CUNY Extension Center
OPENING DOORS FOR THE NEWEST IMMIGRANTS

It was 15 years in the making, so there was much fanfare November 10 as Queens College joined in celebrating the opening of the CUNY Center for Higher Education in downtown Flushing. Queens is one of several CUNY institutions offering programs at the new center, which is geared primarily toward recent immigrants. Spirits were high at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Those present included Borough President Helen Marshall ‘72, Councilman John Liu (D-Flushing), President Jim Muyskens, and QC Executive Director of Continuing Education Programs Barbara Ritchin. The opening of the center received much press coverage, with articles in Newsday, the Daily News, the Queens Chronicle, Queens Tribune, and Times-Ledger.

According to Ritchin, the center "was opened directly to meet the needs of the surrounding community." Housed in the heart of the Asian American community, it offers a mix of coursework and services. English classes figure prominently as the center is expected mainly to draw foreign-language speakers (especially Asians, Colombians, Haitians, and Russians). Civics education also is a cornerstone of the program. To accommodate the busy schedules of immigrant workers and families, the center will be open seven days a week, from 8:30 am until 10 pm. The center represents what Ritchin calls "a unique consortium of (continued on page 3)

Conference Examines Controversy Over Standardized Tests

One of the hottest topics in education is standardized tests, now being introduced throughout the public school curriculum and required as a condition for graduating high school. To address questions raised by what is often termed "high-stakes testing," the Department of Secondary Education & Youth Services, chaired by Eleanor Armour-Thomas, sponsored Mandatory Testing for High School Graduation: An Educational Policy Conference, held Nov. 5 and 6 in Rosenthal Library.

Co-chaired by Bill Proefriedt (Emeritus, SEYS) and Terrence Quinn (ECP), the conference brought together teachers, administrators, and public policy advocates. President Muyskens and Dean of Education Penny Hammrich both made introductory remarks. Keynote speakers included Michael Rebell, director and lead counsel for the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (which successfully sued the state to change its formula for school funding, which had underallocated monies to city schools), and Saul Cohen, a member of the Board of Regents and former president of Queens College.

The conference sparked a lively debate on the relationship between academic standards and testing. Some defended testing as a means of "measuring school performance," arguing that "the larger society demands it." Others raised concerns about the arts and humanities, which "are being crowded out of a restricted school day." Teachers spoke of their "concern and anxiety" about being "straitjacketed" by a test-driven curriculum, and they objected to the (continued on page 2)
CUNY CAMPAIGN BEGINS
Jane Denkensohn (Special Counsel to the President) is the campus leader for 2003 CUNY Campaign for Charitable Giving. This year’s theme is “So Who Cares?” “We want everyone at the college to answer that question with a resounding ‘I do!’ and make a gift to this worthy campaign,” Denkensohn notes. “In the past few years we at Queens College have fallen short in demonstrating our support. I am hoping we will turn that around this year.” She points out that 97 cents of every dollar contributed goes directly to charity.

The pledge booklet contains over 900 charitable agencies to which donations can be made, including services for the homeless, abused children, elderly shut-ins, troubled teens, the addicted, and many more. One eligible organization very close to home is the Queens College Foundation (agency #1791), which uses donations for student scholarships and to support academic programs.

Denkensohn asks faculty and staff to use the pledge forms to send a one-time check or to indicate installment contributions to be made through payroll deductions. Pledge forms or checks should be sent to the CUNY Campaign, Kiely 805. Your donation will entitle you to a special sweepstakes drawing, and if you donate a minimum of $5 a pay period or make a one-time donation of $130 by Friday, December 5, you will be eligible to win a DVD player or round-trip tickets to anywhere in the continental US or Canada. If you have questions or did not receive CUNY Campaign materials, call 5725.

MENINGITIS ALERT
Faculty are asked to remind students that they must return a Meningitis Response Form to the Health Service Center (FitzGerald Gym 204) as soon as possible. Students do not have to be vaccinated against meningitis, but it is mandatory that they return the form to acknowledge that they received information about the dangers of meningitis. Starting next fall, students who have not returned the form will have a stop put on their registration. The form may be downloaded from www.qc.edu/sched_of_classes.php. If you have any questions, call Connie Capobianco at 2760.

YOUNG CHOREOGRAPHERS
The annual Student Choreographers’ Showcase will be held from Thursday, December 4 through Sunday, December 7 at the Performance Space in Rathaus Hall, Room M-11. Performances are scheduled Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 pm, with matinees on Saturday at 2:00 and Sunday at 3:00 pm. Tickets are $6.

COLLEGE CITED FOR SAVING ENERGY
On November 18, Basil Bascetta (B&G) accepted the Peak Load Management Award from the New York Power Authority. The award, which consisted of a statue and a $20,000 rebate, recognized the college’s success in reducing power consumption on the hottest days of the summer.

SCHOOL PSYCH CONFERENCE
The 40th Annual School Psychology Conference, Competence in Therapeutic Interventions: Cultural and Clinical Considerations, will be held on Friday, January 23, from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm in the Student Union. For more information, contact Marian Fish, X5230, mfish@qc.cuny.edu.

President on Live “Learning Curve”

Viewers tuning to channel 21—the PBS Long Island affiliate—on the evening of October 27 had the opportunity to watch a group of experts discuss the region’s pressing educational issues on “Learning Curve.” President Jim Muyskens took his place on two of three panels: overcoming the shortage of school administrators, and recruiting strong candidates for teaching. For the latter, Muyskens cited the success of the Time 2000 program, which is increasing the number of mathematics teachers.

Participants on the 90-minute show included Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College; Ron Ross, distinguished fellow in urban education reform at the National Urban League; Gerald Ross, dean of education at St. John’s University, as well as principals and teachers. The show, second in a series, had a live audience who were invited to ask questions. “Learning Curve” is produced by Lisa Jandovitz, a Queens College education graduate.

Conference on Testing
(continued from page 1)
unintended effect of increasing the high-school dropout rate.

In his keynote speech, Cohen broached the subject of the viability of the tests. “He was frank, and everyone appreciated it,” said Quinn. “He expressed his concern about the overwhelming nature of many of the tests, which a certain number of students will never pass.” ESL and special education students are especially at risk of failing to graduate. About 200 people attended the conference.
Grant Will Help Hospital Workers and Patients Speak the Same Language

In Queens, where much of the population consists of non-English-speaking immigrants, a language barrier in hospitals and trauma centers can lead to serious misunderstandings between patients and doctors. “It’s imperative, for proper diagnoses, to be able to speak in the language of the patient coming in,” says Barbara Ritchin, executive director of continuing education programs.

To address this need, the Continuing Education Program is launching a pilot program in medical interpreting, funded by a $285,000 grant from the NYS Department of Health. Working in concert with the New York Hospital Medical Center of Queens, located in Flushing, Continuing Education will be training bilingual nurses, technicians, and other staff as interpreters for patients and staff. The languages chosen for this program are Russian, Korean, and Mandarin Chinese, representing the areas of greatest need at the hospital. Thirty-five registered and licensed practical nurses and other staff will undergo training.

The program is modeled after a medical translation and interpreting curriculum developed by Monica Casco (Hispanic Languages) for Continuing Education students. However, new materials must be written as the classes will consist not of language students, but of staff who will receive paid leave time for training.

Why should bilingual staff need this training? According to Casco, who will supervise the training, there is more to interpreting than language proficiency. “Students need to learn medical vocabulary, dialectal and cultural differences, and ethical issues regarding the role of the interpreter. In addition, there are varied techniques of interpretation to be learned.”

Casco is delighted that New York Hospital wanted the program. Although hospitals are required to provide medical services in the language of the patient, many have relied on untrained volunteers as interpreters or outside services over the telephone.

It wasn’t until he reached NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts, where he obtained his MFA, that Cole settled on costume and scenic design. His career, which includes teaching at the Fashion Institute of Technology, has continued to span the arts, though he no longer performs. His credits for costume and set design encompass an enormous range, from classic opera to indie films, from repertory theatre to “industrials” (commercial productions, such as corporate films, events, and Web cast, noted for high production values). Even his rock background comes into play, with such credits as costume design for the play Coffee with Kurt Cobain and art direction for rear projection visuals for the REM concert tour “Monster.” He also recently art-directed the product launch and press conference for Napster 2.0.

For his first production at Queens, Cole designed costumes for Electra, directed by noted actress Saundra McClain. He has settled in quickly at the college. “I find the cultural diversity here thrilling,” he says, and he finds the students eager to learn. Wait until they hear about his rock credentials.

(continued from page 1)
To everyone who follows college volleyball, Anna Bondarenko is a star. A newcomer to the Lady Knights, she was deemed Most Valuable Player, four-time Player of the Week, and Player of the Year by the New York Collegiate Athletic Conference. She also made the NYCAC All-Conference first team and the Queens College Traditional Tournament first team. In a season when the Lady Knights won the NCAA Division II Regionals in two games, Bondarenko’s record as a middle hitter stood out. She and the team now head out to San Bernardino, CA, to play in the Nationals December 4-6.

Who is this 6’1” prodigy of the volleyball court? Like many of her peers here, Anna is a recent immigrant. She left both her family and her studies in her native Kazakhstan, though she could have finished a free university education there. “We have a lot of highly educated people in my country,” she explains, “but they can’t find a job.” Though she is an only child, her parents supported her decision, knowing she had “big plans.”

Not that she was unprepared. Anna is trilingual and accustomed to diverse cultures having grown up in Almaty, the former Kazakh capital, the crossroads of central Asia. And as a volleyball player at Kaynar University, she competed all over Asia, and even contended for Olympic standing. She also played in Turkey, Europe, and Russia.

Though she had been studying psychology and philosophy in Kazakhstan, Anna is now working toward a degree in economics. “The teachers are so great, and the department is really strong,” she says. In a year she will choose whether to aim for graduate study in economics or business administration.

Though volleyball has carried her around the globe, Anna is not sure that she wants to play professionally after college. “I really like studying. I really like volleyball also, but I look at a career as a chance for more security. In the United States there are so many clubs and tournaments where you don’t have an obligation to anyone but yourself, to play and enjoy. I will not have to miss volleyball.”

A video of Anna created by Rich Billay (Office of Communications) can be viewed at the NYCAC Web site http://www.nycac.net in English or in a slightly different Russian version narrated by Thomas Bird (European Languages).

Better Holidays Through Chemistry

One of the more unusual and enjoyable holiday traditions at the college is the Thomas J. Hayden III Holiday Chemistry Show. This year’s show will take place on Thursday, January 14, at 11:30 am in Remsen Hall 101 (which, as the plaque outside the room proclaims, is the Thomas J. Hayden III Memorial Lecture Hall).

“The shows started about 30 years ago,” notes Harry Gafney (Chemistry). “Tom Hayden, a director of laboratories and member of our department for 38 years, would put on a show for faculty, students, and visitors of chemical demonstrations that banged, popped, fizzed, and glowed in the dark. He did this for over a quarter of a century, even after he retired. We now carry on the show in his memory.” The 90-minute extravaganza is popular with local high schools, who bring their students here to see the fun side of chemistry and to give them a taste of college life. For more information, call 4114, or send an email to hgfafney@qc1.qc.edu.
The Arab Avant-Garde: Experiments in North African Literature and Art (Praeger, 2003) by ANDREA FLORES KHALIL (Comparative Literature) examines the experimental art and literature of North Africa, much of it written in French. “What was most appealing for me about writing this book,” the author notes, “is that each chapter was written in a different place, and almost each one in a different country.” Indeed, Flores wrote parts of the book while in France, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, and Brooklyn, and interviewed most of the artists she writes about.

All have been deeply influenced by their immersion in French culture and rely on the French language for artistic expression. As such, they face the dilemma of using a foreign language to express an authentic vision of their own culture. This dilemma, Flores believes, is heightened by the tensions of religion and the politics and varieties of Islam. The solution these artists have found questions the constraints imposed by both Western notions of progress and modernity and fundamentalist Islamic notions of authenticity.

“I am a ghostwriter for most of this book,” says GLENN SLOAN (EECE), author of Give Them Poetry! A Guide for Sharing Poetry with Children K-8 (Teachers College Press). “A considerable amount of material comes from the experiences of dozens of teachers in my graduate class, Poetry for Children, over the last 20-plus years.”

Give Them Poetry! offers teachers a number of ways to bring poetry and children together in the classroom. Based on the premise that poetry and verse, when properly presented, promote literacy, this book includes introductions to children’s poets and their poetry, advice on poetry writing from the poets themselves, examples of children’s poetry writing, and methods of presenting poetry to students of any age. Teachers College Press has also just published the fourth edition of Sloan’s The Child as Critic: Developing Literacy Through Literature, K–8.

The Influence of Maimonides 800 Years Later

On November 16 an audience of over 600 attended the symposium Moses Maimonides: Communal Impact, Historic Legacy, held in observance of the 800th anniversary of the death of the influential philosopher. Sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies, the program was the first of at least 12 international tributes to Maimonides to be held during the next year. “Maimonides is perhaps the most seminal thinker in Jewish life over the last 2,000 years,” said Benny Kraut, Director of QC’s Center for Jewish Studies and the symposium organizer. “His intellectual, literary, religious and philosophical legacy resonates in Judaism until this day, and cuts across Jewish denominations. He produced a voluminous body of written material on Talmudic scholarship, Jewish law, medicine and philosophy, all of which are studied to this day.”

In welcoming the overflow crowd, President Muyskens noted that “Maimonides was one of the most influential figures in history in part because he was open to so many different influences. He was familiar with the cultures of the Greco-Roman, Arab, Jewish, and Western worlds. He influenced many great minds, such as Thomas Aquinas and Leibniz, but his words also found a place in the hearts of ordinary people.”

The audience came from all over the tristate area and as far away as Seattle, Canada, and Germany. Among the distinguished presenters were Jane Gerber (CUNY Graduate Center), Allan Nadler (Drew University), David Berger (Brooklyn College), Arnold Franklin (QC), and Elisheva Carlebach (QC).

In the evening, Gerrit Bos (University of Cologne) delivered the keynote lecture, “Moses Maimonides the Physician: Some Aspects of Maimonides’ Medical Writings, Training, Theory and Practice.” Plans are underway to publish the proceedings of the symposium. The event was underwritten by Simon and Dr. Roslyn Gold, in memory of their parents. The conference generated coverage in the New York Times, Jewish Week, and the Times-Ledger.
Speaking about the upcoming city elections in the October 20 issue of Newsday, MICHAEL KRASNER (Political Science) said that in New York “the action is in the primaries,” as incumbents are usually re-elected easily . . .

The Times-Ledger ran an article on November 20 about the upcoming men’s basketball season. Despite losing two of last year’s starters to graduation and another to a season-ending injury, coach KYRK PEPONAKIS is optimistic: “We need a bucket, we’re going to get one or we need a rebound, we’re going to get one. I just have so much confidence because they [the team] know how to play” . . .

JOHN TYTELL (English) was interviewed on NY-1’s “Closeup” feature on November 10. He is the author of the recently published Reading New York, previously featured in the September FYI . . .

SUSAN WEBER-STOGER (Sociology) noted in an October 25 article in the New York Times that in New York City, the number of people claiming to be German dropped almost 50 percent from 1980 to 2000. An October 20 article in the Times about how immigrants are increasingly using nursing homes for their elderly included a chart Weber-Stoger had prepared on the growth of Asian American groups in this country since 1980 . . .

AMY WINTER was interviewed by both Newsday (November 2) and NY-1 (broadcast November 3 and 9) about the Godwin-Ternbach Museum’s exhibit The Light of Infinite Wisdom.
DECEMBER EVENTS

4 THU
QC WIND ENSEMBLE: Michael Lipsey, director; Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 12 noon.

PRESIDENT’S HOLIDAY PARTY: Student Union, 4th flr., 3-5 pm (for info, call 5559).

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE: Michael Lipsey, director; works by Xenakis, Cage, and others; Music Bldg., Choral Rm., Rm. 264, 7:30 pm (voluntary $10 donation to the ACSM Scholarship Fund requested).

7 SUN
JEWISH MUSIC/THEATRE PERFORMANCE SERIES: Zalmen Mlotek, “100 Years of Yiddish Theater Music”; Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 2:30 pm, $10.

9 TUES
KWANZAA CELEBRATION: Dining Hall, Patio Rm, 3:30-6 pm.

10 WED
BIOLOGY COLLOQUIUM: “Two Mutants in Phytochrome Signal Transduction Pathway,” Cai-Hong Qiu (Biology); Science Bldg. B137, 11 am.

QC ORCHESTRA: Maurice Peress, director; Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 13 (“Babi Yar,” after the poem by Yevgeny Yevtushenko); Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 12 noon.

LECTURE: “Islamic Art in Context(s),” Denise Marie Teece, Doctoral Fellow, Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 12 noon.

11 THUR
QC CHORUS AND CHOIR: Cindy Bell and James John, directors; Holiday songs and carols; Music Bldg. Atrium, 12:15 pm.

GALA CONCERT “There Are No Years”: Celebrating Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Readings in English and Russian by Yevtushenko; Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 13 (“Babi Yar”), QC Orchestra, Maurice Peress, director; world premiere of Bruce Saylor’s “Swimming with Yevgeny”; Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 7:30 pm. Concert: $15/$13 students and alumni; Concert and reception with Yevtushenko: $125/$100 alumni. Reception RSVP by Dec. 8 to 3802. Ticket info: 718-793-8080.

13 SAT
QC CHORAL SOCIETY: James John, director; Bach’s “Magnificat in D,” BWV 243, Saint-Saëns’ “Christmas Oratorio,” Handel’s “Foundling Hospital Anthem”; Colden Auditorium, 8 pm ($15, $13 with discount; call 718-793-8080).

JEWSH STUDIES CINEMA ON SUNDAYS: The Boat is Full (in German with subtitles, 1980); Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 2 pm, $4.

14 SUN
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY LECTURE: Caught in the Crossfire, film discussion by Ammiel Alcalay (Classical Languages); Rosenthal, 5th flr., President’s Conference Rm. #2, 12:30-2 pm.

JEWISH MUSIC/THEATRE PERFORMANCE SERIES: Piano duo Yelena & Vladimir Polezhayev, with Anton Polezhayev, violin; Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 2 pm, $10.

21 SUN
ASIAN ART IN PERFORMANCE: Ethos Percussion Ensemble & Masters of Indian Music; Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 2 pm, $12.

JANUARY EVENTS

11 SUN
KIDSCLASSICS II: "Hear the Organ"; Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 3 pm ($12, 4-event series price $40).

25 SUN
JEWISH MUSIC/THEATRE PERFORMANCE SERIES: Piano duo Yelena & Vladimir Polezhayev, with Anton Polezhayev, violin; Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 2 pm, $10.

Exhibits

THIS IS WOMAN’S HOUR: The Life of Mary Baker Eddy; Rosenthal Library, Barham Rotunda, 3rd flr. (through Dec. 19).


CIPHERS IN TIME: Recent Italian Mixed-Media Art (Angela Biancofiore, Luisella Carretta, Gian Carlo Pagliasso); QC Art Center, Rosenthal, 6th flr. (through Dec. 23).

FYI is published on the first Thursday of the month. Items should be submitted by the 12th of the preceding month to Maria Matteo, Kiely 1310, x 5590. Items longer than one paragraph must be submitted via e-mail to mmatteo@qc.edu. FYI will resume publication in February.