

Empire State College

ALUMNI AND STUDENT NEWS

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Welcome to Our Neighborhood

CROSSING THE BOULEVARD

UNPLUGGED IN THE ADIRONDACKS

URBAN MISSIONARY



C o n t e n t s

“Welcome to Our Neighborhood”

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“Unlikely Bedfellows” from
Crossing the BLVD: strangers, neighbors, aliens in a new America
W.W. Norton by Warren Lehrer and Judith Sloan

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Immersed in Community

By Robert N. Seidel

Rochester has been Betty's and my home since August 1974. Then I became a mentor at Empire State College's Genesee Valley Center, located at the time near downtown in the former Sacred Heart Academy building on Prince Street. Thirty years later, we've celebrated our 47th wedding anniversary; begun to anticipate the birth of a seventh grandchild; and attended the annual family reunion, this time on Sodus Bay and the shore of Lake Ontario. What an event-filled three decades!

Family, neighborhood and community are important in this, partly because mentoring made it so. Until retirement in 1999, I relished asking students about themselves and their life circumstances. What they said taught me much about people of the Rochester metropolitan area, extended families and relationships, and transformations both demographic and socio-economic.

Some vocational activity grew from these encounters. Empire State College's Arthur Imperatore Fellowship for faculty members enabled me twice to examine Rochester's diverse, multi-faceted community networks and issues in some depth. The first time as an Imperatore Fellow, student Shirley Thompson and I interviewed people involved in various sorts of volunteer activity. (Shirley now presides over the Board of Education, of the Rochester City School District.) We published a serviceable report on voluntarism and the common good, and we delivered gratifyingly well-received presentations in Buffalo and Rochester.

In 1998, it was my privilege, again because of the Imperatore program, to devote a year to a photodocumentary project, "Restoring Keystones to Rochester's Community." The focus was on efforts of neighbors, the city, and volunteers to cope with quality of life deterioration in many neighborhoods. Suburban flight of residents and entrepreneurs, deterioration of an old housing stock, poverty, class and racial segregation, violence and crime, unemployment, and disappointing educational outcomes definitely stood out as problems.

In relation to these, empowering neighbors, restructuring Rochester's municipal services to focus locally on immediate concerns, and collaborative mobilization of resources to work with single parents, children, landlords, small businesses, and others became critical. It was often as simple as neighbors getting to know and look after neighbors.

"Restoring Keystones" was an attempt to depict truthfully the struggle against significant odds. It was also the first time that I had done such a large field study and so much photography. In the end, with the generous and talented assistance of a Rochester Institute of Technology professor and her graduate class of designers, assistants who labored with me to select and catalog thousands of prints, and a small army of neighbors – both old and new friends – we mounted the exhibit.

It displayed large, full-color posters, with pictures and text, telling stories of what was happening in nearly every sector and many neighborhoods of Rochester. Over the next 12 months, we brought the show to two dozen sites in the area, with short talks and lively Q&A sessions. The Imperatore Fellowship made it possible for us to publish the attractive 28-page exhibit brochure.

Equally outstanding, citizens of Rochester contributed \$8,000 to purchase portable display units as the property of the people of Rochester. We entrusted them to the care of the local Arts and Cultural Council



Bob Seidel

“... civic duty, a burden and onerous at times, is rewarding and soul-satisfying. It reinforces ages-old verities: love your neighbor, tend to the needy, respect all persons.”



Rochester Public Market, an inner-city site where people of all sorts, urban and suburban, meet in convivial circumstances.

Immersed in Community

(continued from page 1)

and the Dr. Freddie Thomas Learning Center (now High School). I'm proud to say that people from around town and school children still make good use of these simple but sturdy items, which should last for years.

“Keystones” continues to be a theme in my volunteer community activity.

A dear friend and former student will soon rescue “Restoring Keystones” from mothballs. He's opening a coffee shop in an historic building once vacant and slated for certain demolition. The local business association, which I helped create, saved this interesting brick edifice. In the late 1800s it housed a drug store on a busy intersection. Now, it will again be open to neighbors.

Doing What It Takes

The Peace Action Collaborative, of which I am secretary, partners with the Center for Dispute Settlement to develop a program to recruit and train residents and volunteers for service in neighborhoods at risk of violence. Last year, a friend and I were staff of PEACE's Making Neighbors program. Neighbors in the Lyell Avenue area, a former industrial sector strewn with empty factory buildings, toxic waste and high poverty rates, further their interests by organizing, vigorous advocacy, and cooperation with authorities. I enjoy getting together with them as a friend and consultant. Most arguments are even convivial.

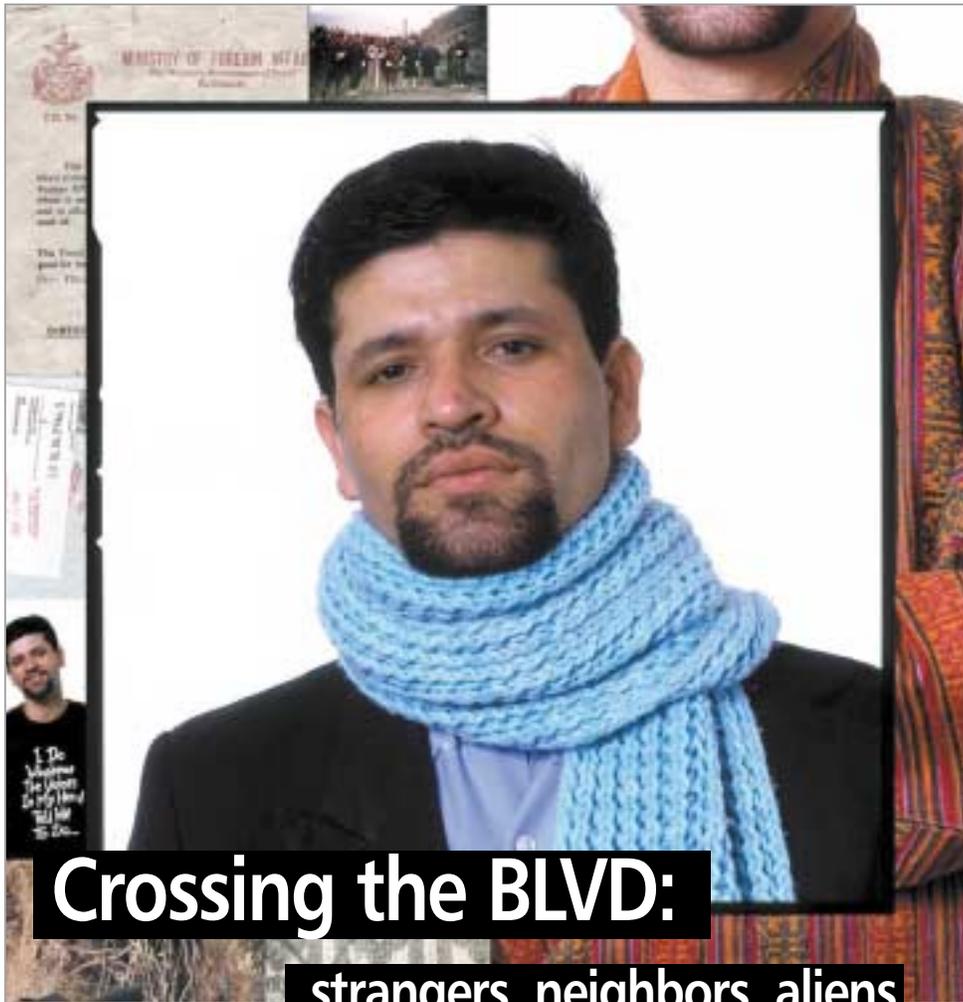
A group of ministers who believe in the healing mission of serving parolees and people in need through theater, job training, and community-building, invite me to meetings and to draft documents. A long-time neighborhood activist who called the other day sought advice on how to save another historic building, stimulate business nearby, and promote historical and other educational activity of great importance to people of the inner city and the history of the Rochester community as a whole.

Betty and I belong to a multi-ethnic, faith-based organization, an extension of our family, that occupies one of Rochester's oldest downtown buildings. We also strive to live out “Keystones” principles. Following a successful nationally instituted model, the Rochester Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (RAIHN) houses and feeds homeless families until they find proper jobs and residences, assisted by a professional social worker who is the organization's one employee. When the homeless, who are a factor in most American cities, are provided with temporary or emergency shelter, they are ordinarily separated by gender and lose contact with neighborhood institutions. The organization mitigates this difficulty by providing a single address for mailing, school attendance, job hunting, and social worker contact while family members move weekly to new RAIHN housing locations. According to what we have learned, RAIHN encompasses a greater diversity of religious organizations than any other of the 100 affiliated networks scattered throughout the country.

Nearly every day reminds me of the lesson my parents taught so fiercely and my Empire State College experience manifestly reinforced – that civic duty, a burden and onerous at times, is rewarding and soul-satisfying. It reinforces ages-old verities: love your neighbor, tend to the needy, respect all persons. It flies in the face of overblown and wasteful consumerism, a revisionist ethic that largely denies public responsibility except by choice, and extols paradigms of glamour, wealth and comfort that cannot suit the circumstances of most human beings.

Community, a much overused and too often ambiguous concept, is of vital importance to all. In the larger sense, we cannot pick and choose our neighbors, and we simply must learn how to live reasonably and wisely with them. □

Robert N. Seidel, Ph.D., retired as Distinguished SUNY Teaching Professor, history and politics, from the college's Genesee Valley Center in 1999.



**Crossing the BLVD:
strangers, neighbors, aliens
in a new America**

By Hope Ferguson

Judith Sloan '99, '04, was working as an artist-in-residence at two Queens high schools, when she began to send her students out into their communities to interview family and neighbors as a school oral history project.

The narratives that the students were bringing back intrigued Sloan, who has just completed her Master of Arts in Liberal Studies degree in documentary art/oral history at Empire State College. After enlisting her husband, Warren Lehrer, the couple decided to do their own investigation into these somewhat mysterious lives that surrounded them.

“Most of us just live our own lives and don’t really listen to others’ stories.”

Tulasi Ghimery escaped military brutality in Nepal.

The project spanned three years – pre- and post-September 11. In their old Subaru, the couple crisscrossed Queens, seeking stories, searching out “urban legends,” prompting and prodding, and most importantly, listening.

They visited a Nigerian Pentecostal Church, where the congregants would emerge Sunday morning wearing “incredible cloths.” Through their nonprofit organization EarSay, they partnered with the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (now Human Rights First), to track down political refugees. They pursued others through storytelling workshops at the Queens Borough Public Library, “and other stories we had heard about – some were developed for our documentaries for National Public Radio,” said Sloan.

For example, “we heard that a bull had gotten loose from a Mexican rodeo,” so they tracked that down. They knew they wanted to include someone from Afghanistan to see how their life had changed post-September 11. They questioned teachers from other countries, and added to this just “walking, snooping and also getting referrals from people,” said Sloan.

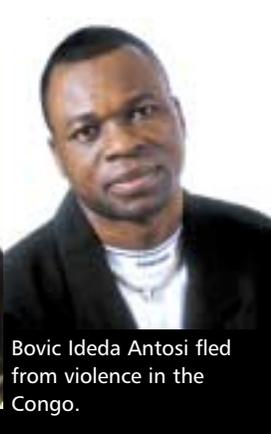
There was no dearth of people who wanted to participate, said Warren Lehrer. By the time the book *Crossing the BLVD: strangers, neighbors, aliens in a new America* (W.W. Norton, Co.) went to press, “we were overwhelmed with stories.” Sloan added that many wanted to take part because they were “relieved to be able to dispel myths that they felt were out there.” Some had never really had someone sit down and just listen to them. “I think when you shine a light on people’s stories and they feel respected they are more willing to open up.” Lehrer added that, “folks tended to trust us as seasoned oral historians.”

The New York Times called the book “an offbeat ethnic tour of one of the most ethnically diverse counties. It does not point out trendy kebab places or obscure taco stands, but rather tells riveting stories about a new wave of immigrants to America.”

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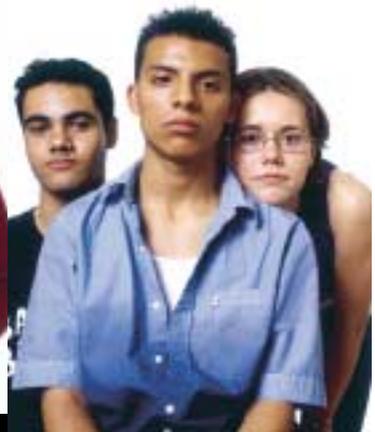
Malika Kalontarova left war-torn Tajikistan in 1993 with two teenage sons.



Bovic Ideda Antosi fled from violence in the Congo.



Amy Li had to leave her family and daughter in China.



(l-r) Mohamed Attia escaped war in Kuwait; Jonathan Barba came from Ecuador when he was 11; Joanna Pittner immigrated from Poland when she was 13.

(continued from page 3)

The Daily News describes their subjects as “political and religious exiles, war-haunted refugees, persecuted lovers, aspiring entrepreneurs – now settled in a large patch of New York Lehrer could barely recognize as the pale-skinned land of his adolescence.”

Or, as Lehrer noted to *The Times*, it is no longer the “Archer Bunker” Queens of his youth. With 138 languages spoken, “no matter who you are, you’re a minority.”

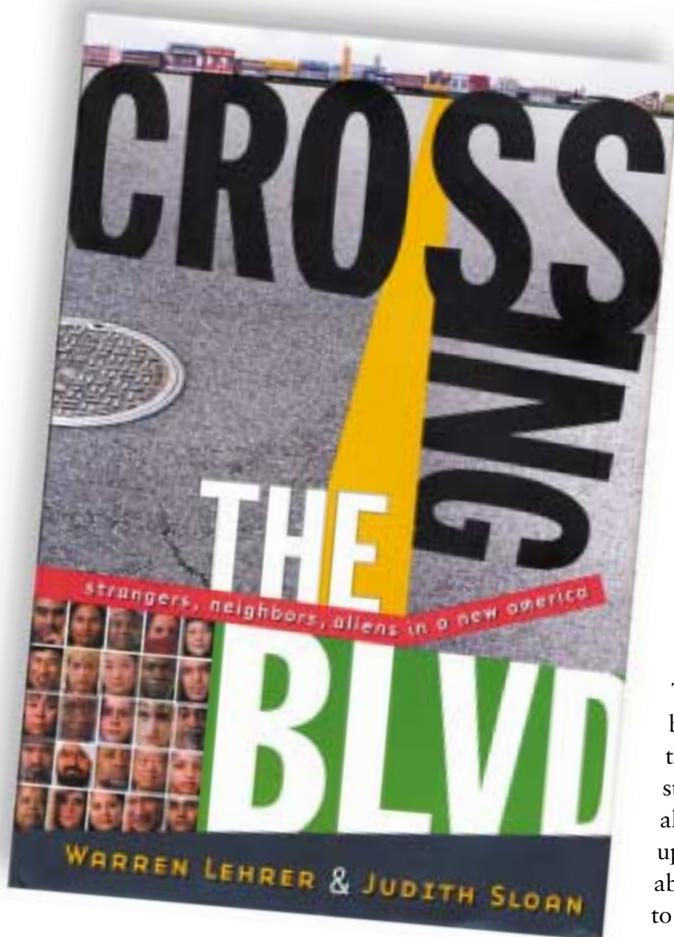
Lehrer said that they were struck that “even people who didn’t have formal education had an incredible amount of sophistication and awareness of world events. Many are people who speak four, five or six languages.”

There were some unexpected results from the project. One of their subjects, a woman from Romania who was a political refugee, had discovered that she had a secret half-brother. The couple interviewed not only the woman, but each person separately, since the father and half-brother had also both fled Romania. The family had never before talked about the others’ side of the story, and the project allowed them to open up for the first time about how they came to terms with their

father’s affair. As a result, they agreed that the project brought them closer together.

A man from the Democratic Republic of Congo, “a place of great beauty, and, I am afraid, great brutality,” had stowed away in a wooden crate on “a cargo flight to somewhere, I had no idea where.” Disembarking, his “angel,” a Russian pilot, gave him a new name and a new passport, and told him to “go to the destination of the flight, and you will be a free man.” The destination was JFK Airport.

One woman who got a happy result from her participation in the project was Amy Li, a practitioner of Falun Gong. Falun Gong, meditation and exercises that combines elements of Buddhism, Taoism, Chi Gong and other traditional Chinese beliefs and practices, was outlawed in China in 1999, according to Sloan’s and Lehrer’s book. With 70 million followers, it has more adherents than the Chinese Communist Party. Li, a successful fashion designer and manager of a women’s clothing company in Guangzhou city, took up the practice to relieve the stress of her job. One day she was arrested in a local park as she was doing her exercises, and subsequently taken into custody and tortured. Her husband was forced to divorce her because she would not renounce her spiritual practice. She eventually fled China in the middle of the night, without even



telling her mother or young daughter, as they would be forced to report her if they knew. Her narrative in the book has a postscript by the authors that notes that, Li, who had acquired a job as a menswear designer, “remained determined to reunite with her daughter sometime in the near future.”

After the book was published, Li mailed photocopies of her story to the United States Consulate in China and the Department of Homeland Security, and was reunited with her young daughter, then 8.

Sloan noted, “For a lot of people we interviewed, they were incredibly motivated to make a new life. It doesn’t always work well – but when it does it’s

unconventional page layouts that display some of the artifacts that are significant to their subjects’ lives, the project includes a CD of their subjects’ voices, and a show of photographs that debuted at the Queens Museum of Art in December 2003, garnering media attention in *The New York Times*, the *Daily News*, *Newsday* and other publications.

In fact, the CD was a direct result of Sloan’s master’s work at Empire State College, where she “was really focused



Traveling exhibit of Crossing the BLVD

between music and speech, journalism and expressionism, tradition and the avant-garde, according to the couple. The end result is “a highly composed, edited, cross between journalism and expressionism,” said Sloan. Several of the pieces from the audio CD have aired on NPR.

In the spring, summer and fall of 2004, the exhibit was showing at the Bronfman Center Gallery at New York University. It will be on view at the Main Library of the Borough of Queens exhibition space through January 23, 2005, and is slated to travel around the state and the country in the coming years.

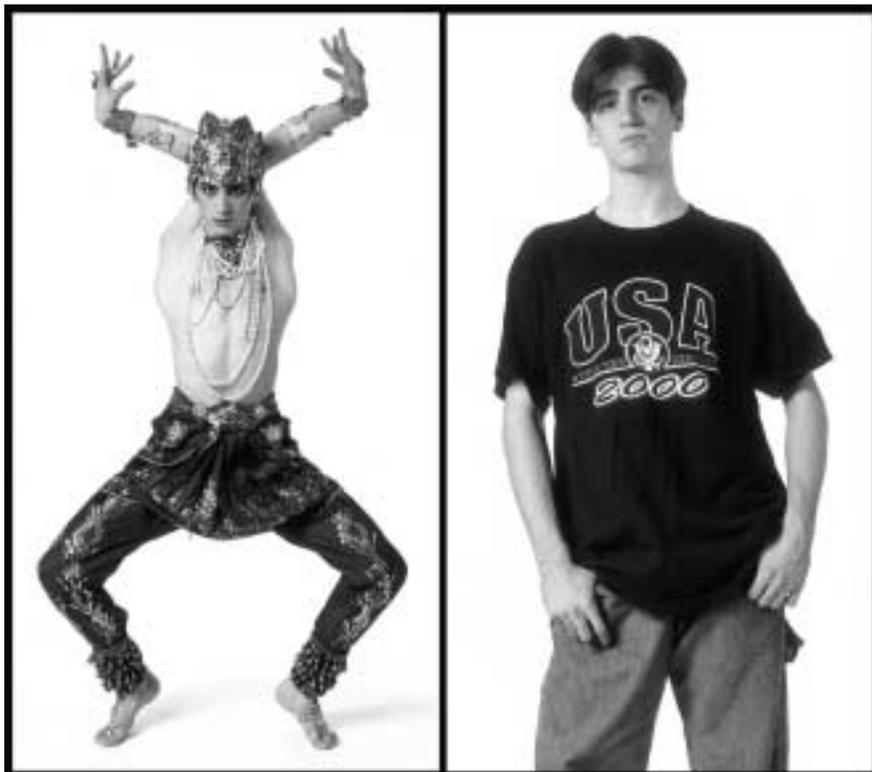
Sloan said she has heard that the book is being used by doctors to orient their interns; by colleges who use it in their American studies, oral history and immigration and foreign policy studies; and by libraries.

Despite the eye-catching and unusual presentation, the power of the stories is what really seems to stand out in the minds of the readers, viewers and listeners, said Sloan.

“The demographics have changed in the United States and [the project] hit a nerve with what’s going on post-September 11. There is more interest in immigrants ... and people always respond to good stories.

“As a granddaughter of immigrants, I actually felt connected to the stories,” said Sloan. “People from so many ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds are definitely co-existing, maybe not easily, but definitely co-existing, and that gives me a lot of hope.” □

To visit the interactive web site: www.crossingtheblvd.org



Arthur Gulkarov, who fled Tajikistan as a teen, had learned traditional dances. Today, at 21, he studies jazz, hip-hop and acting.

probably a combination of ingenuity and luck.”

Because of the couple’s backgrounds as performance and visual artists, they knew from the beginning that this would be a multimedia project. Besides the colorful book employing varied typography, color photographs and

on the audio art, and the editing and crafting of the pieces on the CD.”

“If the book is the movie, then the CD is the soundtrack,” Lehrer says. With original new music compositions by Scott Johnson (of John-Somebody fame) and text-based audio compositions by Sloan and Lehrer, the CD blurs the boundaries

Residency Explores Lives of Immigrants

By Laura Arpey

They are described as the invisible population. Some lost their undocumented lives in the September 11 tragedy, leaving behind families unable to receive compensation. Others work jobs no one else in America will take at incredibly low wages. This invisible population is better known as “the new Americans” or immigrants. The empowerment of immigrants is “an issue that absolutely deserves more attention,” explains Beverly Smirni. “They are an invisible population that needs to become more visible.”

Smirni and Lear Matthews, faculty mentors at Empire State College’s Metropolitan Center, held a two-day residency on the empowerment of New York City immigrants in March of 2004. Over 60 participants attended the event; many were students and alumni of the college. Smirni, stressing that New York City is “a place where everyone comes from somewhere else,” wanted to expose the participants to the challenges that this invisible population endures on a daily basis.

Hardships Endured

Immigrants often face a number of problems while adjusting to their new environment: language barriers, isolation, separation from family members, and acquiring credentials that will allow them to work legally. Fortunately there are agencies, such as community-based immigrant groups and nonprofit organizations, which have been established to respond to those problems. The group also talked about how immigrants can organize themselves to protect their own rights, i.e., immigrants helping immigrants.

During an interview, Matthews mentioned the great effect September 11 had on the immigrant population. Not only have Americans’ perceptions of immigrants changed, so have the laws. Immigrants often suffer increased anxiety about being deported, since more stringent laws are now in place as a result of the increase in homeland security since September 11.



Warren Lehrer and Judith Sloan

One of the most fascinating presentations of the residency was by husband and wife team Judith Sloan and Warren Lehrer on their book *Crossing the BLVD* [see main article, page 3]. The dramatic audio-visual presentation was based on interviews conducted over several years with immigrants living on Queens Boulevard. This highly effective presentation dramatized the lives of immigrants and their everyday tribulations, said Smirni.

All of the participants in the residency greatly benefited from what they learned, said Matthews. This was clearly reflected in the student evaluations. Many students indicated they had no previous understanding of immigrant issues and now, after participating in the residency, have a better knowledge and

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Guest Essay

Giving Hope to Families Stricken by Tragedy

by Pat Gioia '75

On August 16, 1985, my 22-year old daughter, Mary Regina, was murdered in Berkeley, California. She was shot at close range in the neck with a 44-Magnum rifle. The man who murdered Mary and a young male companion was found guilty and sentenced to death on September 25, 1986. He remains on California’s Death Row, appeals pending. Mary’s violent death, a parent’s worst nightmare, changed the course of my life.

Mary was born on December 20, 1962, and grew up in the Town of Niskayuna, Schenectady County. She was my seventh child, having two older sisters and five brothers. Mary was a happy child, although at times slightly shy and reserved. She did not have a highly regulated or structured activity schedule as many children now have. Most of her free time was spent with friends, piano lessons, part-time jobs, including delivering the afternoon newspaper and as a waitress in a neighborhood restaurant. Always loving to bake and cook, after graduating high school, Mary pursued a degree in culinary arts at Schenectady County Community College. She graduated in May 1983. We now have a scholarship in her name there, awarded yearly to a returning woman student in culinary arts. In July 1985, Mary traveled to California to pursue her dream, to see the country and work in a restaurant or resort out west. But the violent, evil act by another prevented all of that.

Until Mary’s murder, my life consisted of all the activities that go along with

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Guest Essay

Inner-city Missionary

By Andrew Stankevich '01



Andrew Stankevich, stirring vegetable curry, is committed to feeding the hungry people on the streets of Rochester.

Prior to enrolling in Empire State College's flexible program, I worked full time waiting tables and ran a food cupboard/soup kitchen outreach program on Sundays. With friends of mine, we got the local food bank to donate a weekly truckload of food, which we sorted and cooked meals with. Loosely affiliated with other groups with the same mission and name, we called ourselves "Rochester Food Not Bombs," and provided cooked meals and groceries to approximately 90 people a week in a downtown park. We funded our program by putting on rock concerts in the cafeteria of the soup kitchen where we cooked, raised money and had a good time.

I really enjoyed providing groceries and free meals to the people; I found that it gave my life direction and purpose, while giving me a real boost every week. I grew up in Fairfax, Virginia, the son of Eastern European refugees from Belarus. My grandfather was active in the resistance movement to both Russia's czars and to the Soviet communism that replaced them, so I have always had an interest in politics and social activism, and the belief that you can be most effective at a grassroots level. Instead of talking about social problems like hunger, I prefer to follow in the footsteps of people like Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Workers movement, and take practical steps in my own community.

I had started my education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, before taking a leave of absence to find a more relevant and fulfilling form of education, and that's how I came to enroll in Empire State College.

With one semester left to go at Empire State College, I took on a kitchen manager position at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, one of the largest soup kitchens in the City of Rochester and the oldest Catholic Worker house in the country. Catholic Workers believe in living in community with those whom they serve, so I lived on the third floor of St. Joseph's House in the staff quarters, with a transitional shelter on the second floor and a soup kitchen on the first floor. While living at St. Joe's, I finished my last semester of Empire State College and graduated with a B.A. in human services.

At Empire State College, I enjoyed taking courses that were relevant to my life. I interviewed professionals in fields I was interested in, wrote sample grants, as well as studied activist figures and nonprofit administration, in ways that I couldn't at more traditional colleges. More than anything else, I learned

how to be a self-directed learner; to study and accomplish my own personal goals.

After graduating, I began working on launching the food distribution program to a higher level. Through Food Not Bombs' small-scale, weekend warrior food cupboard, we'd get offers of mass quantities of perishable groceries that we'd have to turn down, while crowds of people would clamor for groceries every week. I got laid off of my first post-graduation job at an emergency teen shelter, so I decided to work towards self-employment and expansion of Food Not Bombs while collecting unemployment insurance. As a lifetime learner, I began taking classes on nonprofit development and grant writing through Nonprofit Works, a Rochester-based nonprofit consultant firm. More than anything else, I realized that I needed to find funding for my project. In 2003, I raised over \$55,000 in grant funding as a self-taught grant writer. Among other grants, the UPS Foundation funded Rochester Food Not Bombs for \$25,000 in December of 2003. In 2004, we decided to change the name to "Friends Helping Friends" to affirm our nonpartisan commitment to "fostering multicultural collaborations focusing on providing supplies to those in need."

Having mastered self-directed learning, I've personally learned to operate jackhammers, weld concrete saws, drive tractor-trailers, and install commercial refrigeration in addition to the nonprofit administration and management skills I've picked up along the way. Our effective, bureaucracy-free system of organizing low-income people to distribute groceries to others and ourselves has generated a lot of attention in the Greater Rochester area. In 2003, Friends Helping Friends was featured on the front page of Rochester's *City Newspaper*, as well as the *Catholic Courier*. Friends Helping Friends has been featured on radio talk shows for four different local stations, as well as on a local television talk-show program. By the time this story goes to print, Friends Helping Friends will have installed a mural on the front of the building, partially funded by the City of Rochester. Feel free to get in touch for more information, to make a financial contribution, volunteer or get on our mailing list. Wish us luck in the future! □

Contact: Friends Helping Friends & Andrew Stankevich
P.O. Box 39618 • Rochester, NY 14604 • 585 254-5490
www.friendshelpingfriends.cjb.net



Unplugged in the Adirondacks

By Hope Ferguson

Susan Dean '74, maneuvers her huge, old but serviceable GMC pickup up the pock-marked and rutted dirt road that leads to her dream home atop a mountain in the Adirondacks. She has asked her visitor to leave her four-wheel-drive vehicle on the first landing of the steep, twisting route leading up to the house. Now one can see why. At times it seems that Dean must wrestle with the steering wheel of the lumbering vehicle to keep it from careening off the road.

Twenty years ago, Dean, and her “mountain man at heart” husband, abandoned the life of a house in town with a yard and neighbors for a latter-day homesteading adventure in the Adirondack Mountains in New York.

Humans may be scarce in these parts, but the Deans, whose hand-hewn home sits on 63 uncleared acres, may be visited by moose, deer, bear, porcupines and other wildlife. She and her husband Jim, who earns a basic living by seasonal construction work, raised three children (the youngest Kate, 18, just left for college) and kept a variety of dogs, cats and chickens, as well as a vegetable garden, at their 24 ft. by 24 ft. country home.

Choices Made

They choose to live without electricity and conventional indoor plumbing. Jim Dean has arranged a system involving a feeding trough and hoses to bring cold water into the family habitat, that can be heated in pots on the gas-powered stove to warm for showers or cooking. Toilets

are flushed with recycled shower water. Laundry, in a concession to modernity, is taken to town; although at first Dean used a time-intensive, vintage pink wringer washer.

Besides the labor of keeping her household going, Sue Dean has devoted her days to quilting, drawing, writing, and lately drumming and collecting oral histories of local residents for the Johnsbury Historical Society.

She has chronicled her experience living “off the power grid,” in a series of self-published books (*Redrock Arts*, available through North Country Books), lyrically written ruminations on life, love, family, friendship, mid-life transitions, tragedies, roughing it, and dreams, which she has christened, “A Violet Tapestry.” *Book One: Unplugged in the Adirondacks*, was published in

1996, followed by *Book Two: Plugged Into the Mountain Sun* in 2000, and *Book Three: Life is Love*, published in 2003.

Despite the intimacy of her books, Sue Dean in person is less talkative and expansive. A small woman, with strands of gray appearing in her long dark hair, she is dressed casually in a brown tee shirt, khaki shorts and sneakers. Like a lot of writers, she has a deep and multi-layered interior life; but she prefers to share it through her written, rather than spoken words.

Dean, who grew up in Amsterdam, New York, the granddaughter of Ukrainian immigrants, met her husband when both were in their late teens. A bond of friendship matured into love, and the two were married in 1974.

Building a Dream

It was Jim Dean who always dreamed of homesteading in the mountains. As members of the Woodstock generation, the idea of living close to the land and away from the stresses of modern life was appealing. Sue Dean said her husband modeled his dreams on an old trilogy by another couple that moved into the Maine woods.

It took nearly five years to create their dream house. Jim Dean did most of the labor himself, hauling materials up the mountain with any one of several old vehicles the couple collected, including a classic tractor that is still settled on the side of the road leading to their home.

The home is wrapped in Adirondack siding, where the swirls and eyes of the bark of the trees can be clearly seen in the rough-hewn waves. Inside, there's a hundred-year-old cast iron stove that keeps the whole home warm (central heating, Dean laughs) in the long, snowy Adirondack winters.

There's a 120-year-old upright piano and a treadle sewing machine that her husband presented to Dean on the occasion of their 20th anniversary.

In her memoirs, Dean consciously chooses to focus on the abundance of her life, not any lacks: the bright, clean mountain air and water; the creative, healthy kids she and Jim raised; and treasured friends like Katie, an iconic Adirondack woman who not only sold them their land, but taught Sue Dean to quilt, grandmothers her children, and, otherwise welcomed them to their new home. The generous spirit of Katie, who was killed in an auto accident six years after the couple moved to the Adirondacks, hovers over the narrative of the three books.



With the forest at her back, Sue Dean '74 weaves the story of how she and her husband created a life and raised a family in the Adirondacks.

Dean consciously chooses to focus on the abundance of her life, not any lacks.

Although her books have been warmly received locally and even around the globe (she devotes space in her third volume to “violet responses”), Dean guards her privacy jealously (she has renamed one of the mountains and other things in her books to keep her anonymity). And she claims she wouldn't change a thing – except perhaps being a little more accessible.

For social interaction, Dean is active with the historical society, and takes part in the International Women's Writing Guild conference each August at Skidmore College.

One of Empire State College's first graduates, she came to the college's Albany location because after three-and-a-half years of “sitting in classes” she decided she couldn't take it anymore. She brought her 100 credits to Empire State College, where she wrapped up a degree equally weighted between art, English and philosophy, all three of which she has

drawn upon to create her way of life. “I just supported the whole idea [of Empire State College],” she says, adding, “obviously, we've kept up the free-thinking attitude.”

Dean admits that she is on a mission when she shares the intimacies of her life – but it's a mission to “share it, not impose it.”

Just before her visitor leaves, Dean pulls out an African-style hand drum with an ornate, engraved, polished wood base and begins beating it, slowly at first and then faster. The drumbeat, like the quiet house with gas lamps, the green of the late summer leaves beyond, becomes just another rhythm of Dean's singular life. □



Bodil Drescher Anaya '92 in her garden.

Planting a Seed of Happiness

By Laura Arpey

“The pride you see in the eyes of a client is so amazing,” explains Bodil Drescher Anaya '92, a master horticultural therapist registered with the American Horticultural Therapy Association. Whether it's through preparing the soil, planting, weeding or harvesting, Anaya's clients learn to live a better way of life through gardening.

At her home on top of a serene mountain, surrounded only by nature, Anaya spoke candidly about her experience with horticultural therapy. Anaya started and developed a new Horticultural Therapy Department at the New York University Medical Center and also was a founder and CEO of Way to Grow, Inc., a not-for-profit agency in Schuylerville, NY. Way to Grow, Inc. offered horticultural therapy and also trained future horticultural therapists. The school relied on grants and donations to stay in business and,

unfortunately, was forced to shut down recently because of a lack of funding.

Anaya, however, is still able to “transplant” her skills to a variety of patient/clients, who have ranged in age from two to 107. All populations she works with are severely disabled, either physically, mentally, or both. Ideally, she would like to see her clients once a day for about an hour. If she sees them any less than twice a week Anaya doesn't get the results she wants.

Anaya has worked at a variety of locations such as rehab hospitals, nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals and prisons. One of her primary goals in teaching horticultural therapy is to help some patient/clients to learn a trade so they can eventually obtain a job. Oftentimes her clients will find jobs landscaping and in nurseries.

Anaya explained that horticultural therapy is quite similar to occupational therapy, which is the therapeutic use of self-care, work and play activities to increase independent function, enhance development and prevent disability. Horticultural therapists use plants as a means of therapy, working with plants in the same way occupational therapists work with their tools. It is a rehabilitation process that is both mental and physical. Anaya said that it is “a matter

of adjusting tools to the person's ability, not the other way around.”

As Anaya explains, “it is a matter of teaching from the bottom” because the majority of her clients have never gardened before. The planting, cutting, picking and harvesting is all done by the clients themselves. In doing so, they use every muscle in their body and are learning a wealth of knowledge at the same time. Anaya says, “Gardening is a wonderful tool for teaching language, geology and math.” The clients keep a daily log where they record the date, weather and what they accomplished that day. For example, after measuring a plant, noticing the insects surrounding that plant, and then examining the soil, they would record all of their findings in their daily log.

Currently there is no state or national licensing of horticultural therapists. To become a registered horticultural therapist, like Anaya, an individual must have a background in college courses that include medicine, psychology and horticultural therapy. Anaya recommends that an individual interested in becoming a horticultural therapist get their bachelor's degree in occupational therapy.

Becoming registered is based on a point system. A candidate's education is worth a certain amount of points along with the amount of internship time they

Whether it's through preparing the soil, planting, weeding or harvesting, Anaya's clients learn to live a better way of life through gardening.

have invested by working with any of the disabled populations.

Anaya came to Empire State College “because it was willing to give me credits for the knowledge I already had acquired through a long life of learning.” She grew up in Denmark, where she began her schooling and education as a nurse. When she came to Empire State College, she was 53 years of age. Anaya, who graduated in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in horticultural therapy, is extremely grateful for Empire State College giving her the chance to complete her degree. “Thank God for Empire State College,” Anaya said. “It is a lifesaver for a lot of people.” □

Giving Hope to Families

(continued from page 6)

rearing eight children, a limited participation in local politics, and earning my degree from Empire State College. Ironically, Mary was the only family member to attend my graduation ceremony, the others either working or living too far away.

In 1978, I began to work in the New York State Senate, allowing me to continue an interest in government and politics. I managed the Albany office of State Senator Franz Leichter (D-Manhattan), who represented a district where, coincidentally, I lived as a child. We also had five family weddings take place within five years, including my second marriage. But when tragedy strikes a family, radical life changes occur.

My job in the legislature provided me with a necessary understanding of the legislative process and the criminal justice system. I worked where I could ask questions and get answers, even if I did not agree with all of them. I was determined we would achieve justice for Mary's murder. It has been a long time coming. And I knew that our family's attendance at court proceedings was absolutely necessary. We would always be there for Mary.

My first trip to California was in the fall of 1985 when I attended a preliminary hearing in Berkeley, after which our case was pushed up to the Alameda Superior Court. In the spring of 1986, I was in Oakland for three weeks for the guilt phase of the trial. Three of Mary's siblings attended at different times. The jury found the murderer guilty. Then I and two of Mary's siblings went back for the three-day penalty phase. We didn't return in September for the sentencing, but we mailed scores of victim impact letters to the judge.

A "New Normal" Life

In the first days of my grief journey, I sought out Parents of Murdered Children and Other Survivors of Homicide Victims (POMC). This is a national self-help support group offering emotional support and friendship to persons surviving the death of a relative or friend by homicide. I recalled opening a letter to Senator Leichter from one of its members. I remember thinking what a morbid name, never realizing POMC would soon be my lifesaver. My daughter, Joan, and I attended our first meeting of the local chapter three weeks after Mary's murder. There I saw family members of homicide victims actually smiling, even laughing. I didn't know at that time if I ever would but, thanks to POMC, I discovered there is hope for a "new normal" life after such a tragedy.

In 1988, I became chapter leader of the Albany-Capital District POMC, a role I continue. Without POMC, there would have been a terrible dark void in my life and in my soul. Through it, I am able to reach out to others in this same terrible plight and help them begin to heal. Also, I believe POMC has a positive influence on the criminal justice system. We often invite persons working within the system to POMC meetings. Hearing our stories sensitizes them to the rights and needs of crime victims and survivors. In 1989, I started a chapter newsletter. Many survivors may come to a meeting only

once but through the newsletter, our support continues.

In addition to POMC, in 1988, I and a small group of victim advocates and service providers planted the seed for what has developed into the Capital District Coalition for Crime Victims Rights.

That year we organized the first Rally for

Victims' Rights on the steps of the New York State Capitol during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The coalition has continued to expand, now having over 40 victim organizations, including police agencies, from six neighboring counties. Each year we organize events during Crime Victims' Rights Week to educate the public about the effects of crime and victimization on individuals and families of crime victims.



Pat Gioia '75

Raising Awareness

A coalition project near and dear to my heart, and with which I am very involved, is the brick walkway at the New York State Crime Victims' Memorial in Albany. The memorial, a large limestone and calcite boulder, is located directly behind the Legislative Office Building. It commemorates New York state crime victims, deceased and survivors. Walking about the Empire State Plaza during lunch hours, I would note memorials dedicated to police, firefighters and veterans. I thought, "How about victims of crime?" So, with the help of a state senator and the Office of General Services, and the generosity of many community businesses, the coalition established this statewide memorial in 1996. Two brick walkways lead up to it. Each year new bricks, bearing the names of crime victims, are dedicated at a ceremony during Crime Victims' Rights Week. Currently there are over 525 bricks – and growing. I am in contact with victims and families from all across the state who learn about the memorial and want to have a loved one remembered there.

Because of my advocacy on behalf of homicide victims' families, I have had the honor of serving on several victim-related boards. I have just completed a six-year term on the New York State Crime Victims' Board Advisory Council. In 1996, then Attorney General Dennis Vacco established the first Crime Victims' Advisory Panel and appointed me as a member. I now serve on Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's Crime Victims' Advisory Panel. I consider these as opportunities to "tell it like it is" as a family member of a homicide victim and to have input into the criminal justice system.

Since my retirement in 2000 from the legislature, I can now devote more hours to victim advocacy and to writing about Mary and my family. All of this would not have been possible without the support of my family and the love that I know streams from my daughter, Mary. □

Documentary Filmmaker Examines Community Life

Sarah Mondale '04, producer of the PBS series "School: The Story of American Public Education," and a documentary, "Asylum: A History of the Mental Institution in America," was among the graduates last spring from Empire State College, speaking on behalf of the graduating class of nearly 200.

Mondale, now in her 40s, enrolled in the college's Hudson Valley Center to complete the degree that she began two decades earlier. She had "left college in my 20s to go to work," and has since wracked up an impressive list of film projects (many presented on the Public Broadcasting Network.)

In 1986, Mondale, a niece of former presidential candidate and longtime Senator Walter Mondale, co-founded Stone Lanterns Films with some family members.

In 1990, she was nominated for an Emmy in the category of director-news and documentary subjects, for "Asylum," a history of care for the mentally ill that was screened in festivals from Shanghai to Florence, winning a slew of other awards along the way. She has directed and co-produced (with partner and sister-in-law Sarah Patton) an award-winning documentary film, "Marcel Proust: A Writer's Life," which aired on PBS in 1993.

The PBS series "School" is an in-depth look at the American system of public education, beginning with the late 1770s and tracing the development through the 21st century. The topic was suggested by her father, Clarence Mondale, a history professor, in 1992, and took nearly 10 years to produce, according to the PBS web site.

Anticipating a lull in her career, she returned to school to earn her Bachelor of Arts degree in history and French, thinking she would have a fall-back career teaching high school. She needn't have been concerned. Mondale has had a full slate of projects she was at work on this year.

Her three new film projects all have something to do with manmade environments, she explained: "Megamall," explores the controversy surrounding the construction of one of the country's biggest shopping malls, located in Rockland County; "Haverstraw," looks at a predominantly Hispanic Hudson River community, chosen to become a national showplace for sensible riverfront development; and another PBS documentary still in development, "The Way We Live" takes stock of American architecture and at why it looks the way it does. □



Patricia LaFreniere '82

Judge Pat Hears Family Matters

By Laura Arpey

"Being a lawyer was on my long-time wish list," explains Patricia LaFreniere. However, LaFreniere didn't stop there. After a number of years prosecuting

various family-related matters in Family Court, she moved on to become a Family Court magistrate.

LaFreniere began her education at Empire State College's Metropolitan Center in the early 1980s. During her time at Empire State College, LaFreniere participated as an intern for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), reviewing foster care cases and assisting those parents through the foster care system in an effort to regain custody of their children. It was there that she discovered her intense interest in family law.

During a phone interview, LaFreniere explained that upon graduation from Empire State College, she attended Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. Following law school, she won appointment as an assistant corporation counsel with the New York City Law Department and was assigned as a prosecutor to the Family Court Division. There, she prosecuted cases concerning juvenile delinquency, domestic violence, and child and spousal support. After several years of practicing law, while still with the Office of the Corporation Counsel, LaFreniere became an adjunct professor at Empire State College, teaching courses and conducting tutorials on family law. Currently, she is a Family Court magistrate where she hears a daily average of 25 support and paternity cases. These cases involve establishing paternity and support for children born out of wedlock and, where the parties are married, determining child and spousal support. "All of these cases involve determinations regarding the basic financial obligations of parents for their children as well as their obligations to provide health care, child care and appropriate education," said LaFreniere.

LaFreniere explained that she heard about Empire State College through an acquaintance in the late 1970s and, in 1980, she enrolled at the college to finish her bachelor's degree. LaFreniere graduated with a degree in business, management and economics and a minor in sociology. □

Denise DiPace: From Secretary to Social Workers' Advocate

Denise DiPace was raising two middle-school-age boys and working as a secretary, when she decided that professionally, she wanted more out of life. So, she enrolled in Empire State College's Northeast Center (Sylvain Nagler was her primary mentor) not knowing exactly what she wanted to focus on, but beginning by taking courses in human services and psychology.

Then, Nagler suggested a business law class, and DiPace was hooked. In 1996, she received her Bachelor of Science degree in family and legal studies. She had planned to go on for a master's degree, but with her sons now grown and in college themselves, she chose to continue on to law school, earning her law degree in 2000.

DiPace says she had always worked in government and politics, having worked in the office of Lt. Governor Stan Lundine during the Cuomo administration, and, while earning her J.D., working part time in the attorney general's office. Upon completing law school, she landed a job as assistant counsel in the Office of the Senate Minority Leader, working directly for New York State Senator David A. Paterson (D), who, in 1995, was appointed as the first African-American deputy minority leader in the state Senate's history. DiPace had responsibility for legislative issues concerning education.

Finding Her Niche

Late last year, she heard about an opening with the NYS chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, which is one of the largest chapters of the organization in the country, boasting 12,000 members. In January, DiPace became a government relations specialist with the NYS chapter.

The chapter includes all social workers in the state, except for the five boroughs, which have their own chapter



Denise DiPace '93, '96

of 10,000 members. According to its web site, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), founded in 1955, is the largest membership association for professional social workers in the world, with 160,000 members in the United States and overseas.

The advocacy group focuses on lobbying the state legislature on issues related to social workers' professional responsibilities, and issues of concern to their clients: health, welfare, education, and others, which "in some way protect and strengthen opportunities and social supports for individuals and families."

Focusing on Health, Welfare and Education

Some of the specific issues that DiPace is working on are legislation supporting mental health parity – requiring insurance companies to cover mental health diagnoses at the same level as other illnesses; increasing the minimum wage, which the organization feels goes to the heart of allowing their clients to live productive lives in their communities; issuing policy papers on adult home care; the death penalty (which the group opposes), and other social justice issues.

When asked to describe what she does in a typical day, DiPace responds with two words: "Oh, boy!"

"When the legislature is in session, that could be anything from dealing with policy issues, to meeting with legislators or coalition partners (for example, on Timothy's Law, named for Timothy O'Clair, a young Schenectady boy whose suicide highlighted the deficiency in

insurance coverage for mental health issues) to bringing a memo in support or opposition to legislation to sponsors, committee members or just the leaders in the house," DiPace explains.

She also works with the organization's membership, taking phone calls, answering questions – many about new requirements for state licensure in social work – and going out on the road. She said she has plans to visit a number of schools of social work in the coming weeks to talk with social work students about licensure issues.

The membership, she says, is "strong and very active," and apparently DiPace, in her role as government relations specialist, is working hard to keep it that way. □

Lives of Immigrants

(continued from page 6)

appreciation for what they deal with. Small discussion groups were held so students could converse about what they learned. Also, some of the students in attendance work for nonprofit organizations and were able to take what they learned back to their agencies and apply it to the real world.

First-time Web Sites

For the first time, web sites are available for immigrants, as well as advocates, with an established set of contacts and additional information about immigrant rights. These web sites also promote connections in the community, according to Smirni and Matthews. Both were pleasantly surprised to see how much interest was expressed in immigrant empowerment in each of the boroughs. There are a variety of immigrant organizations working with unions and nonprofit organizations, but they could do better with more adequate funding.

Smirni and Matthews have no immediate plans for another residency, but are strongly considering one in the future. The topic will be related to cultural diversity and the impact of changing demographics on social institutions and higher education. □

Trammers' Gifts Benefit Students and Mentors

When Monte Trammer and his wife Hilda decided to fund a scholarship at Empire State College, it did not take them long to decide whom they wanted to focus on.

The Monte and Hilda Trammer Scholarship aims to assist African-American men who are raising families, with single fathers considered first. Why?

"No. 1, in the popular media, when you see African-American males, they are either in entertainment (and I include sports figures) or they are not quite criminals, but they are portrayed as people you wouldn't want to emulate – people who are exhibiting some kind of aberrant behavior," explained Monte, publisher of the *Star-Gazette* newspaper in Elmira, New York.

"The guy who gets up every day and goes to work – he doesn't get portrayed in the media. His life is not 'fun.' He doesn't have a lot of bling bling, but is just raising his kids and trying to get an education. When you are a single guy trying to raise a family, it's difficult."

Hilda noted that, due to societal changes, more couples are having children at younger ages and living together rather than marrying. Factor in marriages ending in divorce, and that adds up to more single-parent households than ever before. The positive part of the equation, she said, is that many more men than in the past are single-handedly taking responsibility for their children. And unlike women, who often have a lot of support and resources, the Trammers believe that men are often left to sink or swim on their own.

So, although there are various scholarships serving the different demographics represented by the college's students, investing in the education of

black men who are fathers was especially close to their hearts. "Various organizations pay attention to women, especially single women, but men often don't even talk to each other!" Monte noted with a chuckle.

"Since the guys are stepping up to the plate we need to step up and help support them," Hilda added.

Monte still remembers how moving it was when he met Henri Williams, the first recipient, his fiancé and daughter at an All College Conference dinner celebrating the close of the college's first major campaign, The Promise Continues.

Now the Trammers have decided to increase their support to the college with a \$100,000 pledge to assist faculty. "I would like for a faculty member who has a wild and crazy idea to get a chance to pursue it," said Monte – whether it's writing something creative or presenting the results of scholarly research at a conference.

Monte believes that the faculty here face a special challenge. They are not, after all, teaching 18-22 year olds with limited life and work experience – instead they are serving adults in their 30s and up who have already embarked on their careers, and are "at the top of their game."

"Even teachers have to continue to educate themselves," Hilda concurred. "You want faculty to stay abreast of what's going on in the community."

The newly funded fellowship will "allow that teacher to be a better teacher – sort of scholarship for its own sake," Monte said. "Hilda and I just want to give a person something purely to make them somehow a better teacher. Maybe somebody needs to go somewhere and sit on a beach and finish a novel. I'm not going to laugh," says Trammer.

"Our teachers don't get the same psychic benefit that teachers in traditional colleges get," he continued – the luxury of time for collegial chats, or an array of campus-based publications to contribute to, frequent workshops, or other activities common to the college campus. However, "our students are energized, so our teachers had better be.



Monte and Hilda Trammer

That's why we're endowing this with more money, because it's going to take more money."

Monte's involvement with Empire State College dates back to 1987, when foundation board member Sondra Silverhardt invited him to join the program committee soon after he had been named publisher of *The Saratogian* newspaper. He soon took his place on the foundation board, serving as vice chair, and now, chair.

Because students at Empire State College tend not to "go away" to college, but stay planted in their communities and jobs while they further their education, Monte believes that it is especially vital for businesses to get involved in contributing to Empire State College. As a former education reporter for *The Baltimore Sun* and deputy managing editor for the financial pages of *USA Today*, Monte, a lifelong learner who himself is currently pursuing a law degree, recognized early on the synergy between higher education and business. "We should work at making things better, period. An important way of doing that is to assist higher education. If you see something you like in higher education, then you have an obligation to make sure other people benefit. How could you not do something to salute and support that institution?" □

College News

Empire State College Hosts "Environment and Community"

Environmental writer **Bill McKibben**, who lives in the neighboring Adirondacks, was a headliner for the 14th annual Environment and Community Conference, held for the first time in the Northeast in Saratoga Springs, New York, where the college is headquartered. Mentors Elaine Handley and Wayne Ouder Kirk took the lead in organizing the conference, which was sponsored by Empire State College. It explored environmental issues from a variety of standpoints, offered hundreds of workshops, special presentations, music and poetry readings.

Bill McKibben, a former *New Yorker* writer, whose *The End of Nature* (Random House, 1989), was the first book on global warming written for a general audience, is the author of eight other books, including *Enough: Staying Human in an Engineered Age* (Henry Holt and Co., 2001). McKibben titled his talk, "Beyond Globalization: Groping Towards What Comes Next."

McKibben, whose office at *The New Yorker*, was next door to a kindred spirit, writer Jonathan Schell (*The Fate of the Earth*), expounded on some of his signature themes: the dangers of globalization and unfettered growth and appetites; the unprecedented concentration of wealth into fewer hands; and the stresses on the global environment caused by the above. Our growth, he maintained, is being sustained by our dependence on fossil fuels, which emanate, to a large degree, from one of the most unstable regions of the world, making this country increasingly vulnerable to global unrest and terrorism.

He told the appreciative and sympathetic crowd that we are "well into the

rapids of river-deep, structural, unavoidable problems with its use," and went on to talk about the fact that within the next 25 years, he believes oil production would hit its peak, "and the price of oil will spike and spike dramatically" which in turn will increase global violence, as countries jockey to maintain an unfettered flow of oil. "The system leaves us enormously vulnerable, in ways we haven't been before" – including threats to domestic pipelines and refineries.

He spoke of how our food must travel longer distances, ending up tasting like nothing; while mega-stores like Walmart get ever bigger. Yet, he maintained that globalization "holds some seeds of its own undoing."

McKibben's prescriptions for at least some of the ills that plague us include thinking locally, and thinking smaller. He advocated the production and utilization of "slow food," which is local, seasonal and grown without pesticides – "actual food with the vitamins" still intact. A network of root cellars and small slaughterhouses would replace mega grocery chains and factory farms. To make such a future a reality, he said that people must "fight against the idea of efficiency" and get used to living a life with fewer possessions and less variety. "Where has the worship of cheapness gotten us?" he asked rhetorically. Besides scaling back on foods, he recommended weaning ourselves of



McKibben suggests steps people could take to create "more dignified and lovely human lives, complete and as full of meaning as they can be."



A special guest was a white wolf, a reminder that other lives depend on how humanity behaves.

dependence on automobiles; using more bicycles and mass transit; and increasing the use of solar energy and wind power. Consciously scaling back on so much that is taken for granted demands a certain level of sacrifice, he conceded. "This kind of world wouldn't be as easy or positively effortless as we've come to

College News

expect – and it may be more expensive – at least at first.”

He maintained that such a return to a more basic way of living added up to “more dignified and lovely human lives, complete and as full of meaning as they can be. It may not be possible to sustain, but it may be if we’re clever and creative and start caring about beauty in these ways.”

Other speakers included **Holmes Rolston, III**, an environmental philosopher and the winner of the 2003 Templeton Prize, who is distinguished professor of philosophy at Colorado State University, and the author of six books, including *Conserving Natural Value* (Columbia University Press, 1994) and *Genes, Genesis and God* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); **Amy Vedder**, ecologist, primatologist, co-author of *In the Kingdom of Gorillas: Fragile Species in a Dangerous Land* (Simon and Schuster, 2001), is also director and vice president of the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Living Landscapes Program; and **Joseph Bruchac**, a Native American writer, editor, activist and author of *Our Stories Remember: American Indian History, Culture and Values Through Storytelling* (Fulcrum, 2003) and other books. □

First Alumnae Women in Business Hosted in New York City

High above the bustling city streets, in a large multi-windowed banquet room in the Dag Hammarskjöld Tower, C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan borough president, recounted her long journey from her childhood in segregated Birmingham, Alabama, to her arrival as a major player in the world of New York City politics. Along the way, as a teen, she became an



New York City women in business luncheon: (l-r) Melba Tolliver '98, Dean Persico, President Fields and Barbara O'Connell '76.

activist marching with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., braving fire hoses and police dogs, went on to a career as a social worker, moved to New York, and became the first African-American woman elected to the City Council of Manhattan in 1989, before being elected borough president in 1997. Her signature issues are those that will improve the lives of everyday city residents – education, economic development, affordable housing, seniors’ issues and health care.

C. Virginia Fields and Leslie Koch, the CEO for the Fund for Public Schools, were the keynote speakers at the first Women in Business Luncheon in New York City, sponsored by Alumni and Student Relations and the Metropolitan Center. Other women who took part in the event were former journalist and journalism professor Melba Tolliver '98 (ABC/USA Today) who’s now working as an interior decorator; and CEO of Working Mother Media, Carol Evans '77. Elizabeth Kaming, Empire State College Council member, and Barbara O'Connell '76, Empire State College Foundation Board member also attended. Dean Christine Persico welcomed the attendees.

The Alumnae Women in Business Luncheon was organized by Maureen Winney, director of alumni and student relations, and Andrea Hoffman, a current student and president of Hoffman Management and Consulting.

Hoffman, an accomplished marketing professional with such clients as 20th Century Television, Steinway, Mercedes Benz and the Amani Toomer Foundation, was instrumental in securing the speakers. “The college has so many impressive women living and working in New York who never had the opportunity to meet each other and to network. This was our way of bringing them together and to showcase the high caliber of Empire State College alumnae,” said Winney.

A large part of her success was due to the mentoring and support she received from her mother, Fields told the group of women alumni who represented the banking, education, communications and social work fields, to name a few, gathered on an early spring day for the program. “My mother always emphasized the importance of education. She was absolutely adamant that we had to get our education,” said Fields.

Leslie Koch, who works as a consultant to the NYC schools working with people like Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg, also credits mentors for spurring her forward. “It’s the importance of having someone take an interest in us.”

Koch attributed her career growth to her mentor, Ellen Chester, chief of staff to Carol Bellamy (the first woman president of the New York City Council), who took the then 19-year-old intern under her political wing.

“I got an enormous amount out of the relationship,” Koch said.

Fields reminded the group to always be mindful of those who have come before, and to focus energies on those who are behind. “We must never stop dreaming. We can access mentors, who are so incredible, so important – teachers, mothers, sisters, mentors at the college. Then, when we reach a certain level, we become those mentors ourselves.” □

Faculty and Center News

Northeast Center Hosts Open House; Presents Altes Prize

The Northeast Center hosted a well-attended dual event May 12 – an open house to mark its move to its new location in the Airport Park Complex in Latham, and the presentation of the Altes Prize for Community Service.

Mentor **Karen Pass**, with a number of her students past and present looking on, was awarded the Altes Prize to recognize her volunteer efforts with The Center for the Disabled, Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, The Immigration and Refugee Program and New Day Art, among other organizations. After a welcome by **Dean Carol Zajac**, and remarks by **President Joseph B. Moore**, who noted that there should be “no separation” between college and community for an institution such as Empire State College, former Empire State College Interim President **Jane W. Altes** presented Pass with the award, which comes with a \$2,500 check, to do with “whatever she pleased,” she was told. Her husband **Wally Altes**, who is the former president of the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce, accompanied Altes. The check was donated to the Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, and it was announced that that organization had successfully sought a matching grant, making the total donation \$5,000.

“Karen is completely selfless,” said **Elizabeth Dibona**, executive director of the Interfaith Partnership, adding that the only reason Pass had accepted the award was because she knew she could donate it to an organization in need, “not for the accolades.”

Pass, who said she had accepted the award on behalf of the powerless, added

that she was thankful to be involved in organizations “that allowed me to be creative and innovative and provided an opportunity for others to be involved.”

A surprise gift of \$430 also was presented to Pass by then Faculty Chair **Mike Andolina**, from her then colleagues at the Northeast Center, and a proclamation from State Senator **Neil Breslin’s** office, which had been presented on the floor of the Senate May 4 was read and given to Pass.

Among those in attendance were SUNY Vice Chancellor for Business and Industry Relations **R. Wayne Diesel**, Schenectady Assemblyman **Jim Tedisco**, **Robert Prentiss** and **D. Andrew Edward** from the SUNY Counsel’s Office. After

mingling with staff, faculty, students, alumni and dignitaries, during the open house, Senate Majority Leader **Joseph Bruno** made remarks welcoming the college, and Microknowledge, Inc., a computer training firm, which moved to the same location. He spoke of the importance of tech companies, such as Microknowledge, to “Tech Valley.” He also lauded Empire State College’s mission of educating adult learners for the workforce, and its innovative independent study and distance learning models. He noted that his brother had attended the college. “We’re indebted to you for all the good things you do and will continue to do,” he told President Moore.

Center for International Programs

Teta Stefanou, a student at the college’s Athens Unit, worked for the 2004 Olympic Games held in Athens, Greece, last summer as the results manager for beach volleyball (which was won by Team U.S.A.). She was responsible for all the results and statistics for the sport, working with a group of volunteers that she personally recruited for statistics, scoreboard and time keeping. Initially, Stefanou was results manager for five other sports – volleyball; table tennis; artistic and rhythmic gymnastics;

Aghi (Agatha) Kassoumi '03, became the World Cup champion in shooting at the World Cup in Shooting, held in Sydney, Australia, March 1 to March 8, 2004.



and trampoline but confessed, although all were “very exciting sports, I kept beach volleyball because it is my sport.” She writes that the job “is a one-in-a-million experience, and I am crazy happy to be in it.” She credits her family – parents Tassos and Evi, grandparents Manolis and Zacharo, and her best friend “since we were babies” Emmanouela – for her success.



Teta Stefanou (center) with her Olympic crew.

Alumni News

Center for Distance Learning

Liisa Backus '01, who has a passion for colonial history, earned an M.A. from Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, specializing in Colonial and Revolutionary American Studies.

Ty Uhlig '04, who moved from New York to Kentucky, has taken the position of human resources specialist with an auto manufacturing company and is responsible for more than 300 employees. He wrote his mentor, Carol Carnevale, "... to thank you and the Empire State College staff for guiding me through my time at the college and eventually changing my life."

Central New York Center

Karina Altieri '01, a chiropractor with At Best Chiropractic, is a member of the International, American and New York Chiropractic Associations as well as the National Chiropractic Council.

Karla Baugher '02, an income maintenance caseworker, has attained permanent civil service status at the York County Assistance Office, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

Paula Behm '95, who earned a Master of Science degree in education from Le Moyne College, is a career management consultant specializing in helping professionals who at mid-life are interested in changing careers, becoming self-directed or those who may be in search of re-employment.

Nancy Cioch '94 is a senior customer service representative with ACS Direct Loan Servicing Center. In addition to serving as New York state director of Palatines to America, she is a member of the Astenrogen Chapter of the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), the Yellow Church Cemetery Association, and the Herkimer County and Little Falls Historical Societies.



Ronald Heath '02 has been named director of marketing and corporate communications for Coyne Textile Services, the largest independently owned uniform rental company in the

United States. His prior experience includes a managing partnership in SportsBuilders, Inc. and co-ownership of CA Marketing and Public Relations. Following in his father's footsteps is his son, **Justin**, who graduated from Empire State College in June 2004. The elder Heath wrote, "I looked at many college opportunities over the years to complete my degree. Empire State College was singular in its offerings for time-stressed adult students, and its unique understanding of the value of life learning. The quality of education and amount of 'face time' I received with exceptional professors is hard to duplicate at other institutions."

Deanna Lothrop '02 has been awarded a Master of Science in Teaching with honors (4.0) from SUNY Potsdam and is a member of Kappa Delta Pi. Coordinator for Seaway Trail Even Start, Jeff-Lewis B.O.C.E.S., she presented at a workshop at the National Even Start Conference. Lothrop's memberships include the Lyme Community Foundation, Human Development at Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYS and National Even Start Associations and the Eat Well - Play Hard Committee.



Rev. Deborah Rose '00 was recently awarded her master's degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School and is pastor at the Montrose United Methodist Church, Pennsylvania.

Rev. Babette Steinert '94, who holds a Master of Divinity from Colgate Rochester Divinity School and certification in pastoral care from the Onondaga Pastoral Counseling Center, has assumed the pastorate of Seneca Castle United Methodist Church.



Amy Twiss '98, who joined the Department of Environmental Health and Safety at the State University of New York College at Cortland in 2002, has been promoted from hazardous material

manager to safety specialist. An instructor with her department at SUNY Cortland, as well as their Center for Continuing Education, she trains the campus and community on dealing with hazardous waste operations, emergency response, blood-borne pathogens, fire safety, biological and chemical terrorism, and personal protective equipment. Twiss has a degree in medical laboratory technology from SUNY Morrisville and is a certified chemical hygiene officer. Her experience includes being a laboratory scientist for NET Environmental Laboratory, a laboratory technician with both SUNY Albany and C & S Environmental Laboratory, and a senior research technician with Sterling Winthrop Pharmaceuticals.

Genesee Valley Center

Doris Brevoort '74 is a founding board member of The Turning Institute providing support and advocacy for caregivers of persons with life-challenging illness and families of children with disabilities. She holds an M.Ed. from the University of Washington and completed Brain Research in Education offered by their extension program.

Graduation does not mean quieter times for **Gerald Pickering '03**, chief of the Webster Police Department. He has been elected as chair of the Monroe County Law Enforcement Council; has been selected to attend the F.B.I. National Academy, held at the Marine Corp. base in Quantico, Virginia; and, he is beginning graduate work at the State University of New York at Brockport.

Debra Robison '91, who earned an M.S. in elementary education from Nazareth College and New York State Permanent Education Certification, is CEO of Tots University Child Care Campus, Ltd. She also owns Hickory Springs Welsh Ponies.

Barbara Thomas '03 is executive director of the 77-year-old Rochester Family Mission, a Christian outreach organization providing material and spiritual resources to help strengthen families. A graduate of the Rochester Institute of Christian Education and an ordained minister, she is working toward a master's degree in theological studies at the Northeastern Seminary of Roberts Wesleyan College. Thomas, whose own mother found assistance at the Rochester Family Mission, hopes to be a positive influence on the lives of young women who have suffered hardships. She is a board member of the Greater Rochester Association of Evangelicals and is on the planning committee for Flower City Work Camp.

Center for Graduate Programs

Lance Evans '95, executive officer of the Board of REALTORS, Inc. for both St. Lawrence and Jefferson-Lewis counties, has been honored by the National Association of REALTORS with the REALTOR Association Certified Executive designation.



Following an 18-year career as vice president of human resources for the Healthcare Association of New York State, **Rosanne Greenwood '89** has started RJG

Consulting, LLC, "... to help companies realize their business goals through the creation of a strong human resource function." She is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management, the National Association for Human Resource Professionals, the American Management Association, the Albany Chamber of Commerce, the Women's Business Council and the Executive Women's Golf Association.

Patricia Hirsch '00, a faculty member in Mohawk Valley Community College's (MVCC) Psychology, Human Services and Education Department since 1997, has been promoted to associate professor. Prior to joining the MVCC faculty, she was director of human services for the Oneida Indian Nation Health Department and family development specialist and program

director for Madison County Community Action.

Deborah "Mickey" Lord '02, senior manager of organization development with Suburban Propane, enrolled in the doctoral program at Syracuse University. Lord writes that the college's graduate program was, "... an extraordinary learning experience – probably the best learning experience I ever had! Moreover, the greatest gift I gained from the program was a sense of relentless pursuit of excellence in scholarly work. I believe this developed because each of my professors imparted a belief in my abilities and offered firm but supportive counsel to do my best."

Wendy Perron '01 is editor-in-chief of *Dance Magazine*.

Deborah Putnam '02 has been named vice president for information technology at Alfred State College.

Mike Rauh '00, an announcer of outdoor road races and indoor track and field events, has been the voice of the Hispanic Games and the New Balance Games, one of the largest indoor meets in the country.

Jack Risewick '02 is an adjunct professor of teaching management principles and human resource management at Bryant & Stratton College and member of the Ombudsman Association.

The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

Bernard Kerik '02, former commissioner of the New York Police Department (during the September 11 terrorist attacks), was keynote speaker at the FBI National Academy Training Conference. Most recently, he was tapped to set up training schools for 40,000 Iraqi police officers. Kerik has written *The Lost Son: A Life in Pursuit of Justice*, the film rights of which have been purchased by Miramax.

Hudson Valley Center

Having earned an M.A. from Columbia University and a Ph.D. from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), **William Bauer '81** is assistant professor of music and coordinator of the music program at the College of Staten Island, CUNY, and author of *Open the*

Door: The Life and Music of Betty Carter (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

Moira Kirstin Boyd '98 has been awarded an M.F.A. in Canadian literature and creative writing from Norwich University at Vermont College.



Stephen Collins '94, president of Safety Educators Inc., also is a staff officer for Palm Beach County

Fire Rescue. Collins was loaned out to the county sheriff's office in response to the first incident of anthrax death that occurred shortly after September 11. He swiftly and successfully developed and delivered an awareness curricula and response plan, which was immediately adopted by road deputies. Collins is a member of the American Society of Safety Engineers, the American Industrial Hygiene Association and the Florida Fire Chiefs Association.

Maria Gambino '04, a social work assistant with the New York Westchester Square Medical Center and dietary supervisor with the Throgs Neck Extended Care Facility, has been accepted by the Graduate School of Social Work at Fordham University.

Deborah Grosmark '03, a registered Music Together Teacher who also is certified with the Early Childhood Music and Movement Association, teaches at Suffern Montessori and is president of The Creative Arts Corner of Hudson Valley, Inc. With the family unit as its focus, The Creative Arts Corner strives to nurture a noncompetitive, child-centered, multi-arts environment. A member of the Arts Council of Rockland, Grosmark is the recipient of a grant enabling her to bring music and children to the Ramapo Nursing Home each month. Having battled breast cancer, she has been asked by the American Cancer Society to be a volunteer counselor.

As a member of Friends of the Great Swamp (FrOGS), **Edie Keasbey '03** was included in a *New York Times* article, *Beseiged Bayou: Champions of a River-fed Haven Aim to Keep it Alive*. The *Times* detailed efforts to preserve the 6,800-acre

Great Swamp, which Keasby calls, “A haven – a place of peace, quiet, bird songs. It’s just teeming with life, but it’s an incredibly peaceful place – like a cathedral to me, in a different way.” In addition to its beauty, the Great Swamp provides 20 percent of the water to the Croton Reservoir, which in turn provides drinking water to Westchester and New York City.



In 2001, **Michael Librie '97** was awarded a Master of Theological Studies degree from the Weston Jesuit School of Theology and is nearing completion of a clinical Master of Social Work degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore. He is the author of “Ethical Decision Making and Education,” published in *The Maryland Sentinel* and *To Hear the Heart Beating*, published in *Association for Humanistic Psychology Perspective*.

Harry Parker '02, an addiction therapist at the V.A. Hudson Valley Health Care Center, has been awarded his master’s degree in organizational leadership by Mercy College.

Artist **Paula Renee '90** took second prize in mixed media/collage at the juried exhibition of the Art Society of Old Greenwich. Twelve of her works were on display at the Medical Building, Greenwich. Her memberships include the Richter Art Association, the Art Society of Old Greenwich, the Ridgefield Guild of Artists, the Candlewood Camera Club and the Society of Creative Arts.

In 2001, **Mia Shapiro '94** received her M.S.W. from the Graduate School for Social Work, Hunter College. She is a research associate with the investment management company Lake Partners, Inc. and planning a fall 2004 wedding, after which she’ll be known as Mia Shargel. **Gabrielle Strassman '87** has been selected for honorary recognition in The National Dean’s List featuring America’s outstanding college students.

Center for International Programs

Charbel Boustany '01, who has earned an M.B.A. from the American University of

Science and Technology in Lebanon, plans to enroll in the Graduate Program of Computer Science, Ottawa University.

Jaleh Ruhe '97 received a Latin American literary award for her novel, *The House of Girls*, based on her experience living in Santiago, Chile, in the 1980s and 90s.

Long Island Center



Concetta Caporusso '02, a fifth grade teacher with the New York City Department of Education, is a member of the Queensboro Council of Reading, the New York State Reading Association and volunteer with the Reading/Writing Project at Teachers College.

Carol Dooley '89, who earned an M.P.A. from C.W. Post in 1995 and is now retired, has enrolled in the doctoral program at Kennedy Western University where she is studying health administration.

Following his graduation, **Edward Keenan Jr. '97** received several promotions within NYNEX and then Bell Atlantic; currently he is vice president of network operations and engineering for Cablevision. Feeling that it is important to help others, Keenan is an active firefighter and has been elected fire commissioner in his hometown. As he embarks on his studies with the college’s Center for Distance Learning, in a letter to President Moore, he wrote, “I am undertaking another program, that of fire service administration ... I never thought twice about coming back to this great institution and staff to continue with another bachelor’s degree program. I am proud of my accomplishments in my professional life made possible, in part, by your dedicated faculty and staff.”

Dwayne Meadows '00 is the author of *Tuesday Morning Meditations* available at Amazon.com.

Al Prohaska '86, an artist and graphic designer, is owner of the full-service advertising agency, Pro/Advertising, and an adjunct professor with the New York Institute of Technology and Empire State College. Semi-retired, he is devoting more time to painting and “... enjoying every

minute of it.” Prohaska, whose paintings have been exhibited at the Floral Park Council of Cultural Affairs and the Nassau County Museum of Art shop, is a member of the Floral Park Art League and the National Art League.

Kathy Pugh '91 was elected president of the Florida Trial Court Staff Attorney’s Association (FTCSAA), established to promote a high standard of professionalism among its membership of judicial staff attorneys and the exchange of information thereby providing the most effective and efficient assistance to judges.



A grant written by **Judith Rohan '92** resulted in the awarding of funds from the Telecom Pioneer Foundation, which plays a significant role in

community education, environmental and life enrichment projects, to the newly established Odyssey Charter School. The funds will enable the middle school to purchase computers and educational software packages. Rohan also is president of the Indian River Life Member Club of Melbourne, Florida.

Marianne Reyling Wagner '03, executive director of Mercy Center Ministries, an emergency transitional shelter for pregnant and parenting adolescents and their children, was named 2004 Woman of the Year in Community Service by the Town of Brookhaven. Responsible for administration, grant writing, fund raising and supervision of a 40-plus member staff, Wagner says, “My work with the young women and children who call Mercy home has been the most challenging, humbling and rewarding experience of my life.”

Metropolitan Center

Ahmed Abdullah '04, a music teacher with the New York City Department of Education, is one of 2,000 selected from among 17,000 applicants into the department’s teaching fellows program.

Ronald Alexander '93 is principal of the High School for Contemporary Arts, an art-centered New Visions school in the Bronx, as well as an adjunct professor of dance at Marymount Manhattan College

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BACK TO YOU

Alumni and Student Events Around the College

Two Alumni Events Prove Popular

A charming pavilion at the Spa Little Theater, good food, good wine and 136 people with tickets to a Tchaikovsky extravaganza at the Saratoga Springs Performing Arts Center (SPAC), to be followed by fireworks. What more could be had from a balmy mid-summer night?

That seemed the consensus for those who gathered this year for the fifth Empire State College evening at SPAC, which began with a reception and segued into the concert featuring a suite from Swan Lake and 1812 Overture. The annual event sold out this year.

“It has grown so much over the past five years,” said **Maureen Winney**, director of alumni and student relations. “Because our alumni study independently, it is especially wonderful to have so many come out and meet each other for first time.”

SPAC and Much More

Among those enjoying the chocolate strawberries and cheese and mushroom mini-pizzas were **Donna Luby '94**, and her husband **Richard**, who were attending for their third consecutive year. Donna viewed the event as just another form of lifelong learning. “It’s nice to be with others from the college and to support something the college is doing,” she said. “We do run into some people whom we met the last time. It makes you keep on top of your lifelong learning and spurs a desire to learn more,” she explained. **Van E. Dykeman**



Ethel and Oliver James '92, '99

'78, was accompanied by his wife **Mildred**, daughter **Ingrid**, a cellist and teacher from Grand Rapids, Michigan, and their friend **Kit Kolenda**, also of Grand Rapids. Ingrid was “really excited,” about seeing the world-class orchestra, because of her own background as a classical musician, she explained.

Carole Fox '95, formerly a member of the Empire State College Federation Board of Governors, wandered over from another event with a friend, jokingly hiding her other nametag. “What a coincidence that Empire State College is having an event the same night!” she exclaimed. **John J. Corrou '94**, the chairman of the Annual Fund drive, was with his wife **Jane**.



From l-r: Dennis Spilman, Dorothy Lysyczn '94 and John Corrou '94 enjoying the gathering at SPAC.

“This is one of the nicest events of the summer,” he said. “It’s a great place to meet fellow alumni, faculty and administration, and it’s fun. Empire State College always has excellent food.” He and Jane are fans of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and this was one of many outings for them, as it was for many in attendance.

Pat Gioia '75, the co-leader of Parents of Murdered Children (see article, page 6) was with fellow board member and friend, **Pat Hammond**. Gioia came for the first time two years ago as did her friend, although Hammond missed the event last year. Gioia was thrilled to have met a fellow alumnus from the 70s, Van Dykeman, and since both have previously attended, they made sure to greet each other at the annual event, she said. “And we share political views,” she added.

It wasn’t only alumni who turned out: **Sue Reynolds** and her husband **Bill**, both faculty at the college were enjoying the evening, as well. Reynolds, who has been with the Center for Distance Learning for more than six years, is about to offer an innovative studio art class online, she said. She is expecting 20 students to enroll in the course where students will post their work online for instruction and critique. “I am excited about this and have a good deal of confidence that it will work well,” she said.

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(continued)

Founding President **James W. Hall** was accompanied by wife **Liz**. The couple just relocated back to Saratoga Springs following his retirement as the chancellor of Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio, in the last year. Asked how many times he'd attended the event, he parried that this was the "first time I've been in modern times." Hall led Empire State College for 27 years. "I have already met a number of folks, friends and family, and it's just a wonderful time," he said.

Alumni Day at the Races Draws Record-Breaking Crowd

Staying connected to the college, and the pleasure of watching both the college and the event grow, were just two of the reasons given by Empire State College alumni for attending the 10th Annual Day at the Races.

Audrey and Gary Thompson '92 have been coming to the event since its inception. "We live in Schenectady, so it's fairly close," said Gary. The couple recalled that the earliest event drew perhaps 20 – 25 people. "For the first five or six years we saw the same people," said Gary. After that, a lot of new faces could be seen in the crowd. This year, the event sold out with more than 150 attendees.

Lisa Grossman '00 also has a long history with the college. She was one of the college's first distance learning students, having studied through SUNY by Satellite in the '70s before the ascent of home computers and online courses and was the first female officer for the NYS Dept. of Parks and Recreation. "Computers were seen as a flash in the pan then," she remembers. Grossman now is an administrator of data services for Teaching for Excellence, a group whose motto is "Educators Helping Educators Use Data."

Mother and daughter team and **Jamie and Joyce Chupka '80** were busily discussing their betting strategy with Jamie, "a nongambler," getting tips from more seasoned pros. Joyce Chupka is retired from a series of high-level executive posts



Joyce Chupka '80 and her daughter Jamie, a current student.

with NYS, including with the Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Health, and Commission for the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. She enrolled at Empire State College while raising Jamie. After earning her undergraduate degree,



College President Joe Moore at the track with Heather and Michael Rooney '88.

she went on to earn her Master of Public Administration degree from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Jamie has followed in her mother's footsteps, enrolling at the Northeast Center of Empire State College. After earning her B.S. in human services, she hopes to work as a counselor for those dealing with substance abuse. Joyce said she and Jamie turned out for the Day at the Races, "because it's the first day I haven't been working!" She retired last year. Joyce and Jamie, who lost \$15 their first race, were thrilled when they won \$16 later in the day, more than recouping their loss.

Barbara O'Connell '76 brought guests **Stefanne Duffy, Linda Duffy** (no relation) and **Judy Malloy**. Besides serving on the foundation board, O'Connell is a former assistant dean for assessment at the Long Island Center.

Dorothy Smith '73, a retired special education teacher, and her husband, retired state **Senator William Smith**, came "for the fellowship," she said. Her husband spent 24 years in the state senate before his retirement in 1986, representing the Corning-Painted Post area.

Sheryl Luks '94, who graduated from the Hudson Valley Center, enjoys the event every year. A nurse, she and her husband decided to become entrepreneurs and started a moving company. Shortly after, the mother of two young sons became widowed and was left with



Sheryl Luks '94 (far right) with her mom and husband.

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and co-chairman of the Alpha-Omega Dance Company of New York.

Nancy Garcia '02 is program coordinator and administrative assistant with the Department of Neurology at Mount Sinai-New York University Health Center. Her responsibilities include ensuring program quality and evaluation of the Vascular Neurology Residency Stroke Fellowship Program and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

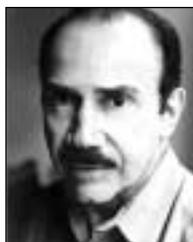
In the recently published *Third Avenue El*, award-winning photographer **George Malave '90** has captured the final year of service of the famed Third Avenue elevated rapid transit system, which ran from the tip of lower Manhattan to the Bronx. Malave, who has been photographing New York for over 35 years, has exhibited at museums and galleries throughout the country including the Museum of the City of New York, Wave Hill Center for Environmental Studies, New York Historical Society, International Center of Photography, the New York State Museum and many others.

Lynne Conrad Marvet '95 is a fundraising consultant and director of finance with Nalandabodhi, a nonprofit organization and network of Buddhist study and meditation centers. Also a clown and vaudevillian, she created and performs the one-woman show "MeeMee HeeHee Lights Up the Universe" and has performed with the Bread & Puppet Theatre in Vermont and New York City. Marvet mentors at the Seattle Girl's School and is a board member of Nitartha International and Nalandabodhi.

Don't Try It On Eleventh Street! by **Sheila Cole Nilva '97** is her first published novel. A member of the Overseas Press Club and the Association of University Women, she holds an M.F.A. from Goddard College and is working toward her Ph.D. in creative writing.

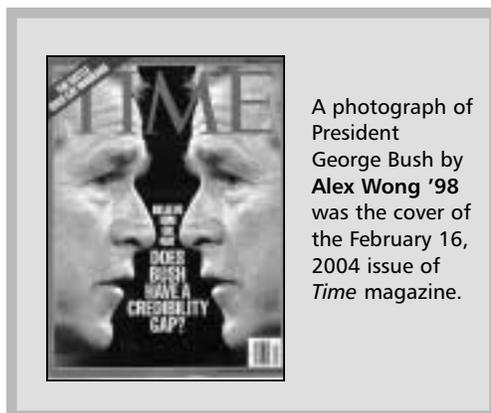
Jeff Sanders '90, who earned his J.D. with honors from the University of North Carolina, has been named a partner with Seyfarth Shaw L.L.P., a leading national, full-service law firm. Working with the firm's Business Services Group, he will focus on serving clients in the media, entertainment and technology industries. His

experience includes practice with Arent Fox PLLC and Winstar Communications where he negotiated that company's acquisitions of BMG's independent film division, Wellspring Media, Individual.com, numerous television stations and motion picture, television and Internet companies. He played key roles in structuring Winstar's alliances with Microsoft, CBS and others.



Jazz tracks by pianist **Paul Serrato '95** have been used in soundtracks of such familiar programs as *Sex in the City*, *A&E Biography* and the Food Channel in Puerto Rico. His

vintage 1960s downtown theater music appears on the soundtrack of the independent film *Superstar in a Housedress*, about Andy Warhol personality Jackie Curtis.



A photograph of President George Bush by **Alex Wong '98** was the cover of the February 16, 2004 issue of *Time* magazine.

Niagara Frontier Center

Louise Marie Kowalski '95, computer information systems department chair with Erie Community College and board member for the Buffalo Alliance on Education, is the recipient of the 2004 National Institute for Staff and Organization Development Award.

Mary Lowther '03, employment director with the Niagara Frontier Auto Dealer's Association, is very involved with the community of Williamsville. In 2003, she was elected village trustee and was named deputy mayor, duties of which include planning, zoning, building and historic preservation.

At this year's Niagara Frontier Center graduation, the Award for Outstanding Tutor/Evaluator was presented to **Carl Meyer '89** in recognition of his work with students. Meyer was recently promoted to technical specialist with Sverdrup Technology Inc.

Madeline Scott '95, a recognized genealogist, has been inducted into the Sons and Daughters of Slave Ancestry. She is a member of the Buffalo NAACP, the Afro-American Historical Association, AKA Gamma Phi Omega and Erie County Links, Inc.

Flavio Van Boekel '04, a school proctor at the University at Buffalo Law School and volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, has been accepted into the college's M.A.T. program.

Northeast Center

Senator Joseph Bruno nominated and presented **Desiree Croteau '01** with the New York State Senate's Women of Distinction Award. Croteau, who is legally blind, earned an M.S. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, is working toward her Ph.D., and has been offered a part-time teaching position with Hudson Valley Community College.

Celeste Farhart '04, who earned her Bachelor of Science degree in human development, is employed with the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Albany.

The Mid-Hudson Teachers Center and the Sojourner Truth Library of SUNY New Paltz hosted **Shari Raymond '98**, a first grade teacher with Warrensburg Elementary School, as she presented her lesson plan, Using Children's Literature in the Elementary Classroom, to fellow K-12 educators. James Ransome's book *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* was used to teach her class on the history of quilting and its significance in helping slaves escape through the Underground Railroad. Students also interpreted illustrations from the book by designing and making their own quilt.

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“one truck and a nursing license.” She had to make the choice of either going forward with her moving company, or staying with nursing. Now Ted Luks, her second husband of 15 years, and she share a blended family of four children. Her company, Santi Express, of which she is president, is still going strong, she said.

Vocally urging on her picks was artist and Saratoga Springs resident **Barbara Garro '93, '95**, seated with new acquaintance

Silvia Silk '91, author of musical stories for children. Garro was excited about a new line of jewelry she was designing named for various masters like Matisse, Vermeer and Renoir. She chose colors suggested by the artists' palettes. “I come to this event because it's just a lot of fun,” she said. Silk had hoped to come last year, but got stuck in a train station during last year's blackout. This year, a picture of elegance in coral lipstick and hat, she looked right at home at Saratoga's classic track. □

Other Alumni Events



Long Island Center dinner: Former Long Island Center dean, Toni Kania, hosted the annual alumni student dinner at the Cradle of Aviation Museum this past April. The evening also feted Joe Mancino '80 and the Roslyn Savings Foundation in gratitude for their scholarship support. (l-r) Michael Paschette; Dean Kania; Diane Paschette '98, '02; Robert Pecoraro and Dolores Pecoraro '97, '00.



FORUM Central dinner: Alumni gathered at the annual alumni student dinner at the FORUM Central residency at the White Eagle Conference Center in May. This event has become very popular over the years with many alumni returning to support the current students. (l-r) Judy Parkhurst '98; Ed Belden '98; Paula Behm '95; Ralph Estabrook '04; Michele Ball '94, '96; Jim Cornell '02, '03 and Dolores Buddie '93.

YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO US!

Send news of your accomplishments and activities so that we can feature them in future issues of Empire State College Alumni and Student News. If possible include a recent photograph (with your name on the back). Please spell out all organization abbreviations.

Name _____

Address _____

Job title _____

Business name/address _____

Center/Unit attended _____

Year graduated/degrees _____

Current student? _____ Area of study _____

Phone number: Work _____ Home _____

E-mail address _____

Honors and other accomplishments _____

Volunteer/professional organizations _____

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