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

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

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

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

CK: Yes, these private schools took a holistic approach to the child's intellectual and artistic development. They were widespread and still are. My mother taught at one when we arrived in Pennsylvania. In fact, I pass one now on 79th Street on my way to the Central Office. The Nazis, of course, disapproved of Steiner methods and began closing the schools down.

GS: Because they were the opposite of regimental?

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

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

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

GS: You chose Haverford for your undergraduate studies.

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

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

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

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

CK: An enormously dedicated teacher, and a good one...a man of very high standards. He valued quality and sought it out. He crystallized for me how important it is to link things together. Child care and education do go hand in hand. It gave me under my skin?

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Kimmich Interview, continued from page 1

"Collaboration, mutual support are the way to success. That was my style at the College and it will be my style here. We should not be struggling with each other, but with the problem."

GS: What is your favorite German city?
CK: Favorite...well, I'll say the most interesting one is Munich...for variety, for entertainment, theater, and being close to a very dramatic countryside. My wife, Flora, and I lived for a year in little Göttingen, and that was not so great! There was nowhere but a subterranean "underground" to go...It was provincial in every way.

GS: Have you visited Germany often?
CK: Not recently, but I did research there, notably in Bonn, and still have friends there. What is your favorite German city?
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GS: You have volunteered to write for CUNY+Matters, and when I spoke with her a few weeks ago she mentioned that you met in Germany.
CK: She had a Fulbright for study in Germany and chose to stay on to work in the Fulbright office in Bonn. I was doing archival research, and we were introduced by a mutual friend. She returned to pursue her Ph.D. in German literature at Yale, so part of our subsequent courtship was by mail. She is from a prominent family of educators in North Carolina.

GS: You, I noticed that she earned a magna cum laude B.A. from Duke. The other Dr. Kimmich's commitment to education, especially the "continuing kind," is amazing...no fewer than four advanced degrees!
CK: Yes, the difficulty of two academics finding jobs within a highly competitive market...does not happen for a law degree at the University of Pennsylvania. She entered public interest law and practiced for some time, but then reverted to her first love, which is foreign languages. She has acquired five of them, the most recent being Latin and Greek, which she learned at the Latin and Greek Institute, a Brooklyn College program housed at the Graduate School. Talk about immersion! This summer program features professors who man a 24-hour hotline! She also earned an M.F.A. in poetry at the College since leaving legal briefs behind.

GS: I studied in Stuttgart in the mid-60s and have not been back in many years, but as I've read the news stories in recent years, I get the distinct feeling I'd find a grimmer, much less salubrious atmosphere. What is your feeling?
CK: The main feature of German society is...it is a deep generational conflict. The turmoil of the first 50 years of the century left the older generation with a conforming, don't-rock-the-boat attitude.

GS: What are some of the small, specific victories of, say, a Provost's job?
CK: Most of the anecdotes of student victories I can recall—succeeding in an area of specialization, getting into medical school, being your family's first college grad—come down to observing a student's sense of accomplishment on his or her own. The privilege of watching that happen is something you can't buy for love or money.

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

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

GS: Is one of the problems the perception "out there" of public education?
CK: I'm the product of private education, from kindergarten through the doctorate. It wasn't until 1973 that I came to know a public academic institution, and I was deeply impressed by how much public education has done and what it can do. To a much greater extent than in Europe, public education has lost some of the cachet it used to have. There was a time when op-ed pages carried academic news. Now it's a free-for-all of talk-show hosts, athletic coaches, celebrities. Opinion-making has become so democratized that we have lost sight of the high level of intellectual discourse that higher education makes possible.

GS: Is this a sense of having "given up" on education?
CK: Or of our depending on it too much. Various new social responsibilities have been imposed—children, economic development, community issues—which by and large we have been happy and...
By Roberta Adelman
Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities Program, Brooklyn College

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

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

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

A highlight of the day-long event was a tour of the adaptive machines now available at the Goldstein Center, as well as at the Library and Computer Lab. Guests in operation, for instance, one of two screen magnification software systems available at the Center, Zoom Text. This enlarges text and graphics up to 16 times actual printed size, and text can be viewed a portion at a time and read at different speeds.

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

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

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

Among the Center’s other remarkable learning aids is the Tactile Image Enhancer, a device that generates raised documents such as maps, illustrations, or charts and can be felt by visually impaired students. There is also software—jaws and PW Web Speak—that allows these same students to browse the Web by reading the text aloud.

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

The Center is administered by the College’s Services for Students with Disabilities Program and currently serves about 200 students. While there is now such an array of devices to assist even a specially handicapped individual, the human spirit has enor-

mous and enduring power.

# Continued from previous page

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

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

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

**GS:** For me it is timely to have my readers understand that we are not clear about ourselves, and we should think hard about our missions.

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

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

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

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

His other motivation is more personal. His son, who is dyslexic, went to a college that had a very good program for students with disabilities, but he didn’t make use of these services because he felt a stigma was attached. Goldstein has been eager and delighted to help make available—without stigma—a core of disability programs, ser-

vices, and assistive technology that will level the playing field for collegiate stu-

dents with disabilities. “They are demon-

strating that the human spirit has enor-

mous and enduring power.”

# Deputy Chancellor Patricia Hassett
Appointed by Board

The City University of New York Board of Trustees named Patricia Hassett Interim Deputy Chancellor at a special Jan. 7 Board meeting, upon the recommenda-

tion of Interim Chancellor Christoph M. Kimmich. The appointment is effective Jan. 20. Hassett has served for more than two decades in senior administrative positions in both public and private higher education, including, since 1993, the office of Vice President for Finance and Administration of Brooklyn College. Formerly, she was Vice Presi-

dent for Administration at Fairleigh Dickinson University. In addition, she has extensive experience within the CUNY system, including directorial posi-

tions at Baruch College and City College.

“Ms. Hassett brings to the task a strong and long-standing commitment to the Uni-

versity and its mission, broad campus expe-

rience, clear intelligence and prodigious energies. She will coordinate University-

wide projects, serve as liaison with various constituencies, and oversee select Uni-

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

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

Bargonetti was honored for a breakthrough discovery on the gene p53 and for her belief that a scientific laboratory should be a place for more than just cellular growth. “Science is a group effort,” she asserts. “In the grant application that got me the award, one of the things I wrote was that, through what I was doing, my lab could serve as a national example for a multicultural scientific environment whereby people learned to respect each other in spite of their differences.” Bargonetti knows that training new scientists is one of her chief responsibilities. So it is no surprise to find her achievements well-known among Hunter’s undergraduates. They are at work everywhere in her laboratory. En-ticing newly-declared biology majors to find science as compelling as she does is among her long-term career objectives. “I’m here at Hunter to be a role model, to let people come into the lab and show them what is exciting about science, that it is really enjoyable and that the people who are involved in science are not boring.”

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

S tudents in Bargonetti’s lab are expected to show up together and share pro-cedural information and results with each other. In her lab meetings, data belongs to everyone, and everyone asks questions. “It’s a group effort. A lot of people are uncomfortable dealing with interpersonal skills in the lab; they prefer not to discuss problems. I have a different approach. I know that not everybody is going to be great friends, but we all work together. We all respect each other.” Although the lab is very much a CUNY facility, you will not hear the range of lan-guages spoken here that is typical of Hunter’s student body. Bargonetti’s empha-sis on group learning leads her to insist on English in the lab. “I demand that one common language be spoken here because I don’t believe in the idea of language ever being used as an exclusionary measure.” In other respects, informality is Bargonetti’s style. She does not expect students to call her Dr. Bargonetti, though her youth and easy demeanor sometimes bring about unexpected obstacles in the student-teacher dynamic. “I think it’s different for them to see me in this position. It’s also different for people to have to address me as ‘sir’ or ‘mam.” She is at ease with students, at ease with their occasional fail-ures, and very comfort-able—even encour-aging—with the inventive few who can modify parameters in search of a new re-sult. “If they’re not creative,” she says, “they’ll never be able to come up with a hypothesis.”

Bargonetti knows what it’s like to conduct cutting-edge scientific research a few floors above the subway. From the Hunter College Elementary School to the Bronx High School of Science, as well as an undergraduate degree from SUNY Poughkeepsie and a Master’s and Ph.D. from N.Y.U., Bargonetti has cultivated strengths from nearly every educational system in New York. She even did post-doctoral research at Columbia University prior to her present position at Hunter College, where the view from her office of all of midtown Manhattan captures whatever imagination is not engaged in science.

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

Even now that she is on the faculty of the College and the Graduate School, dance is still very much a part of her recre-ational life and her thinking. Every scien-tific maneuver, Bargonetti insists, has an equivalent spatial movement. Those who understand the physical correlation to scientifc motion, she believes, have a great advantage. “A dancer has to have good memory skills, has to be very spatial and conceptual ability, because you must remember all of the steps and movements well. There’s a lot of that in understanding biological concepts—being able to visualize what’s on the page. If you can’t go beyond data on the page, then you won’t be able to do science very well.”

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

I n her mind, dance and science meet where precision and creativity inter-sect. A dancer must be specific. “If you think about ballet or any other dance, every-thing is very precise. I mean, if your toe is not like this,” her hand gestures a dizzyingly precise angle, “it’s not the dance at all.”

Similarly, those who fail to meet the rigid expectations of their language are unlikely to succeed as scientists. But Bargonetti is quick to point out the other side of this coin: the absolute neces-sity of creative thinking. “When you get to the lab bench, everything’s set up, and you follow the protocol in the lab book. So far so good, but if that’s all you can do, you won’t be going much further. You may be a very good technician, that’s all.”

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

So you think about that problem. That’s your job. You’re a thinker. If you have re-sources to deal with a problem, it’s very satisfying.”

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

Morris Rossabi, Queens College professor of East and Central Asian history, co-curated this exhibit with James Watt of the Met and Anne Wardwell of the Cleveland Museum of Art. It is the most important display of Asian textiles since World War II. Many of these silks were produced during the era of Mongol rule in Asia, as the pastoral nomads from the steppes prized these colorful brocades and embroideries. “Welcoming Spring,” says Rossabi, “is remarkably large—94 x 25 inches—and complicated, and it offers a charming depiction of a boy riding a goat and many other ani-mals, all against a background of flora, water, and earth.”

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

A leading scholar of the interior of Asia, Rossabi was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and conducts research in nearly a dozen lan-guages. He has authored China and Inner Asia, Khubilai Khan, and Voyager to Xanadu, and among his current projects are articles on China’s relations with Inner Asia for the Cambridge History of China and a CD-ROM on the Silk Route, forthcoming from the Asia Society, and research for a book on post-Soviet Mongolia that has been funded by the Soros Foundation.
VISIONARY CHARETTE OF FIRE
CCNY’s Design Students Board “Crosstown 116”

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

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

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

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

We at the CCNY School of Architecture and Environmental Studies (SAES) are particularly enthusiastic about “Crosstown 116” because it will test a unique idea about how best to involve architecture students in their surrounding communities. For the first time, all of SAES is devoting its energies to a single design context. All 16 of its architecture and landscape studios are working together to create visions for the urban communities served by the crosstown 116th Street as a model 21st-century urban thoroughfare.

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

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

The first of the three “Crosstown 116” phases began last summer with the preparation and distribution of a briefing book describing 116th Street as it now exists. Its contents were generated in part by a community event, “Partnership to Save a City: A Harlem Dialogue,” that took place in 1996. The briefing book is being used by local citizens, architects, urban planners, landscape architects, and all of SAES’s second-year students in the fall of 1997.

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

PIE: A $5,000 Slice

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

The seminar’s syllabus offers weekly sessions on such topics as “Connecting Race and Ethnicity,” “Autobiography and Contemporary Issues,” “Women and Work,” “Heterosexism and Homophobia,” “Disability Studies,” and “Sexualities and Reproductive Issues.”

Faculty Development Spring Term Offerings

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

Four seminars continue from the fall semester: “Current Policy Issues in Economics” will focus on such topics as rising health care costs, the widening gap in income, and the impact of job loss in the U.S. The CUNY Logic Workshop will convene those interested in mathematical logic, including set theory, model theory, computability theory, and proof theory. “The Geographic Information System and Spatial Analysis of Urban Problems” will offer monthly lectures on the use of GIS and contextual analyses of urban issues. “Linking Research in Natural Products, Plant Biochemistry, and Biotechnology” will feature interaction among botanists, chemists, biochemists, and molecular biologists, with the long-range intention of developing a new interdisciplinary research training program.

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

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

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

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

The volunteer design professionals and community leaders who participated were mightily impressed by the input of the SAES architecture students, and the students, some skeptical early on, gave the extramural visitors high marks for their participation. At one point more than 20 people were working feverishly to finish the “street group” drawing by pin-up time. The networking and bonding produced at this charette, we think, will bear fruit in the years to come.
The Passing of Brooklyn

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

Fighting for Queens & Country

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

The Tweeding of New York

Tweed when he was confronted with the enormity of his alleged theft of public funds. However, the 1871 Thomas Nast cartoon is pure journalistic invention. He never uttered such a self-destructive statement. Tweed was a Democrat, and Nast, his publishers, Harper Brothers, and the editors of the New York Times, which published the cartoon, were all zealously of the Republican persuasion. Purveying such stories was politically useful to them. Since 1871, the stereotype of Tweed as a hallmark of corruption has been repeated by authors, journalists, and media commentators...and has led to a kind of moral finality but in irony.”
—Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

The First Bronx

Tweed being rid New York City as a civic den of iniquity. But Tweed was never a "boss," and he was indicted not for theft but for failure to audit county bills. Though he was convicted, sent to prison, escaped to Cuba and then Spain, captured, and sent back to prison, where he died in 1878, some of Tweed's accomplishments were more noteworthy than notorious. He helped to charter and aid such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mount Sinai Hospital, and Presbyterian Hospital. He introduced legislation to build Riverside Drive, widen Broadway from 34th to 95th Streets, embellish Central and Prospect Parks, and incorporate the New York Stock Exchange.

—Leo Hershkovitz
Queens College

CUNY on "New York City 100" Bandwagon

University Historians Turn

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Wendell E. Pritchett
Baruch College

A More Perfect Union

W
to the collapse of the financial titan Jay Cooke & Co. was announced on the floor of the N.Y. Stock Exchange in September 1873, one newspaper reported that “a monstrous yell went up and seemed to literally shake the building.” Brokers were trampled—some even hospitalized—in the scramble to sell off vulnerable shares. Firms failed, banks buckled, and depositors surged to cash out at institutions with fast-diminishing railroad bonds in their vaults. One broker moaned at the “worse disaster since the Black Death.”

As usual, working people bore the brunt. By winter, 25% of the area’s labor force had lost their jobs. A shantytown-dwelling population on the West Side grew to huge dimensions, and thousands sought shelter on police station floors or in almshouses. Radical politicians demanded comprehensive anti-depression programs and called on all “in sympathy with the suffering poor” to rally in Tompkins Square and march on City Hall.

The First Media Mayor

N
ting radio program. Mike Wallace’s Mickey Mouse History (excerpted in CUNY+Matters in Fall 1996) just received the 1997 Historical Preservation Book Prize. His monumental Gotham: A History of New York City, co-authored with Edwin G. Burrows of Brooklyn College, is forthcoming soon from Oxford University Press. Here he highlights an event that shows just how far back the debate over welfare reform goes in New York City.

A recent arrival at the City University is Wendell E. Pritchett, the holder of a Yale law degree. His Penn Ph.D. is of 1997 vintage, and it was titled “From One Ghetto to Another: Blacks, Jews and Public Housing in Brownsville, 1945-1970.” Pritchett tells of a crucial moment in the history of public housing in the city. Richard K. Lieberman directs the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, a major repository of civic historical treasures, and has authored a major book on the history of the Steinway piano manufacturer. He captions here a rare photograph of Civil War soldiers mustering in Queens.

Joshua Freeman, who recently came to CUNY from Columbia University, is a major authority on mass transit (his In Transit: The Transport Work-ers Union in New York City, 1933-1966 appeared from Oxford in 1989). He highlights his new work on Capital Metropolis, a study of the city from 1870 to 1900, when it was one of unalloyed dereliction.

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Blackwell, John Jay College —Joshua Freeman

Welfare Reform—19th-Century Style

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

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

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

Subway unification helped fulfill the promise of consolidation begun in 1889, knitting together neighborhoods from the northern Bronx to Coney Island. It also left a $310 million debt from the cost of buying privately-run systems, which taxpayers’ money had helped to build. Rather than ushering in a golden age of mass transit, unification led to a half-century of declining services and rising fares, a trajectory only recently reversed.

—Joshua Freeman
Queens College

A More Perfect Union

W
candy that is a dirty, lousy, sticking, putrid liar.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A few years ago, in tandem with Professor Myriam Sarachik of City College, Chudnovsky initiated experimental research in this field that helped lead to the discovery of quantum magnetic hysteresis, a novel physics effect reported by major universities and newspapers. Chudnovsky explains, "If we were able to trap these magnetic fields inside a superconductor, the barrier to practical applications would be removed. I am one of many physicists experimenting with this phenomenon."

Chudnovsky has brought a number of CUNY undergraduates into his research projects over the years. Last year, Lehman students Joyce Williams and Ronald J. Persaud worked on the DOE and NSF projects. Anthony Estrada of Hunter College is working on the Air Force project. Currently, in collaboration with Lehman undergraduate Biology major, Jing Wang, Chudnovsky is doing research on magnetic bacteria for the NSF. "About 20 years ago, it was discovered that some bacteria have small magnetic particles, but no one really understands the significance of these particles," he observes. "I wanted to study the magnetism but the particles are so tiny. We have to grow a huge amount of culture—and bacteria are hard to grow. If you have too much oxygen, the bacteria die. If the temperature is wrong, they die."

Wang is growing this culture in Lehman's Department of Biological Sciences, and last summer she and Chudnovsky took the bacteria to an experimental facility at the University of Barcelona, where they conducted measurements. "We have come up with some interesting results, which may change the current view that bacteria use magnetic particles for navigation," he says. He and Wang are writing up their research now and plan to seek additional support for further work from the National Institutes of Health. The potential applications of this research include development of magnetic methods of controlling the growth and division of biological cells.

In addition to his introductory course, Chudnovsky also teaches an upper-level course for Lehman and Hunter physics majors and advanced courses in magnetism, superconductivity, and quantum physics at the Graduate School. Born in Leningrad, he was educated at Kharkov University in the Ukraine, where he received his Ph.D., in theoretical physics in 1973. In the 1970s, his political activities led to interrogations and eight years of surveillance by the KGB. With help from friends, physicists, and Western politicians, the Chudnovskys were able to emigrate to the United States in 1987. After a year at Tufts University, he joined the Lehman faculty in 1988. His wife Marina is now dean of students and a teacher of social studies and Russian at Bronx High School of Science, just a block from the Lehman campus. "The administration at Lehman has been very supportive of my research," Chudnovsky says, "and I enjoy teaching. My students at Lehman are determined and very hard working. Sometimes they even surprise themselves by their interest in physics and natural phenomena, and many of them would make good physicists. But these days so many of our best science students want to become medical doctors."

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

Continued on page 12
Psyching Up for the Internet

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

I had hoped that the unusual announce-
ment I made at the beginning of my class in Developmental Psychology in the fall of 1996 would be greeted with cries of “Wow!” or “Right on!” Instead, a nervous wave of fidgeting and murmuring seemed to make its way around the large lecture hall. Many of my 275 students were personal challenge. If she could be con-
gruous, highly social lifestyle.

loners. But they certainly didn’t suit her gre-
that she thought computers were all right for
career in accounting, explained to me later
the most of the present when I add that she
computer stuff is too foreign; it’s for the
afford, I heard, from several rows back, a
e-mail and the World Wide Web (www) as an
that I would require the class to learn to use

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

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

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

There are three ma-
jor components to
my use of the computer in my classes: (1) e-
mail, (2) my homepage, and (3) searching
the www. How do I start? First, by getting
valuable help from Hiroko Miyamoto, for-
merly of Hunter’s Academic Computing of-
fice, who has always speedily delivered a
superb distribution list for each of my
classes. With the extremely competent and
generous help of Nancy Larkin (also of Aca-
demic Computing) and Nancy Guerrero (Di-
rector of Computer Facilities in Hunter’s Read-
ing and Writing Center), I schedule approx-
imately ten workshops within the first
three weeks of each semester.

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

I use e-mail in several ways: to commu-
nicate with the class as a whole; to answer
individual questions; to draw their attention
to relevant articles—some required, some not—and films; and to provide additional
material and clarifications about topics dis-
cussed in class. Once a week I pose a
related question for discussion, and students
use e-mail to ask me questions, find out what
they had missed in class, form study groups,
and discuss course work with each other,
which they seem to enjoy doing. They have
found e-mail particularly helpful when study-
ing for exams, since they do not have to wait
until the next class to ask a question and
need not rearrange their schedules to meet
in person. I also have found e-mail discour-
tering and preparing a bibliography. This
project, of course, involves many of the
same steps involved in writing an old-fash-
ioned term paper.

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

In addition, I believe that important topics pertinent to the course—topics like the definitions of child and do-
mestic abuse in different cultures; the ef-
ects of cocaine addiction on the fetus and infant during pregnancy; differences and
similarities between children raised by het-
erosexual and homosexual parents; and
resources for making decisions about elder
care, to name a few.

Clearly, some of the problems students struggle with in doing this kind of e-mail
projects are like those encountered with
any writing assignment. For example, many students choose topics far too broad
(“human development,” “abortion,” “child
caring”). They also experience difficulty
distinguishing what material is relevant,
sometimes including everything for fear of leaving something out. Providing them
with some instructions about search en-
gines helped them with these problems—
for example, that each search engine has
its own conventions for entering search
terms for Boolean searches and that these
conventions are specified on the HELP
screen for each engine.

Some students have difficulty explaining and defining their topic because of language
difficulties. To be sure, they are extremely
effective, the requirement of precise terms, are forced to reframe their vocabu-
laries and, often, their syntax. Their e-mail
communications allow me to rephrase their
questions in standard English and correct/

E-mail and the web continue to be an
integral part of my courses. For example, as the Undergraduate Advisor for the Psy-
chology Department, I teach a Peer Advis-
ing course. Along with other requirements
of the class, each Peer Advisor researches a
career in psychology, counseling or social
work by surfing the Web, exploring other
databases such as psych-lib, library hold-
ings, information from national associa-
tions, and interviewing professionals al-
ready in the field.

The results of these projects serve as
career and graduate school guides to
fields such as General Social Work, Clinical So-
cial Work, School Social Work, Marriage
and Family Therapy, and Counseling Psy-
chology. These guides are available in the
Psychology Advising Resource Library, a
collection of materials on reserve under
“PSYCH ADV” in Hunter’s Wexler Library.

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

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

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

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

Continued on page 12
Child Development Center, continued from page 1

Charlotte Bellamy and Mary Lou Brorderick, who have both been in the Center for 30 years, have consistent-ly been at the forefront of the child care issue at CUNY and were recently honored by past and present faculty, peers, staff, students and their children at the Center’s annual Golden Acorn Awards.

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

The Center, located just off Campu campus, currently operates four programs, The Early Childhood Program, in which child care

ors first-grade students with placement in field work or internship settings.

The Center was initially funded by the New York City Agency for Child Development, but in the later 1970s, as a result of the fiscal crisis, it was one of 49 day care centers to lose funding. Committed faculty, students and staff, however, refused to close the Center’s doors. Funds were eventually obtained from a variety of sources ranging from the City’s Childcare Grant to scholarships from the Center’s own students and parents.

The College President, Carolyn Williams, observes, “Our students with children enrolled in the Center benefit in sev-

eral ways. They are free to pursue their own academic studies because they feel comfortable about the nurturing environment for their children. Subsequently, they are enabled to function as substantial role models for their children. This is a classic win-win situation.”

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

One of the Center’s most significant family successes is that of Elva Velez and her son Danny. When Danny entered the Center, he was withdrawn and had difficulty socializing, but he was encouraged to participate in a special play group designed to draw him out. By the time he entered elementary school, Danny was placed in a gifted program. His mother went on to ear

ear a business degree at Baruch College and now works at the Center herself. His younger sister Felicia is attending Syracuse University and Danny is due to graduate from Wesleyan University this spring in religious studies.

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

As welfare reform has recently become a topic of national interest, for Assistant Director Brorderick suggests that the successful BCC model be considered seriously. “We’ve been doing effective welfare reform for 25 years!”

While the long-term family outcomes of on-site collegiate child care are beginning to become apparent, the direct impacts on the educational attainment of the parents who use the Child Development Center have been clearly documented. A brief statistical summary (see illustration) shows that our parents/students are characteristically similar to other women with children who attend BCC. They are predominantly single, low income, and of minority background. More than one-third are public assistance recipients, almost all (95%) are single

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

As the figures indicate, the academic outcomes for parents who have used the Center were far better than for other parents who did not enjoy child care. After three years, the Center’s student-mothers had significantly higher three-year retention rates (84% for Center parents, 43% for non-Center) and significantly higher three-year graduation rates (16% for Center parents, 4% for non-

Center). In addition, Center parents participated in clubs and student activities to a greater extent (21% versus 11%) and completed greater number of degree credits: 53% of Center parents completed 48 or more degree credits, compared to 20% for non-Center parents.

Some sophisticated statistical analyses suggest that these higher graduation and persistence rates remain statistically significant even when other important factors—like incoming basic skill level, marital status, welfare status—were held statistically constant. Simply put, participants in the Child Development Center are six times as likely to persist (that is, remain enrolled or graduate) at the College after 3 years, and 20% of graduates are likely to graduate af-

ter three years as their parent counterparts. Furthermore, the more complex analyses reveal that Center participation exerts a direct, statistically significant effect on student success as well as an indirect effect on student persist-

ence through social integration.

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

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

From her dormitory at SUNY New Paltz, Lanell recalls the good times she enjoyed as a child at the BCC Center. “It was fun. It was always fun. And the food was very good." She expects to earn a Masters de-

degree in communications and hopes one day to be a TV station manager. About the Center, she adds admiringly, “She always wanted to make my life better...working full-time...going to school. I look at her as a superwoman!”

The BCC Child Development Center will, with support from New York City and other sources, continue to keep such superwomen families and their sons and daughters—leaping up-

war at the City University.
MAE WEST ON TRIAL

Goodness Had Nothing to Do with It

Several years before Mae West left New York City for Hollywood to become, by 1935, the highest paid woman in the nation, she made it virtually her profession—Madonna-like—to raise eyebrows, hackles, and, finally, the law with daring, quasi-improvisational theater pieces that brought sexual topics and the full range of sexual preferences onto the 1920s stage. Lillian Schlissel, Director of the American Studies Program at Brooklyn College, has just edited Three Plays by Mae West (Routledge), their first appearance in print. The first, titled simply Sex, premiered in 1926 and featured the 32-year-old West herself as the prostitute Margo LaMont. The play, Schlissel writes, “broke with Broadway morals and made sex a domestic product.”

The next year West prepared to make the city’s thriving gay cross-dressing underworld legit with The Drag, its denouement being a drag ball. With frissons and gossip radiating from its tryouts in Paterson, New Jersey, the New York police made a preemptive raid on its predecessor, shutting down Sex and two other “sex plays.” Not incidentally, Schlissel notes, the State Legislature in March 1927 passed a law banning all depictions of homosexuality on the stage. Adapted here from Schlissel’s introduction is a description of the raid on Sex and its occasionally hilarious judicial aftermath. (A second trial, in 1930, was evoked by the third play, The Pleasure Man of 1928, which, thanks to the police, a run of one-and-a-half evenings.

On February 9, 1927, with Jimmy Walker out of the city on holiday, Deputy Police Commissioner Joseph B. McKee or dered a raid on The Captive, Sex, and Virgin Man. The intention was clearly to get Mae West ister ever they could catch her. If she were ont he stage in The Drag, then the police would close. Sex even though it had been running for almost a year. The anti-vice societies were sending a war ning to this burlesque dancer, vaudeville hoofer and upstart actress from Br ooklyn, daughter of a corset model and a two-bit boxer, that she was not to expect a career as a Br ooklyn play-wright.

The police raid itself was like a Buster Keaton comedy. The acting mayor sent a warrant to the den of iniquity, and told waiting reporters that, after reciting ribald lines from the show, and belatedly receiving the names and addresses of the all-male jury, everyone an upstanding, middle-class businessman. On public display, the jury took only five-and-a-half hours to reach a guilty verdict. West and Impony were sentenced to 10-day jail terms, and fined $500 each; Mor gan nor was also given jail time.

West complained that she was part of the process of doing business on Br oadway. She had herself driven to prison in a limousine, smiling at the photographers, carrying armloads of white roses. She spent eight days on W elfare Island, dined with the war den and his wife, and told reporters she wore silk underwear all the time she was in prison.

On her release, Lib ery magazine paid her $1,000 for an interview, and she donated the fees to establish a Mae West Memorial Library in the women’s prison. Then she attended a charity luncheon given by the W omen’s National Democratic Club and the Pending Democratic Division of the New York Federation of W omen’s Clubs. If the suffragettes could be jailed in a good cause, if Mar gar et Anderson and Jane Heap could stand trial for publishing sections of Ulysses in The Little Review, Mae W est could do no less for fre e speech.

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

After The Pleasure Man of 1928, Mae W est tried one more Br oadwayplay, The Constant Sinner (1931). It closed after 64 perfor mances, and W est decided the only money to be made was in Hollywood. In 1932, she blazed across the scr en for Paramount in “Night After Night” with her old friend Ge orge Raft, who was building a Hollywood career as a V alentino look-alike. She wrote her own dialogue, and her signature one-liners were sharper than ever.

By 1935, she was the highest paid woman in the United States, and W illiam Randolph Hearst, who tried to keep her name out of his newspapers, was the highest paid man. T o a hackgirl’s admiring (“Goodness, what beautiful diamonds,” came the memorable Mae W est quip, “Goodness had nothing to do with it, dearie.”

BMCC Chess Team Triumphant

(Ben Franklin Cheers)

I n 1786 Benjamin Franklin published a char ming short essay, “The Morals of Chess,” in which he praised the several “valuable qualities of the mind” the game instills in its players: memory, attention, the sense of a good bargain, patience, calculation, and caution. The final les son Franklin notes is especially valuable: “Lastly, we learn by chess the habit of not being discouraged by present bad appearances, but thinking of the future with confidence, the hope of a favorable change, and that of persisting in the search for resources” (Franklin’s italics).

If Franklin was right—and he was most of the time—Br ough of Manhattan Community College now has good reason to cele brate. For its chess team recently re- gained its #1 ranking in the nation at the 53rd Pan American Inter college T ournament, held at Bowling Green, Kentucky, on December 27-29. (In 1994 BMCC became the first community college team to win the tournament, and it won again in 1995.)

One in a field of 27 other college teams, BMCC defeated the University of Illinois to win the championship. Members of the team included Sharif E-I-Assiouti, John Easton Esjanov, Kasson Henry, and Alexander Stripsnyk. In 1995, BMCC won its first championship, defeating Harvard and N YU. BMCC Pr esident Antonio Pér ez said of the victory, echoing Franklin, “We congratulate our team members on their victory and thank them for the perseverance that led to their success.”

THE WISDOM OF MAE WEST

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

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

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

“I used to be Snow W hite, but I drifted.”

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

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

(Barry Fusely, newspaperman)
Celebrating Allen Ginsberg

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

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

Ginsberg was always able to Make It New, as Ezra Pound had urged, and to make his poetry relevant to our general spiritual needs. Both Allen and John Lennon just as Kerouac had with Lester Young, because he felt the older poet should hear the new sounds. Ginsberg jammed with Dylan and John Lennon just as Kerouac had with Pound. And his life was spent shaking those walls with his own music...Our Zeitgeist poet in a particularly dark time, Allen Ginsberg was the main singer of our generation. The songs he sang for us will continue to be sung as long as we have the voice and the heart to sing them.

Chudnovsky, continued from page 8

Letters or suggestions for future articles on topics of general interest to the CUNY community should be addressed to:

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