Profiles of 2003 Graduates
GRAZIELA IONESCU AND VASILI BYROS: MEANT FOR EACH OTHER AND BOUND FOR YALE

Student commencement speaker Graziela Ionescu, a native of Romania, graduates with a 4.0 index, membership in Phi Beta Kappa, history department awards, and a generous scholarship to attend Yale University’s PhD program in Ancient History. She came alone to the U.S. after her 1998 high school graduation and immediately enrolled at LaGuardia. After transferring to Queens College, she discovered her passion for Latin, the classics, and ancient Roman history. She is especially interested in researching the relations of the Roman Empire with Dacia, the ancient territory of Romania.

“No other place could have helped me further my interests as Queens College did,” she says. “It had the ideal environment, resources, and professors who became mentors to me.”

Like characters in a New York fairy tale, Graziela met Queens College student Vasili Byros in an Italian restaurant in Brooklyn that Vasili was managing for his Greek father. Two days after commencement they will wed; Graziela’s mother and Vasili’s Greek relatives will be flying in for the wedding and reception in Queens.

The son of Greek immigrants, Vasili is graduating from the Aaron Copland School of Music with an MA in Music. Vasili also will attend Yale, having been accepted into its PhD program in music. Like Graziela, he hopes some day to be a university professor and a performing musician (he plays the piano). “The music school is incredible,” he says, “comparable in quality to much more expensive schools such as Mannes and the Manhattan School of Music. You get a very practical, hands-on musical education here.”

Tamara Blain: Curiosity Leads to Computer Science

“I think anyone involved in the sciences probably questions a great deal and plays a lot.” Certainly that describes the speaker, Tamara Blain, who obtained her BS in biochemistry from SUNY Stony Brook and is graduating from Queens College with a second BS in computer science. From here she leaves for UC Berkeley’s graduate program in electrical engineering and a job at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Unsure what to do with her biochemistry degree and being artistically inclined as well, she “jumped onto the Internet bandwagon” and worked in graphic design. That led to computer classes at Lehman, and eventually, enrollment at Queens College as a computer science major. “The department has a reputation for excellence and the faculty is welcoming,” she says.

Tamara has become immersed in research on embedded systems—microchips in everything from toys to airplanes. Drawing on her biochemistry training, she hopes at Berkeley to learn how to apply embedded systems to neuroprosthetics and robotics, “helping people with disabilities interact more with the environment.” At Lawrence Berkeley, by contrast, she will be using embedded systems to improve performance of the particle accelerator, then teaching those systems to engineers.

Tamara never strays far from scientific questions, having grown up in a scientific family where inquiry and continued on page 4
Q Gala Will Honor Two Alumni and Former President

The 2003 Q Award Gala will honor the two cofounders of Kepco, Inc. – Max Kupferberg ’42 (above) and his late brother Kenneth ’41 – and former QC President Shirley Strum Kenny (above). The event will take place on Thursday, June 5 at 6:30 pm at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Manhattan. For ticket information, call Mario DellaPina at 3920.

New Acquisition

The Godwin-Ternbach Museum has acquired a two-piece sculpture in Italian alabaster, “Fallen Petal,” by Manhasset artist Marcia Mitchell Reese. Reese is an award-winning sculptor who has exhibited her work in many one-woman shows. Most recently she received the Margo Liebes Harris Memorial Award from the National Association of Women Artists.

Commencement

The college will award 2,247 bachelor’s and 1,319 graduate degrees at its seventy-ninth Commencement ceremonies on Thursday, May 29. The event begins with an academic procession at 9 am. President James Muyskens will preside at the ceremonies and Graziela M. Ionescu (see profile, page 1) will present the Commencement Address. An honorary degree will be awarded to Robert Boyers ’63, writer and founder of the influential literary journal Salmagundi. Among those who will be offering greetings to the students are Senator Charles E. Schumer; Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall ’72; and CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. All members of the Queens College graduating class of 1953 have been invited to attend and will be honored in a special ceremony.

Parking Changes for Commencement

On Commencement Day, different parking procedures will be in effect. The main gate entrance and Schiller Road will be closed, except for emergency traffic. The only vehicles allowed through will be those with parking decals for fields 11 and 12 or with special disabled parking passes. For those who park in fields 1-6 or 14, entry to the campus will be available only through gate 2 on Melbourne Ave. People with decals for field 1 are being diverted to parking in fields 2 and 6.

SEEK Freshman Orientation

The SEEK Program will host its freshman orientation on Tuesday, May 20, at 4 pm. All newly admitted freshmen for fall are encouraged to attend. Parents are also welcome and will participate in a special workshop designed for them. The program will take place on the 4th floor of the Student Union.

Bob Weller to Retire

Bob Weller, who has worked at the college in a number of positions since arriving here in 1986, will be retiring this June. He plans to move to his home in San Diego and spend as much time as he can writing and traveling.

Bob initially came to QC as a consultant for the college’s fiftieth anniversary celebration. After this he became director of the Adult Collegiate Education program and, in 1999, was appointed assistant to the provost. Previously he had been an officer in the navy and a professor of English at Annapolis, where he wrote (with Myron Smith) Sea Fiction Guide, a study of book-length, English-language nautical fiction. Bob also directed a number of musicals and operas, including Richard Faith’s The Little Match Girl, Benjamin Britten’s Noyes Fludde, and Gian-Carlo Menotti’s Amahl and the Night Visitors. The Whydah’s Gold, an opera with a libretto by Bob and music by Richard Faith, received its concert performance premiere at the college on April 30.

“Beyond working with the most incredible people,” Bob said recently, “my favorite experiences have been delving into the remarkable history of the college and my teaching gigs in the ACE Program. There is nothing so rewarding as seeing ACE students, especially, walk across the Quad to pick up their diplomas!”
ROBERT BITTMAN (Chemistry) received the 2003 Avanti Award in Lipids from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and presented a plenary lecture at the Society’s Experimental Biology meeting on April 15 in San Diego . . .

HUGO M. KAUFMANN (Economics) gave a lecture on “European Economic and Monetary Integration” at Adelphi University’s Conference on EU – Russian Relations, April 25-26 . . .

DONALD PIRONE (Music) and GERALD ROBBINS (QC Chamber Music Live!) performed in the spring season Bargemusic Concert Series at the Fulton Ferry Landing in Brooklyn on April 10. Pirone performed piano works by Schoenberg and KAROL RATHAUS (QC faculty 1940-54) on April 27, as part of the Concert of 20th Century Jewish Emigre Composers in America at the American Society for Jewish Music at the Center for Jewish History in Manhattan . . .


JAMES SASLOW (Art) has won a Monette/Horwitz Trust Distinguished Achievement Award for his contributions to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered scholarship. He is author of the award-winning Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts . . .


NATHALIS WAMBA (LEAP) says that when ordinary workers are given cameras and encouraged to document what they see and know, they gain “a certain sense of power.” Wamba is studying the project’s effects on such workers.

QC MAKES NEWS

ANDREW BEVERIDGE (Sociology) notes in the May 7 New York Times that the average commuter to New York City earns more than the average city resident ($75,439 to $41,889), and so is likely to be in a better position to afford new taxes, such as Mayor Bloomberg’s proposed commuter tax. AP also picked up the story . . .


STEVEN MARKOWITZ (CBNS) is featured in the April issue of PSC-CUNY Clarion. Markowitz has been working most recently with workers from Ground Zero, nuclear workers, and New York City neighborhoods experiencing high rates of asthma. In March he was honored for his work by the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health . . .

BARBARA SANDLER (BALA) is quoted in the April 20 issue of Newsday on how to improve resumes so that job applicants—especially new graduates—stand out from the crowd . . .

JUDY SUND (Art) was interviewed for an April 18 article in the Toledo Blade. She was asked to discuss the meaning and evolution of spiritual values in Van Gogh’s paintings, as seen in an exhibition at the Toledo Museum of Art . . . An exhibit of workers’ photographs receiving much favorable press is Unseen America, a project of Bread and Roses, the cultural arm of the Health and Human Service Union. In a May 4 article in Newsday, NATHALIS WAMBA (LEAP) says that when ordinary workers are given cameras and encouraged to document what they see and know, they gain “a certain sense of power.” Wamba is studying the project’s effects on such workers.

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PEOPLE

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experimentation were encouraged from an early age. Her parents are natives of Haiti who left to teach math and biology in the Congo; here, her father works as a social worker and her mother is a head nurse at a psychiatric hospital.

Thus far, Tamara’s work has achieved substantial support and recognition. At the college, she was awarded an Alliance for Minority Participation scholarship and a Renate Chasman scholarship from Brookhaven Women in Science, which is designated for women returning to school. At UC Berkeley, too, she has been awarded a fellowship.

Her ultimate goal: To teach at a university and make her inventions a reality. She is excited about the prospect of having her own laboratory, which she playfully calls “the ultimate sandbox for adults.”

Ada Sayetta: Education Knows No Age

Ada Sayetta, 85, was too shy to attend her high school graduation in Brooklyn. But she doesn’t plan to miss the chance to receive her diploma at the college’s ACE graduation on May 22.

Ada, who had a long retail career at a small, independently owned department store, first experienced college life in 1978, taking one art class here each semester. She decided to enter the ACE program, telling herself, “If I don’t go for credit I’m not going to take it seriously.”

When she graduates, she will have completed a degree in interdisciplinary studies. “You may feel a little awkward to do some things,” she says, “but if your brain is OK, why shouldn’t you do them?”

When her two children were grown, Ada began to feel the need for a greater sense of purpose. In 1978, the same year she started at Queens College, she became active in Recovery Inc., a nonprofit group that works with people dealing with mental health issues as well as those who simply want help improving their life skills—such as overcoming shyness. She became a spokesperson for the group and also took on the personal challenge of matriculating for her B.A. degree.

The experience has proved an accomplishment in many ways. Ada enthusiastically describes her classes, including more difficult subjects like philosophy. She took many art courses, developing her aptitude for drawing and sculpture (her one-woman exhibition, To Remember, is on display through June in Klapper Hall, 4th floor display window). And she came to enjoy the social aspects of college, including the friendly get-togethers of teachers and students after class.

Ada expects to continue taking art classes and, as a lifelong athlete, looking forward to a summer of active swimming. Surrounded by her own art, she says with conviction, “Because you’re aging doesn’t mean to say you’re out of the picture!”

Daline Derival: Preparing for a Public Health Career

Since middle school, Daline Derival has aspired to be in medicine. For years she assumed that meant becoming an M.D. “I thought, in order to help people in the world, I had to be a doctor,” she remembers. To her own surprise, she has found a different path, and this September she will be entering a master’s program in public health at Emory University.

This switch was not made lightly. As she says, “I do a lot of research into things I’m interested in.” She has volunteered in the emergency department at Long Island Jewish Medical Center, and worked as a registrar at Jamaica Hospital. At the college she has been a peer advisor and on the steering committee of the Science Organization for Minority Students. A psychology major, Daline had completed all the premed requirements but organic chemistry when she realized she no longer enjoyed “the hard sciences.”

At the suggestion of Maureen Pierce-Anyán, director of minority student affairs and preprofessional adviser, she started looking into public health, a field of which she was only somewhat aware. “And I thought, oh, this is interesting—I like this! Then I looked into epidemiology and I really liked it. I’m very interested in infectious diseases and how they spread. I like to ask why.”

The prospect of traveling and meeting people in different communities also excites her. Daline, a native of Haiti who came to this country at age 6 and who returns about once each year, isn’t interested in sedentary work.

Daline speaks with enthusiasm about her coursework in epidemiology, including a class this semester on emerging diseases. “I’ve always been excited about diseases. It’s a weird thing,” she laughs. “They’re always going to be around. People think that as time goes on, we develop antibiotics, but really, bacteria and viruses are pretty crafty.”

This year she had a chance to learn more about the public health field when she interned at the Harlem Health Promotions Center of the Columbia University School of Public Health. With her usual thoroughness, she also researched the profession. She has set her sights on working at the Centers for Disease Control, directly across the street from Emory, and hopes to hold a part-time job there while doing her master’s coursework.

With her training in psychology, the sciences, and quantitative analysis, Daline seems to have found in public health the niche she sought. “I found out I can help people—which is very clichéd, but it’s ultimately what I want to do.”

If you know a special student you would like FYI to profile, please send information to mterrone@qc.edu.
Celebrating National Library Week
As part of National Library Week, the Friends of the Library organized a program on April 6, celebrating the centennial of Bing Crosby. Gary Giddins, author of Crosby’s biography *Pocketful of Dreams* spoke to a standing-room-only crowd in the Choral Room of the Copland School. His lecture was followed by the library’s annual reception honoring library donors. This year’s reception featured the music library with its rich collections located in the Copland School. President Muyskens and Chief Librarian Sharon Bonk greeted donors and thanked them for their contributions, which enabled the library to purchase books and electronic resources.

Armenia Exhibit at Genocide Commemoration
On April 27 Margaret Tellalian-Kyrkostas (Anthropology Museum of the People of New York) presented a traveling exhibit at the Armenian Genocide Commemoration held in Times Square. She had been invited to display the exhibit by the Genocide Commemoration Committee and the Knights of Vartan. The original exhibit, “Armenia: Memories From My Home,” was produced by museum students in 1994. Present for the event were Senator Charles Schumer, Representatives Anthony Weiner and Carolyn Maloney, New York City Councilwoman Melinda Katz, and New York State Comptroller Alan Hevesi ’61.

Window Air Conditioners
From May 29 until September 24, window air conditioners may be used in college offices. However, certain citywide rules must be observed. Air conditioners’ filters should be maintained and the temperature should be set at or above 78 degrees. Air conditioners should not be used when room temperatures are below 78 degrees. In addition, air conditioners should be run only when offices are occupied and only with doors and windows kept closed. On very hot days, the units’ fresh air louvers should be closed.

Videocassette Collection
At the end of the semester OIT Media Services will move its video collection to the library’s media center. OIT will continue to provide videocassette equipment to classrooms and will maintain the 16-mm print collection. However, beginning June 2, anyone who wants to view or reserve videocassettes must request them through the library. For more information contact Lisa Flanzraich at 3673 or lflanzra@qc1.qc.edu.

A ceremony honoring the memory of José Francisco Peña Gomez, the former governor of Santo Domingo and a leading statesman in the Dominican Republic, was held on May 8 in the Library. The ceremony was organized by NYS Assemblyman José Peralta, a QC graduate (above with arm around his son). Dominican Republic Consul Francisco Antonio Peña Guava (center) spoke at the ceremony and presented Chief Librarian Sharon Bonk with a collection of books about his country. Members of the Alliance of Latin American Students also attended the event.
MAY EVENTS

21 WED
WRITERS READ SERIES, James Sturz reads from his novel Sasso; Calandra Institute, 25 West 43rd Street (between 5th & 6th Avenues), 18th Floor, Manhattan, 6:30 pm. Call (212) 642-2042 for further information.

SEMINAR: MARCUS BORG’S “READING THE BIBLE AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME,” Alan Bentz-Letts, moderator; Student Union 203, 7:30 pm (for info/to register, call 261-1550).

CONCERT: “CELEBRATING THE MUSGRAVE AT 75,” Merkin Concert Hall, 129 West 67th Street, Manhattan, 8 pm ($25/$15 with discount; for info call the box office at 212-501-3330).

26 MON
MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE: College closed.

28 WED
JEWISH LECTURE SERIES: “THE UNITED NATIONS & ISRAEL,” Anne Bayefsky, Hebrew University School of Law; Music Bldg., LeFrak Concert Hall, 7:30 pm.

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JUNE EVENTS

30 FRI
LECTURE: “CHINESE ACADEMIES: LEARNING AND THE PURSUIT OF MORAL PERFECTION,” Thomas Lee. Asian American/Asian Research Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, Manhattan, 6 pm. For information, visit www.aaari.info

JUNE EVENTS

1 SUN
JEWISH STUDIES CONCERT: “INTERNATIONAL CANTORS CONCERT WITH INTERNATIONAL STARS,” Student Union 203, 7 pm (for info, call 5730).

4 WED
SEMINAR: MARCUS BORG’S “READING THE BIBLE AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME,” Alan Bentz-Letts, moderator; Student Union 203, 7:30 pm (for info/to register, call 261-1550).

6 FRI
LECTURE: “INTRODUCTION TO NAGARJUNA’S MIDDLE VIEW OF BUDDHISM,” Dr. Thomas Tam. Asian American/Asian Research Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, Manhattan, 6 pm. For information, visit www.aaari.info

13 FRI
LECTURE/FILM/POETRY: “BEHIND THE LINES,” Yunah Hong & Meena Alexander. Asian American/Asian Research Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, Manhattan, 6 pm. For information, visit www.aaari.info

Exhibits


LEAH JACOBSON & KATHERINE PARKER: STATES OF UNION (SCULPTURE & PAINTINGS). Through July 16, QC Art Center, Rosenthal, 6th flr. Mon-Thu, 9 am-8 pm, Fri, 9 am-5 pm when classes are scheduled.

ADA SAYETTA: “TO REMEMBER.” (See profile, p. 4) Works on paper. Klapper Hall Student Gallery (Klapper 470). Open Mon-Fri, 12 noon-6 pm

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNA NOWOSAD. Through August. Rosenthal Library Rotunda during regular library hours.

To Our Readers: Please submit items for FYI at least two weeks in advance to Public Relations, Kiely 1310, 5590. Items longer than one short paragraph must be submitted on disk or via e-mail to mmatteo@qc.edu.

FYI will resume publication in September.