City College, life sciences; Je-Hi An and David L.V. Bauer, both specializing in bioengineering and biomedical research at Macaulay Honors College at City College.

Watson Fellows
These 10 CUNY students were among this year’s 15 winners of Jeannette K. Watson Fellowships, which provide internships, mentoring and educational opportunities to promising New York City undergraduates. Michael Maslankowski, College of Staten Island; Eric Polanco, City College; Javeria Hashmi and Christine Pigott, Brooklyn College; and Macaulay Honors College winners Tyler Alterman, Hunter College; Brain Katerman, College of Staten Island; Ilya Ryvin, Brooklyn College; Bing Shao, City College; Jocelyne Jeannot and Sushantha Singhba, Lehman College.

The Mayor’s Top Chef
Six: Mayor Bloomberg has called Feliberto Estévez “the most important man at Gracie Mansion.” Estévez is the executive chef, who plans and prepares meals for mayoral events and educates school kids about food. Originally from the Dominican Republic, Estévez, above with budding gourmets from P.S. 132 in Washington Heights, also has been a top chef for major New York restaurants. Now that he has his City Tech associate degree in hospitality management, he plans to go for a bachelor’s. “At some point, I’d like to teach,” he says.

University’s First Ph.D.
More than four decades after the fledgling Graduate School and University Center awarded its first doctoral degree, the Class of 2009 celebrated a special milestone — the awarding of the school’s 10,000th degree — by inviting back David Robinson, who received his Ph.D. in psychology in that first class. Robinson, who participated in a ceremonial “hooding” in honor of the milestone, has gone on to international acclaim and academic distinction for his writing and research. As a newly minted Ph.D., Robinson told The New York Times, which covered the first commencement, that he would be happy to achieve the status of a “FOOTNOTE.”

Four decades later, he has 18 books to his credit, including two considered classics in his field: An Intellectual History of Psychology and a definitive history of the insanity defense. He is a distinguished professor emeritus of philosophy at Georgetown University and a faculty fellow at Oxford. Robinson recalled that the CUNY program of the 1960s was so small, it resembled an Oxford tutorial. “In one seminar, it was just the professor and me,” he said. Robinson was invited to “hood” Kristen Case, one of the newest graduates to receive their degrees in Avery Fisher Hall. “I found it quite moving,” she said. “It was elegantly done. New York City is still the one place on earth that knows how to put on a show.”
On the ‘Perfect Misery’ of Pain

By Gary Schmidgall

IF YOU EVER RUN INTO Lynne Greenberg, don’t tell her (even if you’re the former president who made the phrase famous), “I feel your pain.” She just might deck you. Ask her how she’s doing, and you stand a good chance of hearing a curt: “I’m doing pain.”

Greenberg has earned an honorary doctorate in pain—in addition to her J.D. from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. from the CUNY Graduate Center—and knows that “pain is by its nature invisible.” The truth of pain is not communicable, cannot be felt by another. Pain can be written about, however—a fact that Greenberg reveals all too scarily in her harrowing, stripped-to-the-skin book, The Body Broken (Random House), which might well carry the subtitle “A World of Pain, Not Much Gain.”

At the beginning of the fall term in 2006, news traveled quickly around the Hunter College English Department that Greenberg, our elegant, lissome and congenial resident Miltonian, was suddenly obliged to take a medical leave of absence. A few attempts to reach out and some vague hallway gossip left the cause a mystery: The Body Broken reveals all its subject is the mystery of chronic pain, which, in a concluding “Author’s Note,” Greenberg tells us one American adult in five suffers from. The book reveals how right Milton was when he wrote in Paradise Lost: “Pain is perfect misery, the worst! Of evils, and, excessive, overthrows! All patience.”

The specific cause of Greenberg’s pain, however, proved no mystery. At the age of 19, she was on summer break from Brown University, at home in Missoula and spending time on her beloved family dog. She remembers the suddenness, one can easily end up trying Plan Z. Take the excruciating $75,000 operation to fuse that pesky dens once and for all. The surgeon pronounced success, but the pain stayed put—and she also experienced a very Miltonian (but temporary) post-op period of blindness. Greenberg took her father-in-law’s advice to “Treat your pain as you would a research paper,” and she ended up surfing the Web and trying many treatments (often contending with diametrically opposed opinions), though drawing the line at magnets, faith healers and big rubber bands around the head. She finally learned to be commander-in-chief of this war.

I’m happy to report that the sense of humor I remember b.p. is evident in The Body Broken, though now with an inevitable tinge of the gallows. Greenberg sees in her tide that her doctors see as an “adjustment disorder.” She had to look this up, and wryly explains, “it seems that there is a ‘normal’ way to respond to chronic pain and an ‘abnormal’ way.” She also looks back bemused on her attempt to replace doing pain with doing plastic—buying Prada suits and Chloe cocktail dresses she couldn’t wear. Retail therapy, she calls it.

During the fedless fusion operation, the beloved family dog had to be euthanized, and there was black-crepe chortling between husband and wife about this as a treatment option. On a wackier note, Greenberg accepts her first marijuana joint from a friend during a fancy book-party attended by celebrities, socialites and paparazzi. She gets stoned, the pain vanishes, and the epiphany turns her flamboyantly, embarrassingly joyous. Later, the pain returned.

It is also reassuring to see many signs in The Body Broken that Greenberg has not lost touch with her identity as a professor of poetry. Every chapter carries a poetic epigraph that is shrewdly chosen: several from Milton, but ranging widely from George Herbert’s “The Collar” (very apt to the site of pain here) to the Rolling Stones (“I can’t get no satisfaction”), to Louise Glück (“Tell me this is the future/I won’t believe you”). Movingly, she even gets poetry out of a nerve rhizotomy (nerve-blocking) injection that gave her 10 pain-free days. Poetry also helps her to define her agony: “Pain, I realized, does not fit into the tampered heartbeat of ambic penumeter… it refuses closure and explodes rhyme and reason.”

All-consuming, it does not permit the luxury of metaphor or chiasmatic thinking, tropes or symbols, wit or pan. It’s soundless, dysphonic, a wall, silence. “A race profound and touch-like a hindaout — is an appendix with 10 poems that helped in the struggle with pain.”

Of books with a happy ending, Greenberg says, “Such a book I cannot write.” She acknowledges in the final pages, “The most absorbing relationship in my life, unfortunate to admit, is still pain.” She therefore opts for a bittersweet ending, making the expulsion of Adam and Eve at the end of Paradise Lost her final epigraph: “Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon.”/The World was all before me,

Jealous, brittle with envy, I resented anyone who still had an intact life. My mind… was utterly self-involved and myopic: me, me, me…

‘My mind… was utterly self-involved and myopic: me, me, me…’

‘The timing couldn’t be better for the release of Philip Alcabes’ acclaimed new book, Dread: How Fear and Fantasy Have Fueled Epidemics From the Black Death to the Asian Flu (Public Affairs). Alcabes, an infectious-disease epidemiologist and associate professor in the urban public health program at Hunter College’s School of Health Sciences, discusses noteworthy epidemics throughout history and explains what our fears about them tell us about ourselves.

Ageless Activists
In Grey Panthers, Queens College anthropology professor Roger Sanjak tells the story of the social justice organization started in 1970 by Philadelphia Maggie Kuhn, who at age 65 began opposing the idea of mandatory retirement. Published by the University of Pennsylvania Press, the book tells how she and her cohorts were inspired by the civil rights and anti-war movements to found an activist group that soon attracted supporters of all ages. Their national causes have ranged from nursing home reform to affordable housing, and the abolition of nuclear weapons. Kuhn died in 1995, but the movement continues.

Renaissance Man
Alain L. Locke: The Biography of a Philosopher, by Queens College professor of English Charles Molesworth and Purdue University professor of philosophy Leonard Harris, traces the youth and career of the man they call “the most influential African American intellectual born between W.E.B. Du Bois and Martin Luther King, Jr.” Published by the University of Chicago Press.

Reverse Passing
In Near Black: White-to-Black Passing in American Culture, John Jay College assistant professor of English Baz Dreisinger explores what she calls “reverse racio passing.” She examines books, films and other narratives that show whites passing for black over the centuries starting from the 1830s and up contexts from slavery to civil rights. Published by the University of Massachusetts Press.

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ON THE 13th floor of the North Building at Hunter College, in the back of a laboratory that is humming and spinning with the sound of high-tech scientific research equipment, Cliff Soll sits at his computer analyzing data compiled by a quadrupole time-of-flight high-resolution mass spectrometer. The spectrometer, which converts molecules to ions so that they can be manipulated by electric and magnetic fields, is so advanced that it is in demand by hospitals, colleges and drug companies outside the CUNY system.

Soll, the director of the mass spectrometry facility at Hunter, remembers the day the equipment was installed three years ago. “Instantly, it revolutionized everything,” Soll says. “It was mind-boggling the data you could get out of this thing, and it put us on the playing field with all the power players. Scripps has this instrumentation, MIT has it, and CUNY is right there.”

Outside institutions such as a pharmaceutical company that recently needed a drug impurity analyzed as part of the FDA registration process are even paying a small fee for Soll, an organic chemistry Ph.D., to run their samples.

CUNY is raising its science profile. Spurred by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein’s Decade of Science initiative, announced in 2005, new laboratories and state-of-the-art instrumentation including mass spectrometers are being installed and construction is underway or near completion on facilities such as the University-wide Advanced Science Research Center at City College.

Center New science buildings at City, Lehman and Medgar Evers Colleges are underway, as well as a major addition at Queens College. Also planned are new science buildings at Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges At the same time, Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning, Construction and Management Iris Weinshall has pushed ahead with an aggressive program to renovate and upgrade out-of-date college laboratories.

“We are projecting to spend more than $1 billion over the next five to eight years on new science buildings,” explains Vice Chancellor for Research Gillian Small, “but these take time, so a decision has been made to renovate certain teaching and research labs at some of the colleges.”

Since January, five teaching labs at Hunter, City, Lehman, Queens and Brooklyn have been completed. Research labs at Hunter’s North Building and Thomas Hunter Hall are in the design or construction phase, as are several labs at City’s Steinman and Marshak Buildings. Ten new teaching labs are slated for Queens, City, Hunter, Lehman, York, Brooklyn, New York City College of Technology and LaGuardia Community College. All of the labs are expected to be completed next year.

The University’s science facilities have been neglected for years due to the high cost of building and renovating laboratories and science buildings. But, says Vice Chancellor Small, “Chancellor Goldstein recognizes that to be a great university, CUNY needs to have high-quality science facilities.”

David Salmon, assistant director of the department of design, construction and management, says 36 labs — some complete, some under construction and some in design — have been slated for renovation at an estimated cost of $55 million to $60 million. “It’s a real challenge, because some of the buildings are from the 1940s,” he says. “The visual part is really easy. You put in new floors and lights, but what’s hard is the mechanical and infrastructure changes.”

Join Far-Flung Research Trips Via Scientists’
that you need to make for a modern lab." The most critical infrastructure upgrades involve ventilation. New codes differ from how older buildings were designed, requiring significant air changes, as well as barred recirculated air, now standard for a modern laboratory.

Another important upgrade is to strength- en emergency power systems. Salmon says that during renovations, it was discovered that emergency power in some labs was inadequate. "Often a scientist’s research is stored in special freezers, or is dependent on animal colonies," Salmon says. "Emergency power is needed to sustain those facilities during a blackout. New buildings are designed with systems to address potential loss of power. We are also starting to retrofit older buildings that house significant research with emergency systems where none currently exist."

In addition to renovations, about $10 million has been given to the senior and community colleges to buy new equipment, with Vice Chancellor for Finance Ernesto Malave working with Vice Chancellor Small to make the funds available for the new instrumentation.

The money has been paying for, among other things, solar panels and a water purifi- cation system at Queensborough Community College, a Perkins Elmer Infrared MicroSpectrometer at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, and a 400 MHz NMR and Neuroscience eye trackers at Hunter College.

The Atom Bomb and “Dr. Atomic”

THE MORAL dilemmas and the science surrounding America’s development and use of the atom bomb during World War II took center stage at a groundbreaking symposium at the CUNY Graduate Center. The event was pegged to the Metropolitan Opera’s first production of “Doctor Atomic” by John Adams. The highlight was an unprecedented discussion by 11 scientists who worked on the top-secret Manhattan Project, some telling stories that had never before been made public. Leading historians also spoke, as did the opera’s composer, director and set designer. The event was part of the Graduate Center’s Science and the Arts Series in the fall of 2008.

The CUNY Channel has archived an edited video recording of the program on www.cuny.edu/ youtube, so that history buffs and opera lovers can watch the six-session event whenever they want. The segments are: “The making of Doctor Atomic,” composer John Adams, director Penny Woolcock and set designer. The event was part of the Graduate Center’s Science and the Arts Series in the fall of 2008.

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Q&A: ANNA LOMAX WOOD

Anna Lomax Wood is executive director of the Association for Cultural Equity and the daughter of folklorist Alan Lomax, who was a pioneer in pres- 
serving traditional music. At his death in 2002 his collection of music, recordings and photographs was housed at the Master of Fine Arts campus at Hunter College. She is working on sharing this material as widely as possible. In particular, she has a dissemination and repatriation program in the Caribbean with the Center for Black Music Research. They are keeping the whole Caribbean collection in their archives. Closer to home, they are working with Harlem’s Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, which will receive all of the African-American and Afro-Caribbean materials that Alan recorded, as well as his- toric photographs. Those are just a couple of examples of our efforts to disseminate and share the collection as widely as possible.

Q: When did your father’s affiliation with the City University begin, and what is the relationship between the Association for Cultural Equity and CUNY today?

A: It started in the mid-1980s. Alan was based at Columbia University with an office in a university-owned apartment on the Upper West Side. At one point they decided to realize Alan’s dreams — I think they decided they had to — and they couldn’t afford it. So it was a pretty desperate situation. Then one of our friends, a man named Martin Koenig who knew the City University’s then-Chancellor Joseph S. Murphy, introduced Alan to Murphy. They clicked immediately and Chancellor Murphy invited Alan to use this space at Hunter College. CUNY gave him a good deal and that’s how we got here. We have had an excellent relationship with Hunter College. They have been really wonderful, which made it possible for us to stay here, and I’m deeply grateful for that. In addition, professor Barbara Hampton, who is the director of the Center for Ethnomusicology at Hunter, has been on our board for many years.

Q: The Alan Lomax Database, that is avail- able online at www.lomaxarchive.com. What can visitors expect to find there?

A: It consists of all of Alan’s media collec- tions from the 1940s onward, including all of the songs and stories, the audio sound recordings, radio programs, photographs, videos and selected video clips. It has been a huge project for us to organize because all of it had to be carefully catalogued by experts in the various fields. Right now one of our last catalogs, of Moroccan recordings, is being completed by a remarkable young man who is a scholar of Arabic Literature and also has a special interest in the music of Morocco. You can look things up according to various criteria and also listen to the music or look at the photos.

Q: In his obituary in The New York Times, your father is reported to have said that cultural equity is the right of every culture to have equal time on the air and equal time in the classroom. How is the Association for Cultural Equity working to fulfill his vision?

A: At the moment and for the next few years we will be doing so through our dissemina- tion and repatriation projects, which are in the spirit of my father’s vision of cultural equi- ty. We are also working to make Alan’s research widely available. That includes devising ways of understanding and approaching all of this work on expressive style that was done from the 1960s through the early 1990s. There are already experts in the fields of genetic anthropology and evolutionary biology who are very interested in this because, when they analyzed the material statistically — the song set, the dance set and the other sets — they found parallel distributions and clusters growing out of it. And these clusters group them- selves according to how people were really distributed around the world. They actually helped map out some of the oldest distributions of populations. Back in 1984, Alan hypothesized that the oldest music on earth was that of the Pygmies and the Bushmen, and now we have learned through genetic science that those are probably the oldest popula- tions on earth. So a number of scientists are utilizing Alan’s work in their research.

That’s why we are so eager to get all of this material out there, to disseminate and share this archive as widely as possible.

Q: There’s still a lot of traditional music out there. Would you like someone to continue the work that your father and your grandfather, John Lomax, started?

A: The field of ethnomusicology has grown into a professional discipline and there are numerous researchers who are carrying this work forward. There are also folklorists who are perhaps working more in the spirit of John and Alan Lomax, espe- cially in the field of public folk. They are dedicating their work not only to academia but also to the communities and people that produce this culture, which is very important.
JULY

summer in the city

Summer in the City
Courses for credit, enrichment and professional development — plus creative activities, sports and academics for kids and teens — are available on 18 University campuses throughout New York’s five boroughs. Courses start on various dates in July and August.

For details, go to http://web.cuny.edu/special/programs/summer-in-the-city.html

AUGUST

SUMMER SKIES

Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower. Twenty “shooting stars” per hour are expected from the constellation Aquarius.

Best viewing: after midnight, facing east.

August 12-13

Perseids Meteor Shower. Astronomers predict up to 60 streaks per hour from this best-known — and famed — “shower of meteors.” Best viewing: midnight to sunrise, facing northeast.

For the public viewing schedule at the College of Staten Island’s Griffith Observatory and other sky-viewing information, go to: http://supernova7.aspcc.csi.cuny.edu/schedulenew.html

For more events, visit www.cuny.edu and click on events.

Details of calendar events can change without notice, so always call in advance.

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Summer 2009 podcasts
• Overnight, singer Susan Boyle became the voice heard round the world thanks to social networking sites. Publicist Steve Rubel says branded products will soon “go viral,” too.
• Harvard professor Niall Ferguson, author of a financial history of the world, explains how Wall Street’s bubble is just the latest to burst — and why it won’t be the last.
• Forensic DNA expert John M. Butler discusses new applications for DNA “typing” beyond criminalology that didn’t exist when the technique was introduced 20 years ago.

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