



QUEENS COLLEGE

History Alumni News

Volume 5, No. 1 Spring 2003

A Letter from the Chair

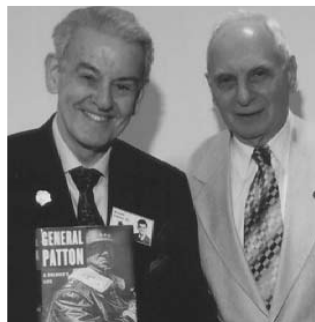
Dear History Alumni,

As usual I am later than I had hoped. But we are back with news and photos. 2002–2003 saw the continuation of the internal transition of the department. Vivian Gruder retired in February 2002; Zvi Yavetz retired this past February; and Martin Pine will be retiring at the end of the August Summer Session. With Zvi Yavetz's retirement we lost a Distinguished Professor; there are pictures in this newsletter of a very warm retirement party we had for him. With Martin Pine's retirement I am losing a superb teacher and scholar, but also a person whose dedication to the department and to the college—and willingness to work for both—has been immense. I was once a young Turk in the department; now I'm part of the Old Guard. With Professor Pine's retirement, only Professors McManus and Hershkowitz will have more seniority than myself.

As I mentioned in my last newsletter, we had two new hires who joined us in September. Professor Julia Sneringer in Modern European History and Professor Amy Chazkel in Latin American History have been exceptional additions to the department. They are already accomplished teachers and contributing members to the life of the department.

This fall Professor Sarah Covington will join the department. She is a student of early Modern European History with a specialty in British and Irish History. She received her Ph.D. from the City University where Professor Stuart Prall was her adviser.

A number of very positive things have happened to members of the department. Stanley Hirshson's definitive biography of General George Patton was published last fall and immediately won high praise. There were numerous requests for talks and television appearances (some of you may have seen him). Professor Joel Allen won a special CUNY Fellowship which allowed him to concentrate on his scholarship. Although it deprived us of his teaching that had already breathed life into the ancient history program, it spoke well of his abilities and the kind of hires we have been able to make. Amy Chazkel has just won the



Arnold Franco and Stanley Hirshson at the Franco Prize Luncheon last fall.

Carlebach has been on leave with a Fellowship from the New York Public Library. And recently she won a National Endowment of the Humanities Fellowship that will permit her to take a sabbatical next year. Again we will miss her for another year, but those of you who have studied under Professor Carlebach know how richly deserving she is of these honors. Professor Morris Rossabi has been on sabbatical; in the fall he was a major participant in organizing the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibit on the Mongol influence on Asian art. He conducted a specially organized tour of the exhibit for History faculty and students. Finally, Professor Joshua Freeman will be taking over as Executive Officer of the History program at the CUNY Graduate Center. I will miss his wise counsel; he has taken a very active role in all our curricular and hiring decisions. He continues as a member of the department, but his responsibilities will be at the Graduate Center.

Many Queens history students continue to have outstanding records. As I write this letter, our top graduating senior, Graziela Ionescu, is debating between acceptances by Yale, Columbia, and Princeton for graduate work in late ancient or early medieval history. I am especially proud of my own son who is graduating with honors in both History and Film Studies. He started at Union College, but had the wisdom to transfer to Queens. In mid-May we will be recognizing our honors-winning students, a number with prizes containing cash awards. These awards are made possible by your contributions to the History Alumni Fund. This year we have added a prize for the top student specializing in Jewish History. In addition, the sister of Alan Jay

same fellowship for next year and again it reflects her abilities and the quality of the new people we are bringing into the department. Professor Elisheva

Orman, a history alumnus who died in the crash of Flight 800 several years ago, made an extremely generous donation that has made possible a prize for the top student in European History who is going to pursue graduate work. Finally, at our honors party we will also be awarding certificates of thanks to several alumni who have been particularly supportive of the department. We started this last year and hope to be able to continue the practice.

The college, like the City University as a whole, is suffering from the state of the economy and from the state budget. But internally the college is on the right course. The reversal of the drop in enrollment that occurred during President Sessoms' presidency was begun under interim President Hotzler and has continued under our new president, James Muyskens. Enrollment is vital to the college's finances, and stable finances are vital to the ability of the college to hire full-time faculty.

News of the retired History faculty is good. Professor Prall is splitting his time between Florida (winters) and Canada (summers) and reports that he likes both. Vivian Gruder has spent much of the year in Paris. I am in e-mail communication with Professors Wreszin and Gruder regularly and with Professors Della Cava and Kinsbruner occasionally. And I speak occasionally with Professors Avrich, McConnell, and White-side. Although not a retiree—she is now at New York University—Marion Kaplan and I continue to keep in touch.

In this issue, you will find portraits of Professors Amy Chazkel, Julia Sneringer, and Martin Pine along with some of their own thoughts about Queens students. Amy's and Julia's are from the perspective of new faculty; Martin's is from that of a retiring faculty member. I think their comments are reflective of the strength of the college and its student body. Martha Gli-poneo, one of our graduating seniors and the President of Phi Alpha Theta, is largely responsible for these three portraits.

All the members of the History Department enjoy hearing from their former students. Even when they are sometimes negligent (like myself) in replying, they still appreciate the letters.

Sincerely,
Frank Warren, Chair

Teaching @ Queens College

Professor Amy Chazkel

One of the newest history professors of Queens College, Professor Chazkel specializes in Latin American history. "I had always been interested in Latin American culture, having lived in New York and New Jersey most of my life," she explained. She attended George Washington University where she initially aspired to be a diplomat and majored in International Affairs. A part-time job in college directed her instead toward the field of history. As a tour guide, she embarked on her own research of Washington, D.C. and gave historical tours throughout the area. Soon, she would use her researching ability to complete her graduate degree.

Chazkel traveled to Brazil in 1994 and immediately fell in love with the country. She wanted to be completely immersed in its culture. She worked hard to learn Portuguese, at times carrying three English-Portuguese dictionaries. Back in the U.S. she knew that she wanted to focus specifically on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Brazil. She recently received her Ph.D. from Yale University, having finished her doctoral dissertation in September 2002 on Brazilian urban society and the illicit lottery. She is looking forward to publishing her dissertation in book form, and then translating it into Portuguese. Ideas for new projects include slavery and the law in Latin America.

When asked about her first-year teaching experience at Queens, Professor Chazkel evaluated it with the following thoughts: "As someone with a lifelong personal and intellectual interest in city life, I feel blessed to have gotten a job in this vibrant, fascinating part of this most vibrant, fascinating city. Teaching at Queens College also presents challenges I had not faced before. For instance, arranging educational activities to complement those inside the classroom, such as museum and library visits or film screenings, has proven logistically difficult. While teaching at a commuter college has its logistical hurdles, I am also finding here a wonderful diversity of 'real-life' experiences that students bring into the classroom, the likes of which I had never seen before. I am endlessly impressed with the Queens College students' ability to take seriously their college learning experience while still juggling, in many cases, nearly full-time work, parenting and other family responsibilities, and a long drive or

bus ride to campus (which this winter often made even more of a burden due to horrendous weather conditions). I have found the students at Queens intellectually curious and open-minded, and among them there have been some who are truly intellectually gifted. Only a few Queens College students I have encountered so far have had any contact with Latin America through study, travel, or family background. Yet the students in both my introductory surveys and my advanced seminars have entered that largely unfamiliar territory with enthusiasm. I look forward to harnessing that energy to develop an increasingly solid program in the study of the history of Latin America by, for example, helping to organize a lecture or film series or perhaps a study-abroad trip to Latin America. I especially hope to build momentum in the inherent interest I have detected among Queens students in the study of Brazil, the country where I do my own research."

Professor Julia Sneeringer

As a longtime resident of Philadelphia, Professor Sneeringer is glad to be back on the East Coast. After spending six years teaching European History in Beloit College in Wisconsin, she is settling in quite nicely at Queens College.

Professor Sneeringer received her doctoral degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Her field of expertise is in women's history in twentieth-century Germany. Her first book was on women and politics in the Weimar Republic. She is currently writing an article on advertising and inflation in Germany in the 1920s.

Her interest in German history stemmed from her interest in German art, which naturally led her to probe more deeply into German culture and history. She started her graduate degree with "a good feeling that I would go on to teaching." She adds, "I had always admired teachers." She keeps her students interested in the subject by "making things more concrete" through the use of propaganda images and films. She has visited Germany several times, as a student and researcher, and loves its dynamic political and social nature. She plans on traveling to Germany again for her next project on the cultural life of Hamburg in the 1960s.

In reflecting on her experience with students during her first year at Queens, Professor Sneeringer writes: "I'm very happy to have landed at Queens, for many reasons. The students keep me interested because they bring so many different perspectives to our classes. I love the mix of

ages, backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities because I really do learn a lot from this diverse student body. I also appreciate the way Queens students tackle issues in class—they aren't afraid to have opinions, and they're not afraid to try new ideas. I like to present material that brings alive the experiences of common men and women, and that ties the past to the present. Queens students respond well to that approach to history, which makes it a pleasure to teach."

Professor Martin Pine

Professor Pine's teaching specialties are in medieval and Renaissance intellectual history. In the field of Renaissance history he is the leading authority on Pietro Pomponazzi, the early sixteenth-century Italian philosopher. He will be going on Travia leave in the fall and officially retire January 31, 2004. After forty-one years of teaching at Queens College, he looks forward to spending his free time continuing his research and writing.

During his long career in the history department at Queens College, Professor Pine has also taught in the SEEK program, the ACE program, and the Honors Program in the Western Tradition. He has directed the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies since 1984 where he has witnessed "terrific, high-level Master's theses." In 1991, he received the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

As part of the History Personnel and Budget Committee, he was instrumental in hiring new faculty, which include Professors Joel Allen, Amy Chazkel, Julia Sneeringer, and Sarah Covington. Reflecting on his impending retirement, he says, "I leave the college knowing that there is a strong core of younger faculty so the department will remain strong in the years to come." He feels equally positive about the present student body. Noting the tremendous changes in the student body over the past twenty years, Professor Pine finds the ethnically and age diverse student body challenging and exciting to teach: "Many students are immigrants or first-generation Americans who are eager to learn and overcome linguistic problems. The senior-citizen retirees and other older students bring historical perspective to the classroom and thus make the past come alive to our younger students. It is thrilling to see our new generation of students winning a high proportion of top honors at graduation."

Gruder Retirement Party • May 2002



Pictured above are Professors Kraut, Alteras, Hirshson, Hershkowitz, Pine, Gruder, Haan, Warren, Wreszin, Whiteside, Syrett, and Peterson



At left, Professor Vivian Gruder

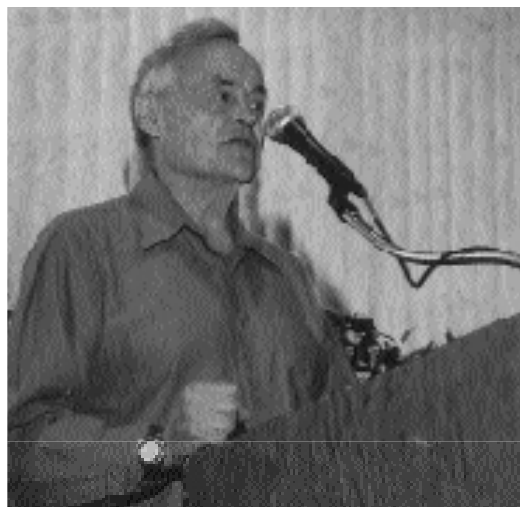


At right, Professors David Syrett and Vivian Gruder



Professors Elena Frangakis-Syrett and Vivian Gruder with Robert Haan and Michael Wreszin

Honors Award Party • May 2002



Professor Leo Hershkowitz

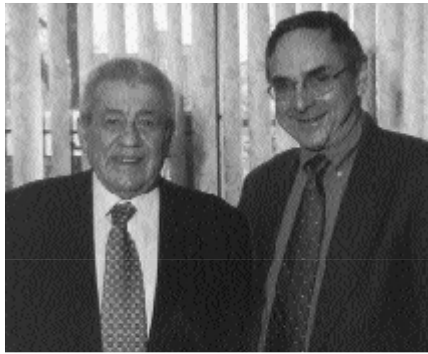


Alumnus William Asadorian with Professors Warren and Hershkowitz

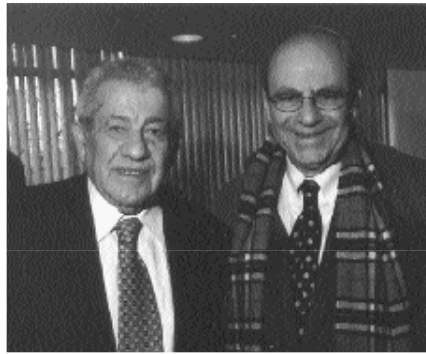


Alumni George Williams and Arnold Franco with their awards

Yavetz Retirement Party • Fall 2002

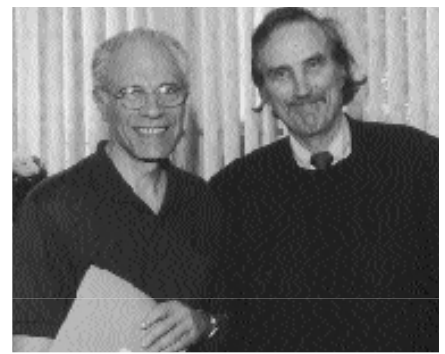


**Professors Zvi Yavetz and
Jon Peterson**



Professors Zvi Yavetz and Martin Pine

Pinson Prize Winner



**Pinson Prize Winner Anthony Panepinto
and Professor Warren on May 28, 2002**

Franco Prize Luncheon • Fall 2002

Attending the Franco Prize Luncheon were,
from left to right, Christopher Maier,
John Mark DuCharme, Arnold Franco,
Professor Joel Allen, and Graziela Ionescu.

Graziela was the Prize winner and
Christopher and John Mark were the runners-up.



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