This issue was made possible by grants from:
Baruch in Florida
The Baruch College Fund
and The Reuter Foundation

We are grateful for the support of:
Prof. John Todd, Chair, Department of English
Prof. Carol Berkin, Acting Chair, Department of Art
Dr. Norman Fainstein, Dean of the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Dr. M. Barry Dumas, Associate Provost
Dr. Lois Cronholm, Provost
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Dr. Matthew Goldstein, President

We appreciate the assistance of:
Karl Schmid and the Office of Campus Facilities and Operations,
Theresa Karamanos and the staff of the Office of College Advancement,
Robert Klotzbach, Director of Media Services,
Prof. Kristin McDonough, Newman Library Director,
Dr. Samuel D. Johnson, Dean of Students,
Prof. Joan Japha, Assoc. Dean of Liberal Arts & Sciences,
Prof. Fran Antmann, Amanda Barrett, Jerry Bornstein, Prof. Artelia Court,
Prof. Bridgett Davis, Al Goldstein, Prof. Judi Hampton, Bert Hansen,
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Prof. Myron Schwartzman, Dave Strickler, Mark Strickler, Prof. Alisa Solomon,
Prof. Leonard Sussman, Connie Terrero, Brenda Vercesi, Frank Werber and Prof. Lucinda Zoe.

Printing: Tri-Lon Color Lithographers Ltd.

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From the Editor's Desk

The streets are lined with gold. There is absolute political and religious freedom. You can be what you want to be. These are some of the myths that have drawn immigrants to the United States for generations. Undoubtedly, the world's greatest melting pot has many things to offer, but there is also a down side. Here at Baruch College, the students are well aware of the trials and tribulations involved in coming to America, and that first-hand understanding of immigration informs every page of the cover package for this year's issue of Dollars and Sense.

Two stories in the cover package deal with the lengths people will go to in order to obtain a green card. “Close-up on the Nanny” focuses on women who work as underpaid nannies for people who offer to sponsor them until they gain residency and “The Tarnished Ring” is about three men who entered into green card weddings in order to keep themselves or their girlfriends from having to leave the country. How West Indian dollar vans are competing with the MTA is shown in “A Run for the Money.” Habla Español? There are television and radio stations that are geared towards Spanish speaking Americans. These networks and the advertising that supports them are looked at in “Televisionaries.” And finally, “Form Frenzy” gives us a glimpse of the struggle to get information and the right forms from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The feature stories are grouped into six sections: corporate, finance, health, industry, international and politics. “Losing Power,” a story about Con Ed and its struggles with lawsuits and repairs, leads off the corporate section, while the finance section shows companies getting involved in new territory in “Other People’s Business.” The resurrection of a disease presumed to be conquered and the high cost of treating a fairly new disease are discussed in the health section. In the industry section, “Gold in the Garbage” argues whether or not recycling is going to pay for itself. The Caribbean is a hot topic right now with all of the political unrest and military action in the region. Three Caribbean economies and a trade agreement that has the potential of being a tremendous help for the countries involved are the focus of the international section. “The Lost War,” in politics, talks about the legalization of drugs and the possible effects on the economy.

This year, the business journalism program and Dollars and Sense moved into new offices, and became the beneficiaries of the Reuter Business Briefing, just the latest sign of support we have received from the Reuter Foundation, which has been a vital part of the development of the business journalism program, its lecture series, the international internship and Dollars and Sense. For their faith in the students in the business journalism program, we express our sincere thanks.
Cover illustration by Yanoret Saez
Back cover by Timothy I. Jones

THE NEW MELTING POT

Cover Package

THE "NEWER" IMMIGRATION
by Diana Cabral and Fernando Luján

FORM FRENZY
For today's immigrants, just getting hold of the right forms is an ordeal
by Sarah Jacobson

THE TARNISHED RING
When wedding vows have a market value, you can assume the INS is watching
by Peter Antonio

A RUN FOR THE MONEY
New York's dollar vans are challenging the MTA on its own streets
by Antoinette Coulton

TELEVISIONARIES
Advertisers have nothing to lose in the translation
by Katty Acosta

CLOSE-UP ON THE NANNY
Nannies have stepped into the spotlight, but the attention is not always welcome
by Antoinette Coulton
Santería, a magical religious practice inspired by West African deities that thrives in Latino communities from Brazil to Cuba to the barrios of the Bronx.

Santería is seen as a way of life for many people in this community. To Martinez, his 10-year-old store is just a normal business. Martinez does not expect it to move or close down anytime soon. “God willing, no. I won’t leave. I have my own loyal customers. I help out this community, its people and their problems.” Santería’s association with witchcraft is not taboo to Martinez. “This is what we believe, what we grew up with. We’ve been doing this for a hundred years, even more than that.”

Martinez inherited his business when his father passed away. His father had first opened this store, known as a botánica, with $10,000. Today, according to Martinez, “This kind of business needs $25,000 in rent and investments to run.”

People come in groups or individually and ask for different herbs, statues, and oraciones, or typed prayers on thin yellow sheets. They flock around the glass counter and ask Martinez, “What do you think I should do?” Such was the quest of a young mother who dropped by to see Martinez. She greeted him affectionately, and whispered to him, “I just don’t know what to do… I’m in trouble.” Martinez advises her, “Just be patient. Sit down, and wait and I’ll give you a reading.” When asked what a reading is, Martinez slyly states, “Let’s not talk about that.”

A reading to the people of this neighborhood is when a person “endowed” with the ability to tell someone else’s future reads their palm, a set of tarot cards or the stain on a coffee cup from which the person drank. Many people come to see such “blessed” persons because they are desperate as to what the future holds and try to find out their spouses’ infidelities.

Martinez does talk about the need for his store in the community. “I get about 100 to 200 customers per day. I’m open from nine to nine. They mostly buy candles and incense, and hope their luck will change. This is our nature, our legacy from our ancestors.”

Martinez said that he also sells statues of saints for worship, beads and charms for good luck, and the flowers and herbs for people to take baths in. These baths or baños are believed to awaken the bather’s luck, love life and even heal them from any sicknesses or ailments. “Most of the people that come here have health problems,” explained Martinez. “If they don’t, they want a better life, to change their luck.”

Martinez is not the only proud owner of such a botánica, in the neighborhood. One block away, a bigger, cleaner shop has reopened after remodeling, but the owner was unavailable for comment. Martinez, not at all flustered, said the competition “doesn’t bother me at all.”

Martinez has just one employ-
Body Hardware

On a quiet block in the East Village, oblivious to the commercial traffic on St. Mark’s Place, is a storefront window display with dozens of carefully laid-out silver rings. Inside, people sit on black leather couches, nervously smoking cigarettes and staring at deep purple walls. Most of them are accompanied by a friend. The pungent smell of antiseptic permeates the room. The atmosphere is like the waiting room of a doctor-gone-bad. All the patients are waiting to get pierced.

Body piercing is the specialty at Venus Modern Body Arts, which recently celebrated its first year in business at 199 E. 4th St. Once associated with the underground world of S&M, body piercing has risen above ground. When supermodels strutted down the runways baring their pierced navels two years ago, it became a fashion statement. In other words, piercing went mainstream, and Venus was there to accommodate the trend.

“I wish I could turn back time to two years ago. It was more fun when it was less popular,” said Lance Rubin, co-owner of Venus with Maria Tashjian, in a recent interview in Tattoo Ink. “It’s just not as much fun having to deal with Joe Wall Street.”

But it is more profitable. Sales at the Guantlet Inc., a California-based chain of piercing salons with one location in the West Village, have doubled in the past three years according to Jim Ward, its president.

Piercing has been around since ancient times. Egyptian pharaohs pierced their navels, Roman centurian guards pierced their chests as a sign of virility and to clasp their capes. African tribes use piercing as ornamentation even today and in India, noses are pierced as a sign of wealth and status for marriageable women.

In the United States, body piercing is not traditional, but is a way to express individuality and independence. “Leftover teenage angst,” explained Leigh Anne Fitzpatrick, 23, when asked why she put five holes in her ears and one in her nose and another in her navel. “The more you do, the more you want. I keep thinking maybe I should pierce something else.”

Sun, a patron whose multi-pierced tongue clicks constantly as he speaks, has been involved in the body art movement for the past five years. He estimates that 40 percent of those who get pierced do so for erotic pleasure, the other 60 percent for “purely esthetic reasons.”

What will be the trend of the future? Venus also offers appointments for branding and scarification. Next!

—Patricia Avidan

The Beat

The corner of 18th Street and Broadway in Manhattan looks like a typical corner on a typical New York City street. There are unleveled sidewalks, parts of which have been closed off for months at a time for construction. Traffic usually slows to a crawl as cars maneuver through the narrowing street and roll over a steaming manhole cover. The 10-story building at 37 East 18th Street has one working elevator which still has plastic buttons and a whirring fan on top. But the seventh floor is anything but typical.

As you step out of the ancient elevator and walk through the shiny, black doors of the Djoniba Dance and Drum Centre you immediately forget the grey concrete and narrow street outside. Two African statues wait to greet all those who enter the Centre, along with red, yellow and green traditional African patterns, decorations and a window exposing the glossy parquet floor of the front instruction room. It isn’t unusual to find the owner Abdullah Djoniba Moufllet wait-
ing at the front as well.

Djonibia Dance and Drum Centre provides instruction in a wide variety of African influenced dance as well as ballet, jazz, hip-hop, gymnastics, karate and aerobics. Djonibia also offers drum classes using Djembe, Conga and Haitian forms. In addition to dance and drum classes, voice and choral lessons are also offered, utilizing Djonibia’s in-house recording facility. The wide variety of classes attracts an equally diverse clientele. Tetteh Tawiah, a student at York College, was shopping around for a dance school that offered jazz, when he spotted an ad for Djonibia in the Village Voice. Tawiah, who has a background in the martial arts, was impressed with the variety Djonibia had to offer. “So I got off from work and I came right down here,” said Tawiah. He said that he discussed his interest with Mouflet, who was still at the center at 7 p.m., preparing for the annual Djonibia Kids Scholarship fund raiser.

When Mouflet, 32, first envisioned the Drum Centre, he wanted to serve all of New York City’s various ethnic groups. “I wanted a place that everyone would feel comfortable but definitely where black people feel empowered,” he says.

Djonibia has beginner, intermediate and advanced level classes, and provides instruction from ages three and up. On Saturday mornings the smallest of Djonibia’s students, the three to six age group, try diligently to keep step with the instructor. Sometimes they fiddle with their laps or look to the side, where their parents are attentively watching through the instruction room window. Mouflet said that exposing the African-American and Latino children of the city to African culture at a very early age is important. Djonibia prides itself on serving youth, especially underprivileged youth, in an attempt to better the community. It tries to unite people of all ethnicities, not by rhetoric but by interaction and through setting an example.

In an effort to expose underprivileged youth to African culture Djonibia has scholarship and work study programs. Its annual fund raiser, which commemorates Djonibia’s opening in 1986, was a dance recital performed by the center’s younger students.

“I wanted people to see a young, black man around young, black people,” said Mouflet. “I wanted to expose black culture to the world with pride, not just African-Americans but black people from all over the world. But I especially implement programs for the children.”

Mouflet, who is a native of Martinique, acquired the space back in 1986. A bulletin board in the center chronicles the birth of Djonibia, with dated pictures. First, there is a picture of Mouflet examining the gutted space, which was previously a paper factory. Then, there are pictures of lumber being delivered, friends and family laboring over planks of wood and other stills showing the grueling process which goes into starting any business. From the beginning Djonibia received financial contributions and support from Mouflet’s friends and family that made it possible for the center to open its doors.

Mouflet also employed a financing strategy similar to the one celebrated filmmaker Spike Lee used when he was trying to produce his first feature film “She’s Gotta Have It.” I applied for as many credit cards as I could,” a laughing Mouflet said, Plastic aside, Djonibia still encourages donations from the dance and general community.

—Darren Hartley

Hemp

Hemp, also known as marijuana, has been used for thousands of years for both its industrial and psychiatric properties by nearly every culture with access to it. There are literally hundreds of medical and industrial uses for hemp which, if encouraged, could significantly improve this country’s economy, the planet’s ecosystem and the condition of many suffering patients. However, motivated by greed and racism according to critics, the U.S. government made sale and production of hemp illegal in 1938. Today, groups such as Business Alliance for Commerce in Hemp and the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) are fighting for its legalization.

Would legalizing hemp benefit America? Financially, growing hemp would provide American farmers with a profitable, highly-demanded almost all-year-round crop that yields a great harvest in little space under any climate. Marijuana, if sold with an age restriction as cigarettes or alcohol are now sold, would create an entirely new industry providing jobs and tax revenues for the government. All the expenses of law enforcement in this area could be spent on educating the young instead of arresting them.

The husk of the hemp plant can be used to create biomass, a clean, efficient source of fuel. According to the author of Environmental Chemistry, Stanley E. Manahan, if only 6 percent of the nation’s farmland were producing a harvest of biomass, they would provide enough fuel to power the entire country. America could conceivably end its dependence on foreign oil, with its multibillion annual tab.

Medicinally speaking, marijuana can be used effectively as a pain reliever, anti-depressant and appetite stimulant. Studies done at UCLA in 1976 showed that marijuana can be used to treat victims of cancer, anorexia, bulimia, nausea, depression, glaucoma, catacaeta, epilepsy, asthma, arthritis and many other painful conditions. In many cases, it could be used in place of morphine, the opium-derived.
highly-addictive pain killer now being used, according to marijuana advocates.

Environmentally, biomass fuel created from hemp does not deplete earth's natural resources or produce toxic gases or acid rain like fossil fuels. Using hemp fiber to make paper products eliminates the need to cut down valuable, oxygen-producing forestland. According to Jack Herer, author of The Emperor Wears No Clothes, this marijuana economy, in conjunction with recycling, could eventually repair nearly all of the damage done to the ozone layer.

Hemp plants have deep, strong roots which tighten the soil to guard against erosion damage. Unused portions can be made into mulch which actually replenishes the soil. The oil extracted from its seeds can be used in place of crude oil to make more easily biodegradable plastics. This same oil can also be used for cooking and is lower in saturated fat than any other oil. In addition, the plant's husk is an excellent source of fiber and its seeds are the second highest source of protein on the planet.

So, why isn't it legal? Politics. The government would have to admit, in effect, that it had either been completely wrong about marijuana or that it had been lying to the people all this time, neither of which it seems prepared to do.

The claims that legalization is morally wrong, that it sends the wrong message to kids, that usage would increase, and that it would be more accessible for minors to purchase are all unfounded. No such charges made against alcohol and tobacco, two legal drugs proven more harmful than marijuana, have been able to stick.

In truth, it is doubtful that marijuana's availability and usage would increase. Marijuana is currently readily available on the street to any age group and may be laced, sprayed or treated with anything. Marijuana bought legally would be tested pure, clean, and factory-refined, and not sold to minors. In reality, marijuana use is based on personal choice, not legal statute.

The message being sent would not encourage marijuana use, but would be very similar to the message conveyed about condom use and sex—"If you are going to do it, be safe and responsible."

In Amsterdam, where the use of most drugs is tolerated, the rates of crime, imprisonment, drug abuse, murder, overdose and addiction are some of the lowest in the world, and still dropping.

—Robert Braswell

Shaolin Monk in New York

Like other religious establishments in lower Manhattan's Chinatown, Shaolin USA is a place of worship for individuals keen on the words of the Buddha and the Taoist "way." But unlike other Chinatown temples, non-believers also spend countless hours in the 1,200-foot space, vigorously following the discipline of the martial art of kung-fu. Rather than arriving to pray, these individuals come to test their endurance, strengthen their legs and further their agility by practicing spin-kicks, twirling spears, and enduring the pain of hour-long horse stances.

Thirty-year-old Shi Yan Ming is the teacher. And he shares with his students the methods and theories of Shaolin kungfu that his masters have bestowed on him since he entered the legendary Shaolin monastery at the age of five. For over two decades, Yan Ming slept, ate, prayed and practiced the mystified arts of Shaolin kungfu at the Northern Chinese temple. Then, in his twenties, Yan Ming took them to the rest of the world. While performing in various countries reaching every corner of the globe, he has also taught over three thousand students in seminars from nation to nation.

But his travels hit a quick halt when he arrived in the U.S. to perform his art in late 1992. He decided to settle down and spread his knowledge from a more permanent and stable spot.

"Like my being raised in the Shaolin Temple," Yan Ming insists, "settling in the U.S. is simply my destiny and fate." He will return some day. And with him, he will be taking the 50 students who call him siifu, or teacher, at the Manhattan temple and studio. But until that day, with financial donations from an organized Buddhist community and monthly tuition fees of $100 per student, Yan Ming aspires to nurture his school's growth as he works toward demystifying the legends and practices for those with the passion to learn.

—Raymond Lam
here has been a lot of rethinking worldwide about the changing role the government plays in providing social services. In the United States, the revisionist approach to government intervention was fostered by Republican Presidents Reagan and Bush, who drastically scaled back domestic spending and called for private voluntary action to assume greater responsibilities for meeting social needs. Following in their footsteps, the Republican-dominated Congress under the leadership of House speaker Newt Gingrich promises to further scale back the active participation of government in these areas. That leaves a gap, which more and more is filled by many institutions in the non-profit sector that minister to problems in education, health, and economic empowerment. In addition to the assistance they provide, the non-profit sector is a powerful economic factor in another way: It employs a surprising 10 percent of the nation’s workers.

Traditionally, philanthropy meant making gifts to non-profit community organizations that, in turn, provided health and welfare services. Most recently the tables have turned and major philanthropic organizations have begun directly administering their grants to aid civic and cultural causes, minority groups and the urban poor.

Never before has the need been so dire. The nation’s problems of poverty, race relations, urban renewal, pollution, education and housing are just some of the challenges tackled by non-profit organizations.

The Ford Foundation, a non-profit organization founded on the money made by the pioneering mass-maker of automobiles, is a Manhattan-based giant among foundations that is dedicated to international peace and also to the advancement of the well-being of people throughout the world. Ranked as the largest of 25 grant-making and private and community foundations by the Foundation Center in 1990 and
1991, the Ford Foundation contributes $672.5 million a year worldwide to organizations that espouse a wide spectrum of causes. With these generous contributions, Ford has four specific goals in bettering human welfare: to strengthen democratic values, to reduce poverty and injustice, to promote international cooperation, and to advance human achievement.

The Ford Foundation was established in 1936 by Henry and Edsel Ford. Although originally started by the Fords, the Ford Foundation is an independent organization and today has no ties either to the Ford family or the Ford Motor Company. The Foundation’s assets consist of a portfolio of stocks, bonds and other investments that are valued at $6.1 billion.

The brain center of the Ford Foundation is a massive building in midtown Manhattan, designed by Phillip Johnson with interior walls of glass and a spacious atrium garden. The other 17 offices are located in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Foundation’s main areas of funding include urban poverty, rural poverty and resources, human rights and social justice, governance and public policy, education and culture, international affairs, reproductive health and population and a variety of media projects.

Last year, the Foundation approved $196.8 million in the U.S. and International Affairs Programs and $91.1 million in Developing Countries Programs.

THE WAR ON POVERTY

As always, Urban Poverty has received the largest amount of funding. It is expected to receive the largest award this fiscal year for giving $86.7 million towards various programs throughout the United States, Africa, Asia and Latin America to eliminate poverty and misfortunes. The Foundation’s efforts to diminish poverty are carried out in reviving distressed neighborhoods, strengthening economic and social support for children and families, and support for research and disclosure of information on urban poverty.

The largest and most widely recognized element of the Urban Poverty program is community and neighborhood development. The Foundation has supported the creation and growth of community development corporations.

CDC’s are non-profit organizations involved in job training, economic development, and a variety of social services. CDC’s have also become one of the largest producers of affordable housing in low-income communities.

In addition to the CDC’s, there is also a program called Neighborhood and Family Initiative that is very active in Detroit, Milwaukee, Memphis and Hartford. Its goal is to promote the physical, economical, and social revival of under privileged neighborhoods.

The Foundation’s second most active program is Rural Poverty and Resources. They are expected to receive $61 million. Rural Poverty has two grant making divisions: community economic development and environment and development.

A lot of the funds contributed for community economic development are targeted at reducing rural poverty. Attention is directed to organizations connected with rural credit, public development institutions, and state and regional philanthropies. The Foundation’s concern with the environment and development is to find ways to reconcile environmental concerns with economic activities.

The Rights and Social Justice Program, which is concerned with minorities, refugees, migrants, women and legal services for the poor, is expected to receive $60.6 million.

The Governance and Public Policy Program is expected to receive $55.8 million toward the efforts of improving government performance, broadening civic participation, enhancing understanding of public policy issues, strengthening non-governmental organizations and expanding philanthropy.

Ford’s Education and Culture Program is expected to receive $80.6 million to expand opportunities for education. The Foundation aids in national projects in precollege and college levels. In the last decade, the Foundation has also provided approximately 1,000 doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships to minorities whose intentions were to teach at colleges or universities.

The International Affairs Program is expected to receive $66 million to work on their goals of reinforcing the principles governing international law and organizations, to encourage peace and security in foreign countries, to encourage international economics and development, to promote international human rights, to promote effective U.S. foreign policy and international relations and to strengthen civil society in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The Reproductive Health and Population program is expected to get $22.6 million to sponsor social science research and training, community-based initiatives, ethical and legal issues, and the United Nations Conference on Population and Development.

Media Projects is slated for $6 million for independent films, videos, and radio productions in the United States.

GRANTS AND LOANS GIVEN

In addition to granting money, the Foundation also lends money to other foundations in the form of Program Related Investments. PRIs are given as an alternative to help other foundations achieve their goals. PRIs are loan guaranteed and recoverable. This year the Foundation will give out $30 million in PRIs.

Step inside the Ford Foundation’s headquarters in Manhattan and you almost immediately notice the hush. The program directors and administrators inside may be audibly sealed off from the hustle and bustle of New York, but they remain attuned to the problems outside. In an atmosphere that is reminiscent of both a university and a major business, the quiet has become that much more intense as the challenges outside have grown, and with them the need for their work.
Losing Power

After a series of lawsuits and accidents, Con Ed may be facing a corporate blackout

by Juliet Collis
illustrations by Bill J. Tomaras

Con Edison, the energy giant that supplies electrical services to all of New York City and most of Westchester County, has been caught in a pattern of environmental problems as well as several brushes with the law.

On August 19, 1989, a steam pipe exploded in the Gramercy Park area of Manhattan leaving three dead and injuring 24. The company assured investigators that the asbestos covering the pipes was not released into the air and that there was no danger to residents or city workers cleaning up the area. However, four days later, it was discovered by the city’s Health Department that there was in fact a threat of contamination. Two buildings were evacuated, displacing 350 residents and costing Con Ed $500,000 a week in temporary housing costs.

Prosecutors accused Con Ed of deliberately withholding information about the asbestos threat immediately after the blast. The company vehemently denied the allegations—until now.

PAYING THE PIPER

In early 1995, the company pled guilty to conspiracy, failure to notify authorities of the asbestos threat, making fraudulent statements and deceiving the Environmental Protection Agency and National Recovery Center.

Con Ed now faces up to $2 million in fines and 20 years probation. They have already paid $90 million to settle civil suits arising from the blast. Two retired employees, Constantine J. Papakrasas, assistant vice president for steam operations, and Philip B. McGivney, division manager of steam construction, were also named in the suit and face up to 18 years in prison and $1 million each in fines. The charges were later dropped against both defendants because both had become ill and were unable to stand trial.

Until the trial, Papakrasas testified that tests performed by Con Ed immediately after the explosion revealed that in the four hours following the explosion, more than 200 pounds of asbestos had been released. He also admitted to concealing the test results from federal investigators. However, according to United States Attorney Mary Jo White, there was no evidence that any of Papakrasas’s supervisors were involved in the cover-up.

Con Ed arranged to pay the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation the largest settlement in the agency’s history. The company was charged with 319 violations, dating from 1984 to 1991, and agreed to pay $9 million in penalties and $5 million on environmental reconstruction.

Among other violations, Attorney General Oliver Koppell charged that Con Ed violated New York State law by failing to provide a number of religious institutions with special rate options. Koppell seeks to have Con Ed reimburse the churches with interest on the difference of what they paid and what they should have paid.

The company also faces a fine of $247,000 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for failing to drain a 40-year-old steam pipe at the Waterside generating station at First Avenue and 40th Street which ruptured killing a mechanic and injuring five fire fighters, one critically. The incident was attributed directly to the build-up of fluid in the pipe, the same reason for the Gramercy Park explosion.

Eugene McGrath, the chairman of Con Ed, told The New York Times, “We’ve made some mistakes here.” He acknowledged that the company could have taken measures to reduce the frequency of accidents. He later added, “It’s not the kind of company we want to be, or our public wants us to be.”

TAKING STOCK

In 1991, Con Ed reported a 23 percent decline in their first quarter earnings. Net income declined from $138.1 million or 56 cents per share in 1990, to $106.7 million or 43 cents per share the following year. Operating revenues slipped 1 percent to $1.48 billions from $1.49 billion that same year. The company blamed decreased earnings on lower electricity and natural gas sales as well as expenses connected to its Indian Point 2 reactor in Buchanan, N.Y.

However, observers say that the string of catastrophes may
be the leading cause in the company’s decline.” It does not look good to have a pattern of environmental problems occur,” Barry M. Abramson, a utility analyst at Prudential Securities, told The New York Times. He says that the various fines imposed on Con Ed should not have any long term effects on the company’s financial standing. “We don’t think the incremental cost is going to be important to them, because they’re such a large company,” he says.

But what about those rates?

“Where we would worry, from an investor’s point of view, is how is this going to affect the attitude of the regulators who are going to be deciding on the company’s rate cases,” says Abramson. “Sometimes these intangibles can affect the way a particular commissioner or two might vote, particularly if that commissioner has a strong interest in environmental matters.”

**MENDING THEIR WAYS**

Con Ed may be more vulnerable to competition from producers because its electricity prices are among the highest in the country. Government officials have a broad range of power over regulated utilities, and know that in order for them to prosper in an ever changing industry they need the good will of regulators and elected officials. McGrath, who became chairman in 1989 when Arthur Hauspurg retired, admitted to Matthew Wald of The New York Times that he is embarrassed by the company’s record. McGrath, who received a BBA in engineering from Manhattan College and his MBA at Iona College, has been with the company since 1963. He has remained on the operations side throughout his career, working in engineering and construction. He has been involved in developing the company’s programs for the future, containing costs and improving productivity. He claims that Con Ed has had problems in the past with its corporate culture, but he is prepared to change that. Under McGrath, an extensive training program had been developed to educate employees on how to deal with environmental challenges such as spills, leaks and emergencies such as the Gramercy Park incident. MacGrath says that many of the employees can expect to receive drills from time to time and those more likely to be faced with accidents will receive more thorough training.

To improve its reputation, Con Ed has agreed to bring in environmental auditors who will spend months interviewing employees, examining procedures and performing other duties including sampling dirt and water. If any violations or problems are discovered, Con Ed could encounter fines that would cost them millions of dollars. Included in their goals is a plan to spend $4.2 billion on promoting conservation programs such as “Enlightened Energy,” a program offering ways to help consumers save money by using energy efficiently. These programs are intended to save 26 percent of Con Ed’s current generating capacity. The utility has already subsidized the replacement of 89 percent of the commercial and industrial lighting equipment in its service area. Con Ed has gone after improvements not only to gain support from government officials, but also in hopes of reaping big profits.

Not only are they concerned with changing their image to please elected officials, but they are even more concerned about their customers. “Being that our rates have gone up 15 percent since 1991, we must make an extra effort to please our customers,” says a Con Ed customer service representative who asked not to be identified. The representative, who has been with the company for five years and was a meter reader for his first four years, stated that they undergo training once a year on how to handle situations and customers. “We are the eyes for this company I believe training is extremely important,” he says.

The initial response has been good from businesses and residences where 106,000 customers are satisfied with their services received from the utility.

**THE GOOD THEY’VE DONE**

Con Ed has proven that they can do many things right. On October 26, its Indian Point generator broke the world record for longest continuous operation of a water reactor. The plant, which started its current run on May 10, 1993, is scheduled to run through February 4, 1995.

The company was also applauded for its conservation program “Enlightened Energy.” Con Ed hopes that by 2008 “Enlightened Energy” will reduce the amount of energy used during the summer and winter months.

What lies ahead for the company is more scrutiny and probably more public criticism of the corporate culture that produced its recent problems, and perhaps the discovery of more skeletons.
LET'S GET BUSY

Not only do people bring their work home with them, now they bring their home lives to work

by Elnorma Baptiste

collage by Yanoret Saez

Office romance is no longer just a hot topic for hallway gossip. It is becoming commonplace. Because most of our time is spent at the office, it is naturally a good place to meet someone. If you are not strong and mature, though, it can get in the way of your job performance. Sally Broder, not her real name, says, “There is nothing wrong with it if you can handle it.” Broder speaks from experience as she reflects on a love affair at her job that went sour. They worked for the same company but for different departments. They began dating each other by coincidence when Broder began comforting him after he broke up with his fiancee. After he got himself together, he left her for someone else. Broder thought this would be the guy for her, her soulmate, her future husband. She even began to picture what their children would look like. “Everything was perfect until it went bad. It is difficult to see the person at work when it is over. I cry and scream. I am even now seeing a psychiatrist. It may not be at all bad if you can handle it, but I can’t. You don’t understand, it really hurts,” she says.

There is no guarantee when or where one will fall in love, and dating a co-worker does not automatically mean it will not work. You have to know how to conduct yourself at work.

Some companies do not look favorably upon office romances. Because it is an office romance, other people are likely to be affected. You will have to follow the rules and be discreet. Do not bring your problems to work.

The new guy in the office who sits next to you is single, attractive and friendly. You are a single woman looking for a romantic relationship. Should you get involved or shouldn’t you? “Wise or not, they’re here to stay,” says Belle Rose Ragins, associate professor of management at Marquette University. “I think office romances are a fact of life in the ’90s with an increase of women in the workforce and a lack of time for developing relationships outside of work,” Ragins
says. The advantages of an office romance, Ragins says, are the availability of your partner and increased motivation when the romance is going strong. Ragins says that both at work and at home the couple can spend a lot of free time talking about work, and job satisfaction increases because you are happier at work. There is that heightened emotional energy that spikes into new creativity because they would go into the office early because they want to see each other and stay late because they want to see each other. On the other hand, that is still not a good reason to get involved because even though the couple know the rules of the game, when infatuation or love step in, emotions still lead the way. Again, what happens when it ends? Can these two people still work together? One usually ends up leaving, and it is usually the woman. What is the reaction of co-workers? “Whether a couple wants to or not, they are seen as a cadre and people react to them negatively. They are seen as political force, an alliance,” says Ragins. Many people in the office may not be enthusiastic about the sexually-charged atmosphere an intense relationship exudes because it is very difficult for this relationship to be kept a secret. There is always one person who knows.

PLAYING BY THE RULES

Despite all the negatives about office romance, there are some success stories where romances blossomed into happy marriages. The couple has close proximity where they can get in touch with each other. They have the same friends. Many companies discourage these relationships by setting rules that people who marry each other cannot work for the same company. Most companies will not allow you to supervise a person you’re in a relationship with. Even in family-owned businesses, it can often have disastrous consequences. How would one get the nerve to fire his wife or boyfriend and not get sued for sexual harassment?

How can the company know if a boss-employee relationship is truly consensual and there is no hidden harassment issues? A few years ago, a sexual relationship between planning director Robert Spaulding and Susan Bray, an assistant planner who worked for him, became common knowledge. Bray filed sexual harassment charges, and there was a secret settlement of $100,000 for Bray.

In a comment to a journalist for The San Diego Union-Tribune, a psychologist says, “All the discussion going on with respect to sexual harassment has put more rigid boundaries around male-female relationships, and I think individuals and companies are seeing themselves as being more vulnerable to possible suit.” He adds, “More careful attention is being given to those kinds of situations that could result in harassment suits.” This is a major potential problem for many big businesses. There are the conflicting interests of the freedom of the individual and privacy interests, and also the possibility of abuse of power. These narrowly applied rules can infringe on the privacy rights unless companies can show that a relationship really affects work. With more and more women entering and spending most of their waking hours in the workplace, entering formerly male-dominated professions and assuming positions involving frequent interactions with men, circumstances are there for psychologically intimate relationships between men and women to develop. Moreover, as organizations continue to embrace such management strategies as team building, networking, and coalition building, the intensity of co-worker interactions and the need for employees to gain co-worker support will increase, which will make male-female relationships stronger than ever.

Sociologists hold that a couple must be very mature to have a serious relationship at work. You must be able to separate your work and personal lives. Even if the couple demonstrates this ability, there will be others at the workplace who will disagree and will be convinced that one individual in the relationship is receiving special favors. Commitment to a spouse or partner, a strong sense of ethics and the desire to keep one’s personal and professional lives separate should be deterrents to sexual intimacy. Managers must be careful not to apply different standards to opposite-sex relationships compared to same-sex friendships. When they perceive an interaction between a male employee and a female employee that makes managers suspicious, they should ask themselves whether they would have the same reaction or assessment if the participants were both men or both women, and there was no possibility of sexual intimacy.

OVERALL, CONCERN ABOUT CO-WORKER DATING APPEARS TO BE VERY LOW.

Some 1,493 human resources directors responded to a random survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management. The results are as follows:

| DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE A POLICY ABOUT DATING A CO-WORKER? |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| YES | DON'T KNOW | NO |
| 7.3% | 0.2% | 92.4% |

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OF EMPLOYEE DATING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office gossip</th>
<th>Sexual harassment claims</th>
<th>Decision making problems</th>
<th>Distorted communications</th>
<th>Aroused hostilities</th>
<th>Damaged morale</th>
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<td>41.8%</td>
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A WINDOW of OPPORTUNITY

If Microsoft plays its hand right—again—it could take another jackpot in the giant floating software cardgame

by Rosario Mastrogiacomo

Illustrations by Jennifer Chiu and Derek Miles

The computer industry is a sort of card game. It appears to have many players when in fact only a few sit at the table. The others wander about advising the true players as they look for a seat. Behind a pile of chips sits Bill Gates and Microsoft, ready to unleash the proverbial ace up his sleeve while the others wait and watch in silence.

That ace is Windows 95 formerly known as Chicago or Windows 4.0. Windows 95 is Microsoft's newest and soon to be released operating system which will directly replace Windows 3.1 and Windows for Workgroups 3.11 and indirectly replace MS-DOS. Windows 95 promises to change the face of the computer industry, new standards will abound. The Windows 95 PC will be easier to use, easier to manage, and will make computers accessible even to the technophobic. All of which will give Microsoft an even greater stronghold on the software industry.

MICROSOFT: PORTRAIT OF A GIANT

It began 14 years ago when Microsoft purchased the rights to QDOS from Seattle Computer Products for about $75,000 and then persuaded IBM to use it for their personal computers. Renamed MS-DOS, it soon became the best selling software program of the '80s. Almost every PC sold came with MS-DOS preinstalled, due mostly to Microsoft's relentless marketing. It offered extremely low prices for its disk operating system so other companies could not compete.

In 1984, Microsoft began developing and in 1985 released Windows, a new Macintosh-like graphical operating system that would run with MS-DOS. Back then few PC users wanted their IBM's to look like Macs and even fewer were familiar with the mouse so it was thought that Windows would have no future. Still, after several versions and many problems, Windows survived. In 1990 Microsoft released Windows 3.0 and then Windows 3.1 in 1992. Soon it was impossible to buy a PC without MS-DOS and Windows preinstalled. Windows became the dominant operating system and although software manufacturers still developed software for MS-DOS, it was clear that Windows was the place to be. Right now MS-DOS and Windows control the market for operating systems with 90 percent of all the PCs in the world running on the MS-DOS and Windows combination.

Microsoft has become the software industry leader and made its co-founder and chief executive officer, Bill Gates, the richest man in America, according to Fortune magazine. Gates started using computers when he was 13 and would later develop the first Basic programming language for the microcomputer. In 1977, with his high school friend Paul Allen, he dropped out of Harvard University and formed Microsoft. The software industry would never be the same.

Microsoft has revenues of over $4.8 billion and employs over 14,500 people in 27 different countries. It holds almost half the $10 billion software market. In a keynote speech he gave at the Lehman Brothers Multimedia Conference in April 1994, Gates called the PC a quickly evolving product and said, "As these machines keep improving, the software industry responds by building new classes of applications." Microsoft has met the challenges of this ever-changing industry and as it prepares to release its newest operating system, Windows 95, some say Microsoft is attempting to be the IBM of the '90s.

THE NEXT GENERATION WINDOWS

Windows 95 promises to revolutionize the way you use your computer. All the problems found in earlier versions of Windows will have disappeared in this release. Microsoft says Windows 95 will provide an easy to use environment for new users and an easy to accept environment for old users. The new features include Plug and Play, 32-bit processing, multitasking, multithreading, OLE 2.0 and a host of other improvements.

At the Comdex conference in 1993, Gates declared, "Windows 95 will go much further in providing mobility capabilities, advances in user interface and literally everything we can do for a four megabyte system and that will include 32 bit multitasking, a very, very significant advance that we're looking with software developers to make sure they exploit."

Microsoft is releasing its new operating system to Windows 3.1 users ready for an upgrade. But many are fearful of the new operating system's potential problems. The new
unfamiliar interface, the probability that it will have serious bugs and hardware compatibility issues keep current users and systems managers up at night because they know Windows 95 will be their next operating system.

Microsoft promises power and productivity gains from Windows 95. In a press release, Microsoft says "Windows 95 will be the right choice for customers who want to run business and personal productivity applications and for use on home PCs." Microsoft says its customer base has broadened to include less technical users and the new Windows interface was designed to address this. It will make computing easier for both less experienced users and experienced users who want greater efficiency and flexibility. Microsoft sees a potential market of people who are not familiar with or have never used a computer. Some analysts say Microsoft is making Windows easier to use but at the same time it is short changing power users by eliminating tools which are difficult to use and understand.

PC Computing magazine estimates that by 1995, 70 percent of the PCs shipped will have Windows 95 preinstalled. PC Computing's Ed Bott writes, "Windows 95 will change the way you think about computing. Once you see what's inside the next version of Windows, all the design flaws and petty annoyances you've learned to work around will have all the charm of a leaky faucet." But while some praise Windows 95's new interface, others question if Windows 3.1 users will be able to adjust to the new look.

For those who don't want to change to the new interface, they can program Windows 95 to emulate Windows 3.1. Microsoft says they will include this feature to allow people to be productive the first time they use Windows 95 and to help 3.1 users adjust.

The cost of upgrading and the chances that Windows 95 will have serious problems are other issues that information system managers and current Windows users must address.

"It's going to be a major upgrade and support headache for the people who have to administer it," says Paul Gillin, editor at Computerworld. Many people are worried and plan to hold back upgrading until all the bugs are found.

Microsoft is optimistic about sales and upgrades. Gates says Microsoft estimates that by next year, 50 percent of Windows 3.1 users will upgrade and unit sales of Windows 95 will reach the 100 million mark. "We expect, when it comes out, to be the largest software upgrade business that the computer industry has ever seen," says Gates. Systems managers are also concerned with the costs of upgrading. The new Windows might not only require retraining but it may also require replacement of old hardware.

Perhaps the biggest problem Windows 95 faces is its ship date. It was supposed to ship the middle of 1994, then it was set back to the end of '94. Now Microsoft says Windows 95 will be ready by the middle of 1995 but experts say it will not be ready by then. Computerworld says Windows 95 won't ship until the middle of 1995, based on Microsoft's past delivery record, with applications starting to appear between 30 to 90 days after. IBM has criticized Microsoft for its lateness. It ran ads saying, "If you're headed for Chicago, don't forget to set your watch back. Two years."

Although Microsoft has postponed its ship date, few see hurdles for Windows 95 to surpass. Microsoft is known to pre-announce new software and postpone the delivery date. "I do not believe Microsoft ever thought it could deliver Windows 95 in 1994 much less in 1993. These promises were intended to keep people from trying OS/2," says Brian Livingston of InfoWorld. Wendy G. Rohn, who has written several articles on Microsoft and its troubles with the Justice Department including a book on the subject, agrees with Livingston and says Microsoft is notorious for pre-announcing software that they know will not ship by the set date. "Industry insiders know the game all too well, and know that
Microsoft is best at it,” Bob Metcalfe, publisher of *InfoWorld*, disagrees and says Microsoft is a “fine” company. “I’m sure that Microsoft intended that Windows 95 ship in 1994, or maybe 1993.” He warns, however, that Microsoft is now too dominant and must be held in check by the Justice Department to maintain choice and long term market vitality.

**THE FTC AND THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT**

Microsoft has come under attack the last couple of years for what its competitors call monopolistic behavior. Companies like IBM and Novell claim the company uses anti-competitive business practices to lure customers into buying Microsoft applications. In 1990, the Federal Trade Commission began an investigation that ended in a 2-2 deadlock within the committee. The Justice department picked up the investigation in 1993 which ended in Microsoft signing a consent decree that it would stop some of its anti-competitive practices, particularly how it sold MS-DOS. Microsoft sold its operating system for an extremely low price but required royalties from PC makers for every unit they shipped. PC manufacturers would have to pay twice as much if they wanted to carry any other operating system. Since they were already paying for MS-DOS, few companies would carry other operating systems. Signing the consent decree in July of 1994, Microsoft agreed to stop this and some other anti-competitive practices. Analysts say the Justice Department made a political decision in not bringing stronger action against Microsoft. “Ann Bingaman, assistant attorney general in charge of the Microsoft case, talked tough, but did the most practical thing in the end. ‘Practical’ means the most politically expedient thing to do,” says Rohm. She went on to say that although the Justice Department did more than the FTC was willing to do, it is afraid to get involved in big monopolization cases.

In February 1995, Judge Stanley Sorkin overturned the settlement because he said the Justice Department failed to address important issues raised about Microsoft. “The U.S. government is either incapable or unwilling to deal effectively with a potential threat to this nation’s economic well-being,” wrote Sorkin.

While many criticize Microsoft, some say there is little the Justice Department or the FTC can do. The government must prove that the consumer, not Microsoft’s competitors, have been hurt to bring action against Microsoft. “The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that antitrust laws were designed to protect competition and consumer interest – not settle feuds between competitors,” reports *PC Week* in an article written by Mitch Betts, Stuart J. Johnson and Ed Scannell. There have been no complaints from consumers because Microsoft offers low prices and powerful software. Microsoft offers the superior operating system because there are many companies willing to develop software for Windows. Consumers feel safe buying Microsoft products. “A lot of people buy Microsoft because they know it’s compatible with everything,” says John Fileto, a customer engineer at WordPros Computers.

Even though the Justice Department and the FTC did not bring stronger action against Microsoft, it does not mean that their business practices are ethical. In April of 1994, while still under investigation, Microsoft sent out a non-disclosure agreement to independent software developers that told them they must stop developing software for other companies’ operating systems if they are working on applications for Windows 95. Microsoft later withdrew the NDA after WordPerfect among other companies sent them to the Justice Department. “You have to marvel at Microsoft’s sheer audacity in trying to foist such a blatantly anti-competitive restriction on independent software developers at a time when the company is under a Justice Department microscope for allegedly monopolistic behavior,” says Paul Gillin in a *Computerworld* editorial. Gillin also says you have to “cringe” at the fact that most software companies went along with Microsoft’s “outrageous requirement.” Even while under investigation, other operating systems have had to take a back seat as Microsoft’s dominance expands.
DAVID'S EMPTY SLINGSHOT

Microsoft dominates not only the operating system market but also the applications market. "Microsoft is well into doing to the applications software market what it has done to the OS market," says Rohm. Microsoft Office, a bounded package of its business applications, has 80 percent market share. In 1990, Microsoft had 22 percent market share in word processing applications while WordPerfect held 55 percent. In just two years, Microsoft was able to close the gap and tie at 44 percent each. On October 13, 1994, Microsoft bought Intuit, maker of the popular home accounting software Quicken. While Microsoft has only 4 percent market share with its own accounting program Money, Quicken holds over 80 percent market share. It seems Microsoft will buy the companies in which its software cannot compete. "Its purchase of Intuit should not be allowed," says Metcalfe.

Microsoft is sure to release its own applications for Windows 95 way ahead of its competitors. While companies such as Lotus and Novell have had to stop developing software for Windows 95 to update their 3.1 applications, because of Windows 95's delays, Microsoft has been busily developing its own applications for the new Windows.

Rohm says Microsoft's own arrogance may be its undoing and adds that even if the company "screws up," it would have to be an enormous screw up for other operating systems to get market share. Rohm points out that even when MS-DOS 6.0 was destroying data in large corporate accounts, there was no shift to IBM DOS or Novell's DR-DOS: "Microsoft's market power is rather awe inspiring."

Microsoft commands authority. It has become the fastest growing company in the software industry. While other companies grow at a rate of 25 percent at most, Microsoft has been growing at a rate of 50 percent per year. Some say Microsoft's success has come from widely accepted products. Others say Microsoft's success has come from illegal anti-competitive practices. Either way, no one disputes Microsoft's hold on the industry and its future success. With all the major software companies developing applications for Windows 95, no one doubts that it will be the next operating system standard. With it, Microsoft plans to set new sales records by reaching a growing and virtually untapped consumer base. "The key in our business is leadership, following is no way to make money," says Gates. $ 17

YOUR NEW OPERATING SYSTEM

Windows 95 will not need DOS to run. It is a complete and independent operating system. Windows 3.1 ran over DOS which made it somewhat unstable. Users would get "protection fault errors" or memory conflicts because of the limits of DOS. Windows 95 will have complete control of the system which will make it faster and more dependable. The 32 bit operating system will run faster than Windows 3.1.

Multithreading will make Windows 95 more dependable. With multithreading, each application will get its own space in memory so if one crashes, the system will not come down with it.

Multitasking is the capability to run two programs at the same time. While Windows 3.1 used time slicing or cooperative multitasking, which gave applications the same amount of processing power, Windows 95 supports preemptive multitasking. With preemptive multitasking, the CPUs processing power is unevenly distributed so if one application needs more power than another, it gets it. This allows for a smoother operation of both applications and will help protect the system from crashing.

Plug and Play is an industry-wide hardware standard led by Microsoft, Intel, IBM, Phoenix, and Compaq, among others. Plug and play will make hardware installation and setup automatic. With Plug and Play, you just install the modem, CD-ROM or any other piece of hardware and the software recognizes it immediately.

Windows 95 will support Object Linking and Embedding (OLE) which will allow you to "pick up" text, images, sound, etc. from one application and drop it directly onto another.

The new interface has been described as a combination of the Apple interface and IBM's OS/2. Folders are the prominent change. Icons still represent files, but now they sit in folders instead of work groups. Program Manager and File Manager are replaced by one integrated shell. When you want to move, delete, copy or do anything to a file, you can do it directly from the primary shell without having to enter file manager.

The task bar is a bar that runs along the bottom of the screen that lists all the programs currently running. To access any of these applications, all you need to do is click on the one you want.

Windows 95 will offer new possibilities in networking. Along with Windows NT, Microsoft's operating system for network servers, Windows 95 promises to be easier for administrators to control. Microsoft says Windows 95 will reduce PC support burden, help increase control over the desktop and help increase productivity in business.

—R.M.
When corporate giants wander into fields different from their traditional specialty, they often get lost

by Gerald Daily

There are many factors affecting the way we conduct business today, especially in the United States financial services industry. With over 5 million employees and $16 trillion in assets nationwide, there is a constant fight for commercial survival in the U.S.

Traditionally, if you wanted insurance, you would buy it from an insurance company directly or through a broker. If you were interested in purchasing stocks, bonds, mutual funds or making investments, you would see a stock broker. Savings and loan institutions used to restrict most of their investment activity to real-estate, secured loans and residential mortgages. Commercial banks, while offering a larger array of services, would mainly concentrate on short-term lending.

Now, everybody is getting into somebody else's business. Companies like Merrill Lynch are offering Working Capital Management accounts that enable clients to merge services such as checking, investment, money transfer and loans into a single account. In other words, they are taking customers away from banks. Currently, 46 percent of insurance companies' assets are represented by private pension. That was not the case 15 years ago.

Americans are pouring billions of savings dollars into mutual funds, while telecommunications giants like American Telephone and Telegraph, are now major players in the credit card market. Many home buyers are getting their mortgage loans from General Motors, and The Money Store is becoming the largest supplier of Small Business Administration guaranteed loans. This is evidence of how some companies have virtually eliminated their former commercial boundaries and are actively involved in "crossing the line."

There is also a consortium of banks and technology firms working together on such things as stored-value cards. These cards don't involve credit or debit but would be used for small transactions like vending machines and highway tolls. This reflects the intensified competition between the segments of the financial industry as it moves into the 21st century.

Some small businesses are also working with insurance companies to develop pension plans suited to the realities of the 1990s. Banks are pressing for more freedom to sell equities and insurance, while brokerage firms and insurance companies are moving deeper and deeper into areas once dominated by banks. This is due largely to the new flexibility that exists in today's financial services.

LINE CROSSING

Much of this "line crossing" involves the use of computers and computer technology, as more Americans are becoming computer literate. Today's financial consumer is more educated than the previous generation. Most consumers want their choices open and want immediate access to available information that will help them make better choices. With this in mind, it is easier for businesses to provide them with the convenient services they demand.

Studies show that there is a major increase in the use of the little plastic cards, of which we are all familiar. There is probably one in nearly everyone's wallet or purse. These cards could be credit cards, ATM cards, gasoline cards, various store cards or bank cards. The total number of debit terminals in the U.S. grew from 78,071 in 1992 to 155,000 in 1993.

Debit cards are especially popular with high volume retailers such as supermarkets and gasoline stations because they reduce check out time as a result of increased automation. There is also the benefit of guarantee of payment. Enough money has to be in the account for the transaction to be approved, therefore the risk of getting bad checks from customers is reduced substantially.

These transactions were done traditionally with credit cards, through credit card companies. But with the increased use of debit cards, other companies are now taking the business away from credit card companies. Many of these comp-
nies are the retailers themselves, setting up their own credit and debit systems through their bank.

While many companies are working with banks to set up debit card financing and other financial arrangements, others are setting up branches directly on their sales floors. This is more apparent with supermarkets.

Since 1992 the number of such branches nationwide has jumped 26 percent to 1,938 in 1993, a near tenfold increase since 1985. John Garnett is no stranger to this new way of doing business. Garnett’s company, International Banking Technologies, has set up more than 700 in-store branches for 130 financial institutions in the U.S. and Canada since 1985.

These supermarket branches provide the same services as regular banks such as cashing checks, accepting deposits, making loans and selling mutual funds all of which is done at a lower cost. They are open for longer hours, many are open six days a week and some have Sunday hours.

Over 30,000 shoppers visit an average supermarket each week. These branches not only provide shoppers with new services but it also attracts new customers.

THE DECLINE OF BANKS?
The role of banks as the country’s leading financial institution has declined as other financial-services firms have gained a greater foothold in the market. In 1960, the commercial bank's share of the market was 38 percent, today it is a mere 25 percent. The number of U.S. banks has declined as well, from 11,000 in 1985 to 8,300 at the end of 1993.

Due to the dramatic shrinkage of financial assets in depository institutions, consumer funds are no longer going into banks alone. Instead, deposits are showing up in private pension funds, mutual funds and money market mutual funds.

At the same time, the banks that remain in business become larger. The larger the unit, the less personal attention is given to the small-business owner. Smaller firms are having problems connecting with loan officers, as more banks change ownership and personnel.

Banks are also seeking other ways to increase their revenues as larger customers seeking loans have turned to other financial sources. Companies that sell mutual funds are taking bites from traditional banks by using higher yields to lure away bank customers. Banks have countered by moving into the sale of mutual funds, annuities and insurance. This basically creates a tug of war for potential customers.

Competing for new customers will remain intense for both the banking and the securities industries. “Banks just don’t understand the insurance business,” says William Blum, an equitable insurance agent. On the other hand, banks have more direct contact with their customers than investment firms or insurance companies. With this advantage, investment firms, and insurance agents fear that banks will continue to gain power to sell other products.

In the state of Michigan, insurance agents are turning up
the heat in an effort to have state lawmakers pass legislation barring bank sales of insurance. They regard the banking industry as the same people who handed the American public a $700 billion bill for the bailout of the savings and loans.

Microsoft, the software company, is currently discussing plans to venture into the on-line sector of the credit card business and also into on-line commerce. The deal involves MasterCard International Corporation and is worth over $1.5 billion. A Microsoft pact with MasterCard could offer users of Microsoft's personal finance software the ability to use PCs to tap into their bank accounts. Users could perform transactions like checking balances, transferring money and paying their credit card bills.

Microsoft is courting MasterCard's biggest competitor, Visa International, as well. Microsoft plans to develop computer software to let PC users with credit cards shop electronically. These ventures reflect a widening race to broaden digital commerce, while solving data-security problems associated with financial transactions over computer networks.

Several long-time competitors like CyberCash and Open Market Inc., are racing to tackle key parts of the electronic-payments problem. CommerceNet, a group in Menlo Park, California, with backing from major computer makers, is trying to set state-of-the-art standards for electronic payment and related technologies based on the Internet. There is also some stiff competition from Mosaic Communications and Enterprise Integration Technologies.

Some of these companies are expressing skepticism that Microsoft will publish enough information about the new technology to let them compete on equal terms. "I like the idea, but I'm really nervous about the players involved," says Shikhar Ghosh, Open Market's chief executive. "They have the ability to create a market or lock out competitors."

Experts predict that many people will be afraid of putting their Visa account numbers into a computer system being used by thousands of other Internet users, even if the numbers are encrypted. Nevertheless, Microsoft will sell server software into Visa sites. "I wouldn't be surprised if they try to create a recurring revenue stream by adding some type of minimal charge for each transaction," says David Readerman, a financial analyst in San Francisco.

Chase Manhattan Corporation is also hopping on the bandwagon. The company is in the middle of an agreement to buy the securities business of U.S. Trust. This would cost Chase over $350 million, according to The New York Times. This means that Chase's profits would increase while it locks}

out competitors like Northern Trust and Bank of New York. Chase is breaking away from its main business lines. Last year alone, Infoserv, a division of the company, had revenues of over $800 million. The services that they would now render includes asset-management for individuals and institutions. They would also offer mutual funds while providing private banking and corporate trusts.

**COLA WARRIOR WEARING NEW ARMOR**

Traditionally, when you think of PepsiCo you think of soft drinks. But today, not only is PepsiCo still involved in the soft drink business, it is also getting involved in the restaurant business. The new organization is called PepsiCo Restaurants International, which also manages the overseas operations of all three PepsiCo fast-food restaurants: Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell.

PepsiCo has over 6,000 restaurants outside the United States and Canada, and over 18,000 restaurants in the U.S. alone. The restaurant division accounts for about 37 percent of the company's $25 billion in annual sales. Most of the money is coming from strong performance by KFC. The Taco Bell and Pizza Hut divisions are not doing so well because of low priced competitors entering the market. The company expects to earn over half of its profits from international and non-beverage operations within the next five years.

There is also a flip side to this idea of getting into other people's business.

Some companies, like Sears, Roebuck & Company, are in a mad rush to get out of areas that are traditionally outside their normal course of business. The company has just sold its huge Allstate insurance unit in an attempt to return to its retailing roots. The company will transfer over its $9 billion stake in Allstate to its stockholders. "Sears, as well as Allstate, will have greater flexibility to pursue their own growth strategies," says Mark Hantley, a manager at Sears in Flatbush, Brooklyn.

With many companies reaching their maximum market potential, or experiencing slow economic growth, they are now forced to find new ways to make money. With increased pressure from stockholders and the economy, companies are now finding that they have to either go international, expand into other businesses, or both.

Going into other forms of business is not always the best way to make money and survive in today's economy, as is clearly evident in the Sears case. But it is how skillful businesses can maneuver their operations, and know when to get in and when to get out.
BETTING THE HOUSE
Taking a look at the risks and rewards of financial derivatives

by Emmanuel Martinez
illustrations by Yanoret Saez

In this ever-changing world of investments, everything is possible. Just ask the folks at Barings P.L.C., Orange County or Shanghai International. From the creation of big profits to the evaporation of enormous fortunes, casinos might be the perfect place for this scenario to take place. Financial engineers from Wall Street and London made it easier for big players to have the feeling of Las Vegas or Atlantic City while managing enormous amounts of money. It might look like a gambling addiction, but these players deny it. As more countries open their financial markets, more opportunities are emerging but so are the risks. In order to cope with potential risks, investors, with the help of computers, devised new tools to predict market movements and new ways to take risks. Market gurus invented a broad array of exotic instruments as if genetically produced.

DANGEROUS ARRANGEMENTS
Derivatives are the medium used to produce these astonishing results. Like so many games of chance, derivatives have already proven to be dangerous, yet financial markets prefer to keep using them. Derivatives are financial arrangements between two parties whose payments are based or “derived” from the performance of some agreed-upon benchmark such as interest rates or stock indexes. Also derivatives can be defined as custom-made contracts that provide powerful tools for companies to use in the high-stakes balancing act of international financial management.

For the average investor, instruments such as stocks, corporate bonds, municipal bonds, T-Bills and certificates of deposit may sound very familiar. But exotic instruments formed by derivatives are liable to scare the same average investor after some of the recent disasters. The most common form of derivatives are those that come with option-type contracts and forward-type contracts. This is the type of derivatives that have received more attention lately.

In 1995, bad derivatives plays brought Barings, one of London’s oldest merchant banks, to the brink of bankruptcy. Early in 1994, blue chip companies such as Dell Computer Co., Procter & Gamble Corp. and Gibson Greeting Co. posted crippling losses due to derivatives. The losses represented billions of dollars that dry out the liquidity of the financial markets. For instance, Gibson Greeting Co. lost $25 million on derivatives trades, and filed a lawsuit against Bankers Trust Company, a major derivatives dealer. Gibson Greetings Co. is claiming that it was lured and misled in excessively speculative deals. As a result of these losses the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Commodity Futures Commission are investigating whether Bankers Trust violated federal laws by selling risky derivatives to P&G and Gibson Greetings. These inquiries could lead to tougher regulations of the market, especially for privately traded derivatives.

P & G, the consumer products giant, absorbed a $157 million pretax charge against earnings from losses on derivatives. P&G sued its derivatives trader, Bankers Trust, for $120 million. Executives at Bankers Trust denied the charges saying that these companies knew the risks they were taking. Air Products & Chemical Inc., the Allentown, Pa. maker of industrial gases, is another casualty in this big problem. The company terminated three of five leveraged interest rates swaps agreement, and took a $60 million charge to reflect their declining value. This may seem like a cyberspace video game, but with real victims.

In Japan the accounting director of Nippon Steel Chemical leaped to his death beneath a train last May after he lost $128 million of the company’s money by using derivatives to play the foreign-exchange market. In Chile a derivatives trader named Juan Pablo Davila lost $207 million of taxpayer’s money by speculating in the copper futures market. In Germany, the giant conglomerate Metalgesellschaft lost approximately $1.3 billion in 1993 by betting the wrong way.
with oil futures contracts. Nearby, the biggest loser amid the
global turmoil was legendary Wall Street investor Michael
Steinhardt, who, as of last spring, had lost $1 billion since the
beginning of 1994. Another respected and well-known investor
on Wall Street is George Soros, who also lost around $600
million by the beginning of February 1994. His Quantum
hedge fund is now called the “St. Valentine’s Day Massacre”
according to Time Magazine.

NOT JUST FOR BIG SHOTS

Apparently, the derivatives debacle has not only affected big
and established companies, but also individual investors,
municipalities and colleges. For instance, in one suburb a $5
million investment in the fund shrank to about $3.6 million in
1994. Also, in Texas, the former Vice President of finance
invested almost all of the school’s funds into derivatives, the
result of which was a loss of nearly half of the value, obliging
the school to borrow approximately $10.5 million in emergency
funds. One of the big problems that small investors face
is the fact that they may not be aware that their funds are
packed with risky derivatives.

This seemingly never ending array of losses has forced institu-
tional investors out of business. For instance, David Askin, the
hedge-fund manager of Askin Capital Management was forced
to close his doors last spring. Askin was managing a $600 mil-
lion fund for clients and it vanished with the implosion of
fixed-income derivatives.

To hedge or not to hedge, that’s the question. Many traders
on Wall Street are going crazy asking this question due to
the fiasco of the financial markets that try hedging.
Fortunately stock markets have their own genius, now called
quants, that can help traders to manage risk, especially with
these new instruments. According to central bankers, econom-
ists and commercial bankers, derivatives are not dangerous
investments but financial tools. They represent new tools that
lead greater stability to business operations. For instance,
locking in currency or interest rate values for months or years
allows companies to plan their spending and operations bud-
get with some assurance. Also they reduce risks from swings
in currency values and from interest rates movement abroad.

To many, the recent losses that have occurred in the finan-
cial world of derivatives depended on how these tools were
used. According to market analysts, to use derivatives all
investors should expand their risk’s horizons and look at the
financial markets from a different vantage point. For instance
the derivatives hell that occurred at the beginning of 1994 was
due in part to increases in the interest rate by the Federal
Reserve. The irony is that in 1993 derivatives helped compa-
nies post profits due to the low interest rate that prevailed in
the financial markets.

A good example of the savvy use of derivatives is the one
that showed in the currency markets. Merck & Co., the New
Jersey-based pharmaceutical company and the nation’s largest
drug company, decided to enter in the currency market due to
the increasing international business it was developing. It used
derivatives to shield the earnings on its export sales from
uncertain currency swings. Due to this use of derivatives,
Merck’s chief financial officer devised a strategy of currency
options. She used a sophisticated computer-based model
known as a simulation to determine how rate moves hurt or
help profits. As of October 1994, they had an approximate
portfolio of $3.5 billion in currency options, according to
Business Week magazine, emulating the best in the derivatives
game is the best option. Companies such as Coca-Cola,
Colgate Palmolive, Intel, FMC, McDonald’s, Mobil, and 3M
are among the best ranked by financial experts. They have
developed sophisticated analytical skills and have separated a
pool of cash in order to offset any losses.

GOVERNMENT STEPS IN

As the cry for derivative losses increases, the government
and its regulators have to step in. Requirements such as
more disclosure are sought whenever derivatives are used.
Also the regulations might include more prudent actions in
the handling of these exotic financial instruments and more
information given to investors and shareholders so that they
will have a better knowledge of how derivatives work in the
investments they hold.

Due to these pressures and the many billions of dollars
posted as losses, the United States Congress is investigating
this multi-billion dollar market. The General Accounting
Office called for federal regulation.
In a move that coincides with the cry for more regulation, the SEC asked several public companies to provide details on their exposure to risk in holding derivatives. Among the list of companies that are required to do so are major industrial companies, airlines, oil producers and food manufacturers. This inquiry not only asks companies to supply details about their derivatives holdings, but also their terms, maturities and how they would affect the company's income, on both a net and gross basis. Also the companies' internal policies of monitoring and controlling their derivatives use and to the SEC it is enforcing this as a part of their filing requirements.

Following this same path, the Financial Accounting Standards Board explored the opportunity of enhancing disclosures about derivative financial instruments. This move is outlined in "Disclosure of Information about Financial Instruments with Off-Balance-Sheet Risk and Financial Instruments with Concentration of Credit Risk," and "Disclosure about Fair Value of Financial Instruments." According to Halsey Bullen, a project manager at the accounting standards board in Norwalk, Conn. These rules could be compulsory in financial statements by the end of 1994.

But as usual in business, every proposal has it pros and cons. According to an article in The Wall Street Journal, Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Board chairman, suggested "a whole new kind of regulation" to deal with derivatives and their kin. Greenspan urged Congress to shun writing new rules for the use of derivatives by banks and securities firms, saying that legislation could be more hurtful than helpful.

According to noted financial economist and long-standing derivatives expert Terrence Martell, the intervention of the government is not necessary because the market has enough regulations. What is necessary is that companies must establish a corporate strategy headed by the board of directors with the mission to oversee where the company's finances go. "Whenever the government implements regulations, there is someone who loses his or her job," Martell adds.

Also, for many, regulations on the derivatives market should not be sought because out of 15,000 public companies 12,000 are active on different stock markets, and only a dozen of these 12,000 have presented derivatives problems in the United States.

A GAME OF RISK

Due to the attention put on the derivatives markets, risk is now on the mouth of every investor. Risk management techniques are surging as the only protection against this market havoc. With mounting losses, "the fixers" have a lot of work to do. As investors panicked from the losses and the declining value of their portfolios, they began to sell at a very low price. Heinz Bingelli, managing director of Emcor Risk Management Consulting Corp. in Irvinton N.Y., a company or a investor through restructuring can offset some of the losses. "Don't panic and get out at a low price. Do the restructuring yourself or seek help," says Bingelli.

In a move to establish a risk management practice as a global standard, J.P. Morgan, the investment firm, offered a risk management program named RiskMetrics. But for others the derivatives market is a place in which risk is endemic. So, in a strategy to attract investors Federated Investors has begun a marketing campaign showing its conservative style, resisting to use derivatives in their money market account.

Even with the billion-dollar losses announced by big companies, approximately two-thirds of the Fortune 500 American companies still use derivatives, and multinationals want to keep using them. Undoubtedly derivatives are instruments to pass on risk and to have risk. This is what appeals to big users. However, to the negative publicity and government regulation, especially on banks and investment firms, the derivatives market, a market of $24 trillion is perceived to have slowed down, but not forever. All of these determinants might try to deter a major market meltdown due to the fact that the losses represent billions that may dry up the liquidity in the financial markets around the world.
THE ULTIMATE PIGGY BANK

Pension plans are suddenly rich territory for high finance's more creative minds

by Wrenford Phillips

Illustrations by Jennifer Chiu and Yanoret Saez

Providing for the retirement of employees has been a major concern for business organizations. Over the years, this concern has created numerous private pension plans in most medium and small-sized establishments. Recently, there has been an upsurge of linking performance to pension plans among small firms. The growth both in numbers of employees and in dollar amounts is enormous. Around 1975, private pension plans covered approximately 28 million individuals, paid benefits in excess of $16 billion and held assets of $21 billion. It is estimated that by 1996 such plans will cover 56 million people, distribute benefits of $203 billion and hold assets in excess of $2.8 trillion.

A pension is a contractual agreement between the employer and the employee. The employer agrees to provide regular payments, after retirement, to the employees for services provided while employed. Defined contribution plans and defined benefit plans are the most common types of pension agreements. In a defined contribution plan the employer contributes a certain sum to a pension trust each period according to a special formula. This formula is a function of age and length of the employee's service and the employer's profits.

A defined benefit plan defines the benefits that the employee will receive upon retirement. The more complex formula for the latter plan is a function of employee's years of service and salary when he or she nears retirement.

To adequately fund a pension plan requires fixed commitments. For the large companies, with predictable cash flows, this does not pose a problem. Small firms, on the other hand, often find themselves in the red. In a desperate attempt to alleviate such embarrassing circumstances, small firms have begun a stepped-up drive of linking performance measures to 401(K) plans, a defined contribution plan for small firms.

“The combination of performance and pension plans has resulted in a sense of unity in the work place,” says Jerry Jemnar, president of Jemnar Oil Services, Inc. in Brooklyn. In 1992, Jemnar restructured his pension plan by contributing 45 percent of an annual performance bonus, based on profits, to its employee 401(K) plan. Employees had the option of taking the rest in cash, or contributing it to the 401(K) plan. For the fiscal ending 1993, Jemnar Inc. shared up approximately $68,000 of bonuses among its 37 employees. By setting realistic objectives to these plans Jemnar believes that his employees will “join together, work harder and care more about the work, not just see it as a job.”

The sense of unity generated by performance-based pension plans appears to be a motivating force for its growing use among small businesses. Carl Levison, president of Levison Windows Inc. in Queens, manufacturer of energy saving windows, praises the team effort aspect of performance-based pension plans, but embraces the cost savings benefits. Such plans help entrepreneurs control pension costs better by avoiding tying themselves into fixed contributions during rough periods. Levison contributes as much as 75 percent on the dollar for its matching contributions if it exceeds budgeted operating net profit by 10 percent. Levison pays nothing to the 401(K) plan if it fails to achieve its operating net profit goals.

In 1992, Levison contributed $42,000 to his 401(K) plan, which was 30 percent, or $11,000, greater than what was contributed in 1993. “During good years we are happy to fund our plans, in bad years under the old system our backs were
against the wall. Under the new plan during hard times we can still afford to breathe comfortably."

DRAWBACKS
Despite the motivating benefits and the reduction in pension costs experienced by small firms, retirement plan costs still exceed that of large firms. Large firms’ pension costs per individual are significantly lower than smaller firms due to the spreading of total costs over a larger work force. On the other hand, smaller firms’ pension costs are spread over a smaller labor force.

Under the 401(K) system employees are not required to participate in such plans. As a result, the general increase in quality, timeliness and performance at work are borne by a few workers. According to Leison, only 36 of 56 employees participated in the altered 401(K) plan last year. The 18 employees presently not on the system are at the lower end of the pay scale. These workers are not aware that the plan offers the opportunity of sharing in the company’s profit. Leison, nevertheless, anticipates more workers joining as they become more aware of the plan’s potential benefits.

Ronald Blackman, an employee under the altered 401(K) plan is content with the prospects of this plan. “I’ll be getting more under this new system when I retire,” says Blackman.

ACCOUNTING FOR PENSIONS
Prior to 1985, accounting for pensions was done haphazardly. In most cases companies were reluctant to capitalize pension’s liability and assets. In fact, many cases warranting such recordings were simply avoided by most companies. The Financial Accounting Statement Board in 1985 issued statement number 87, which settled most of the confusion in accounting for pensions. The statement made it mandatory to capitalize major related pension’s liabilities and assets. Small establishments became furious with this ruling because for them it meant an increased pension expense and recording of an unwelcome liability. The additional expense meant a lower net income and increased the company’s debt to equity ratio. Companies already in a financial dilemma eventually found themselves worse off. Others, in good standing with their existing mortgage or creditor agreements, subsequently found such agreements in breach with the passing of the new statement. Nevertheless, FASB pressed on with its ruling and passed the burden on to accountants. According to Pat McQueen, a professor at Baruch College, “Accounting for pensions is complex.” She emphasizes that accountants must endure the nerve-racking task of calculating present values of future pension cost. With the uncertainty of health care today, this is an awesome responsibility. Amortization of actuarial gains and losses arising from differences between expected and actual returns on plan assets, and using the FASB corridor method, complicates issues. Writing off prior year’s service costs deriving from the addition of new employees retroactively also adds to the accountant’s headache. “From an accountant’s point of view, I would rather be on the receiving end of pension plans as opposed to the accounting side,” sighs McQueen.

Accounting for pensions is a complex issue and the altered 401(K) plan has its drawbacks. Nevertheless, the modified plan is motivating employees and reducing costs, making employers happy. Likewise employees are also satisfied—they are on the receiving end.
Blood Money

A decade into the epidemic, AIDS is already a major industry. And there isn’t even a cure or vaccine on the market

by LaTasha Pugh

illustrations by Vivian Botero

Karen, a member of the New York AIDS Coalition, is courageously fighting her own personal battle with Human Immunodeficiency Virus, the virus that causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. Positive for eight years, Karen stopped taking antiviral drugs like AZT because of the side effects and high cost. “These drugs aren’t worth the price for which they are sold,” Karen says.

Karen goes on to describe how at first AZT, also known as Retrovir, seemed to work “okay” for her, but after a few months she started feeling nauseated, and fatigued. That is when she believed the drugs were doing more harm than good. “In my personal opinion initial improvement is only temporary,” Karen says. “Your body isn’t used to taking these drugs, so some kind of effect is bound to happen.”

The high price of AIDS drugs does not only affect Karen and AIDS patients like her, but public funds subsidize the high cost of the these medicines. Federal programs funded by tax dollars are used to compensate drug company prices when HIV-infected people become unable to pay for the drugs themselves.

“The medical industry stands to make a lot of money from AIDS,” says Fred Hellinger, head researcher from the Department of Health and Human Services. According to the American Medical Association findings, total drug companies’ revenues are estimated at $400 billion a year from the sale of AIDS drugs.

Companies involved in producing AIDS-related drugs include Burroughs Wellcome PLC, the manufacturers of AZT, the only drug licensed by the United States Food and Drug Administration to treat AIDS directly; Hoffman LaRoche, which makes DDC, and Bristol Myers Squibb Inc., producers of DDI. DDI and DDC were licensed by the FDA to be used in combination with AZT to treat AIDS.

AZT was first developed as a treatment for cancer in 1964 by Dr. Jerome Horowitz, who at that time was director of chemistry at the Michigan Cancer Research Lab. Horowitz’s research and development was funded by federal grants allocated from tax dollars. The drug was found ineffective in treating cancer. “AZT was a terrible disappointment. I didn’t keep the notebooks, there was no reason to patent it,” says Horowitz. “The compound remained on the shelf, occasionally tried by other researchers but always found to be useless.”

In 1984 Burroughs Wellcome tested a revamped version of Horowitz’ 20-year-old discovery and found it worked towards halting the replication of HIV. Burroughs established a chair in Horowitz’s name, but spells his name wrong when according him credit in their three-page account. Horowitz received no financial reward from the company. “My wife sits across from me at the breakfast table and reminds me of all the money Burroughs Wellcome has got out of it, and I haven’t got a dime,” Horowitz says. “I keep telling her about the legacy I’m leaving, but I wouldn’t be absolutely straight with you if I didn’t think I should have gotten something out of it.”
HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?
When AZT was licensed by the FDA in March of 1987, the initial cost ranged between $8,000 to $10,000 a year per patient, making it one of the most expensive drugs of any kind on the market. “There is a substantial amount of money spent on research, prevention and patients who need medicine—expensive medicine,” adds Hellinger.

AZT was lowered by 20 percent in December of 1987, costing about $6,500 a year per person. The price was then reduced again after a wave of protests in September of 1992, to its current cost of about $3,000 a year per patient.

According to Mathilde Krim of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, AZT costs seven to 15 cents to produce. The wholesale price for one capsule reportedly costs $1.20. Patients pay between $1.50 and $1.75 per capsule according to Krim and industry analysts.

Local pharmacies in the New York City area charge between $260 and $300 for 180 capsules of AZT. The average dosage is about 12 capsules a day, two every two hours, lasting about 15 days. For a month’s supply a patient would need 360 capsules costing a minimum of $520, adding up to $6,240 a year. These prices do not include the cost of combining additional drugs when AZT doesn’t work or the cost of medical visits associated with the use of these drugs. Additional drugs and medical visits can push the total up by $3,000 according to AMA research. “Drug companies aren’t making these drugs because they are good Samaritans—they are doing it to make the money,” says Lewis Bossings, committee leader of AIDS Association to Unleash Power.

Hoffman LaRoche set up a program to make their drug DDC more available and free to qualifying patients. Local New York area pharmacists sell DDC and DDI at about $50 more than AZT. The pharmacies pay $86 for 60 tablets of DDC and about $110 for 100 capsules of DDI. The average dosage of these drugs is between six to 12 pills a day, depending on the patients needs.

The Federal Government spends an estimated $5.8 billion a year funding AIDS research, and also Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security for AIDS patients according to DHHS statistics. The lifetime cost of treating people with AIDS is about $80,000 a year per patient, according to AMA officials. If AZT and other antiviral drugs like it increases the life expectancy of its patients for more than 18 months after they become unable to work, cost could shift from private insurance, to public assistance, Medicaid and Social Security, according to the DHHS. “Patients seldom have to pay out of their own pockets for antiviral drugs that are approved by the FDA,” says Christine Rivera, deputy director of the AIDS Drug Assistance Program.

IS AZT REALLY WORTH THE PRICE?
After she stopped her treatment Karen found that her T-cell count went up, and in April of 1993 she found out why. The Concorde Anglo-French study proved AZT didn’t work on HIV infected patients, only on patients with full blown AIDS.

AZT isn’t as practical as once thought for the treatment of AIDS. Many strains of the disease have become resistant to AZT and side effects of the drug can cause serious harm. Side effects that occur in patients with full blown AIDS are anemia, a reduction in red blood cells, and leukopenia, a drop in white blood cells, or both. These side effects take place in more than half of the patients diagnosed with full blown AIDS according to the AMA research. Resistance to AZT may develop in people taking the drug 12 to 18 months after they begin treatment. “Clearly the news of resistant AIDS strains will make therapy for the disease more complicated and expensive,” says Jerome Groopman leading AIDS researcher and physician at the New England Hospital in Boston. “The way to get around the development of new strains is to use alternative drugs or their combinations.”

AZT’s ineffectiveness in half of the known AIDS population has prompted the development of other antiviral AIDS drugs. These drugs are equal in price to AZT, but not much better. DDI and DDC have been available since October 1991. These drugs are used in combination with or to replace AZT when patients are unable to use it because of side effects or their systems become weak from prolonged use. These two newer drugs also have side effects of their own, including inflammation of the pancreas and numbness of the limbs, according to AMA research. “Most people know these antiviral drugs aren’t going to come through,” says Bossings. “Most people just want all options open and available to them.” Local New York area pharmacies charge about $50 more per dosage for DDI and DDC. “It makes you wonder if they are really looking for a cure because they’re making so much money on bad drugs,” Bossings adds.
PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES SPEAK OUT

Burroughs Wellcome executives insist that AZT was hideously expensive to produce and difficult, to price. "Picking a price was a finger in the wind decision," says Alfred Shepard, retired chairman of Burroughs Wellcome. "We didn't know the demand, how to produce in large quantities, or what competing drugs would come out on the market." Officials also claim the market for AZT has been relatively small. According to the company they took risks in developing AZT when no one else wanted to do it. Industry analysts agree that the early market for AZT was small, and Burroughs Wellcome didn't know how big it would become, if the company was to make any kind of money on AZT, few people would have to pay a large sum of money. "This is the price we pay for living in a capitalist society," says George Stanley of the FDA. "Once a drug is put out on the market the company controls the pricing," Stanley concludes. Burroughs Wellcome officials maintain that the high price of AZT is due to the cost of manufacturing, as well as research and development expenses.

According to Burroughs Wellcome, all they want is a reasonable return for years of research and development on other drugs, and money for future drug research. "You don't price on a drug by drug basis, our business is based on research and development, you have to look at all your products," says the new president of Burroughs Wellcome, Tracy Phillips.

"Wellcome wants to build up a very nice nest egg to recover costs, and so the price of drugs like AZT seem very high," says Leonard Schiffrin, health care economist at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. "Then when the worst case scenarios do not happen, but instead there are more patients with a longer life in the market, it can turn the worst cases into billion dollar bonanzas," adds Schiffrin.

According to AMA there are an estimated 600,000 known AIDS cases only in America and that number is steadily growing. In Europe, Africa, and South America together there is triple that amount, and AIDS patients in these countries also use AZT. Worldwide AZT sales for the 1993 fiscal year reached $290 million, making Burroughs Wellcome the second largest earner, according to an industry analyst.

"A small market means far higher prices, but the company has probably already recovered its costs," says Robert Uhl, a pharmaceutical analyst with Salomon Brothers in New York. If Burroughs has recovered its cost, the price of AZT is still too much for most AIDS patients to pay, even though the company has already lowered the price twice. "Lowering the price of AZT in the first place is a pretty good indication that Burroughs Wellcome has been profiteering all along," concludes Mark Harrington of ACT UP.
Back to Haunt Us

Like the plague, some deadly diseases that medicine once claimed to have conquered are back from the dead

by John Azzara
illustrations by Kan Lee

You see it on the subway: Whenever someone sneezes or coughs, people scatter. Tuberculosis is back in the spotlight. Once a major killer worldwide, it is still the infectious disease causing the most deaths.

Just when TB figures were falling, 1985 gave rise to an increase in reported cases. This boost in TB is due to a conglomeration of medical, social, and economic factors: the AIDS epidemic, homelessness, a shortage of medicine, and increasing numbers of infected immigrants.

TB is a bacteria that can be transmitted through coughing and sneezing, most often by prolonged contact. In normally healthy people infected with the TB bacterium, the immune system dispatches cells to surround the bacteria in capsules called tubercles. As long as the bacteria are contained, they cannot cause illness nor spread to others parts of the body and other individuals. The Centers for Disease Control had noted a 14 percent increase in reported cases for the period between 1985 and 1993 in New York City. The worldwide total of new cases in 1990 was 7.5 million, and the World Health Organization expects those numbers to increase to 10.2 million by the year 2000. Last year, 30 percent of U.S. patients whose cases were reported for the first time were born in developing nations, where the dreaded disease is most prevalent.

Successful treatment of TB requires a battalion of medication, which includes a compilation of streptomycin, isoniazid, ofloxacin, and other antibiotics and takes six months to over a year to complete. In people who stop and start their medication, a drug resistant form of the disease develops. These drug-resistant variations are contagious and very difficult to treat, and NYC has 61 percent of the nation’s drug-resistant TB. In rare cases, quarantine has been suggested.

While NYC accounts for only three percent of the entire...
children adopted from 15 countries had at least one serious condition like TB, hepatitis B, or intestinal parasites. In Rumania, children are often administered medicine and vitamins with AIDS-contaminated needles. Many of these children are adopted by people in the U.S. Several bacterial, viral, and worm infections are brought into our country via these young orphans. To decrease the flow of these infections across U.S. borders, the underdeveloped countries of the world must improve their disease surveillance.

The problem may very well lie in the hands of the governments of industrialized nations. Instead of concentrating on social progress and better public health, they assumed that better health would be a by-product of social progress. Instead it should have been one of its central goals. In any successful attempt at promoting social progress, an integrated series of changes need to be assimilated into a community’s way of life. These changes include an increase in literacy rates which produces educated people who make their own improvements to their life, the establishment of police and other enforcement agencies to keep the society contained and to promote peace which allows a society to focus on economic prosperity, the establishment of better hygiene practices by first creating sanitation provisions and the establishment of primary and secondary health care and greater availability of pharmaceuticals to ensure better health standards. Also greater efficiency in agricultural economies in these developing nations is essential to developments in health. Greater availability of medicines is looked at as the most important advancement of these societies.

**A WIDENING GAP**

Increased populations in urban areas pose new health threats and demand new medicines, increasing the need for health care in developing nations. These two factors also influenced increased health developments in the industrialized countries. Industrialization has benefited our country, but what has it done for the poorer nations of the world? The shift to urban areas of residency from rural ones poses new health threats such as pollution and internal conflicts and wars that may have superseded old hazards such as disease and famine. In short, developing nations have problems in common with all nations of the world, but also dangers exclusive to their region.

Ailments such as arthritis, heart problems, cancer and diabetes that are common in ‘rich’ countries pose serious threats to developing nations. Along with all of those affiliations, infections such as TB are not as large a threat in the U.S. as in Africa, for instance. Then there are diseases that have been eradicated in the industrialized world, yet claim thousands of lives throughout underdeveloped nations, such as malaria, cholera and other worm infections.

In such pharmaceutically deprived nations, 50 percent of total deaths occur in children under five, while in the indu
trialized world 80 percent of total deaths occur in people over 65 years old. This being true, you can see why pharmaceuticals must be more readily available and marketed in poorer countries. Accessible medicines in these areas allow for the healing of patients, the reduction of disease transmission, and the alleviation of pain and other symptoms. These benefits set the stage for a turnaround in the public health system. They also allow for a healthy society that establishes hygienic practices within their population.

Providing access to ‘essential’ pharmaceuticals in developing countries involves health care facilities that are available to all people within that society. In societies lacking these facilities, potent medication will undoubtedly be abused, and cause more harm than good. Also, an efficient and controlled system of transporting these drugs from airports and factories to warehouses within the country and then to health care workers across the country will ensure proper distribution to those who need them.

The authoritarian government in many of these countries must realize the need for and give way to the education of its people. The ideal scenario would involve an integration of societal beliefs and customs with the understanding of the functions and purposes of modern medicine.

**BRINGING DRUGS TO MARKET**

The expertise and skills needed to facilitate the proposed medicine markets in poor countries are lacking. Those in control of purchasing drugs for these poor nations must be honest and dedicated to the development of an efficient economy. Until those skills are learned, international agencies such as the WHO may play an important role as middleman in getting the governments and medicine manufacturers together.

Since 1978, worldwide TB cases have been increasing consistently aside from slight decreases in 1980, 1984 and 1987. The recent and possibly overly emphasized decline in TB cases is encouraging, but the cause is not known exactly. Could it be that among those infected, less cases were reported? Or is it that those infected with AIDS, a community largely populated with TB, did not report their illness as tuberculosis but as AIDS instead? Dr. Kenneth G. Castro, director of the division of TB elimination at the CDC, would like to believe that the decline “reflects the effectiveness of prevention and control methods.” Doctor Castro, however, does acknowledge the fact that the under reporting of cases could have contributed to the decline.

Officials are hoping that the $700 million the Federal Government spent on TB treatment in 1991 is the major proponent of the falling numbers. For 1993, reported TB cases fell five percent from 26,673 in 1992. That government money was used to beef up surveillance measures. Over the last three years, the Bureau of Tuberculosis Control increased their staff three-fold to 600 employees, and patient visits to city TB clinics have quadrupled since 1988 due to an expansion of services.

Directly observed therapy has also pushed TB numbers down. This program allows employees to individually supervise patients who fail to take their medication. Directly observed therapy presently puts 1,200 patients on the road to better health, whereas last year the limited staff and facilities barely followed 100 patients.

NYC is one of the top five cities with incidents of reported cases, with a rate of 44.2 cases per 100,000 residents. This is four times the national average.

Health care today is rather narrow in its scope in that it focuses on providing individual medical care rather than adequately addressing the equally important issue of public health. Competent surveillance is perhaps more crucial now than ever before as potentially lethal diseases, once thought conquered, resurface to defeat our once almighty antibiotics.
The United States is now experiencing the largest wave of immigrants in this nation’s history. The first major influx of immigrants began during the 19th century. It started in the late 1840s and hit its peak in the 1880s, a decade in which more than 5 million immigrants arrived on our shores. The majority came from Northern and Western Europe, specifically from Ireland, Britain, Germany and Scandinavia, following a series of revolutions, famine and major disturbances. The next wave of immigrants occurred during the first decade of this century, when 9 million immigrants entered the country, again of European origin. The new entrants this time were Italians, Poles and Eastern Europeans. In the 1980s immigration rose to almost 10 million, the highest it has ever been in U.S. history. More than 10 million immigrants, both legal and illegal, are likely to enter the United States during the 1990s.
Most of these “newer” immigrants are coming from Latin America and Asia. This is one reason experts give as to why immigration has become the hot button issue of the moment. According to Franklin Velazquez, acting director for New York’s Center for Immigration Rights, the population of immigrants has shifted, bringing in more people of color. In the May 17, 1994 issue, The Economist reported that between 1810 and 1960, more than 80 percent of immigrants came from Eastern Europe. By the 1980s the share had dropped to less than 9 percent. Today, about 50 percent of new entrants are from Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. Another 40 percent are coming from Asia, including Korea, China and the Philippines.

The changing faces of these new immigrants may be the underlying reason why both legal and illegal immigration is causing so much of a furor in a country that until recently embraced these “huddled masses.” They appear to be, to the anti-immigration proponent, a danger to the fabric of the American culture. An article in The Nation written by David Cole states, “The ‘American Culture’ has been created, defined and revised by persons who for the most part are descended from immigrants.”

USING UP RESOURCES

Another often used myth about immigrants suggests that they are a drain on this country’s resources and most are on public assistance. The truth is that there are severe restrictions placed on both legal permanent residences and illegal immigrants who seek to receive government assistance. An excerpt from The Urban Institute’s May 1994 study entitled “Immigration and Immigrants: Setting the Record Straight,” indicates that “contrary to the public’s perception, when all levels of government are considered together, immigrants generate significantly more in taxes paid than they cost in services received.” It continues to say that while tax collections from immigrants are understated, the services cost for immigrants are overstated.

A reason that immigrants are not on public assistance programs more than the native-born person is that they are more likely to start their own small business. Former New York Governor Mario Cuomo says that immigrants own more than 40,000 companies in New York. These businesses provide thousands of jobs in addition to the $3.4 billion in revenue to the state’s economy. James Parrott, chief economist for the New York City Economic Policy and Marketing Group testified before the New York State Senate Committee on Cities, that immigrant-owned firms comprise 36 percent of all small businesses in New York.

Further more, these firms employ 22 percent of all New York employees who work for small businesses. There are many factors which lead immigrants to start their own businesses. These reasons often outweigh the obstacles they must face in order to succeeded. In assessing the strong entrepre-

neurial force in immigrants, Parrott gave a variety of reasons that lead to disproportionate self-employment among immigrants. Among these reasons are language problems and discrimination which present barriers to economic mobility in other occupational areas. This encourages the entrepreneurial spirit among immigrants.

Another myth is that immigrants cost citizens jobs. This is just a myth. This is proven by the fact that more often than not, immigrants will look to go into business for themselves. These businesses often cater to the needs of other immigrants. And to further disprove the myth that immigrants cost citizens jobs, these immigrants often hire citizens to work for them as well.

REMINDEERS OF HOME

According to Parrott, immigrants, especially recent arrivals, tend to settle in already established enclaves of their own ethnic background. The concentration of immigrant populations in New York creates a demand for special products and services that only these immigrants can provide. In New York, an immigrant is rarely deprived of the hospitality, the products, services, and traditions of their homeland. New York City is home to millions of new immigrants who are providing services as varied and unique as medical assistance programs, immigrant rights groups, long-distance telephone parlors, legal aid and counsel, dollar vans, child care, voter registration offices, restaurants, prenatal care, citizenship workshops, travel agencies, apparel shops, fortune tellers, publications and specialty importers.

But not only have these new immigrants made major entrepreneurial strides in their areas of expertise, the drive of many of America’s immigrants has seen them inherit delis, bodegas, dry cleaners and specialty restaurants formerly dominated by the first wave of immigrants. New York, home to Asian, African, West Indian, Latino, and European immigrants, stands out as the best example of how the cycle of immigrant contributions continues to evolve. The present state of immigration to New York may some day serve as a model for the rest of the country as now, more than ever, immigrants are making their way to states that have not traditionally felt the influence of foreigners.

Though many immigrants are finding success, recent arrivals still find that being an immigrant means learning to cope with the inevitable feelings of displacement, and in-betweeness. Many start over with a new identity, and most live out a never-ending struggle between the new land and the homeland all in the name of finding an internalized space, a space that the rest of us call home.

But what is important to note is that the same way the first wave of immigrants radically changed the face and pace of the country, particularly in the major ports of entry, so too are today’s immigrants, the influx of which can only continue to make the country a richer, more attractive place to live in. $
FORM FRENZY

For today's immigrants, just getting hold of the right forms is an ordeal

by Sarah Jacobson
illustrations by Dany Peña

Manhattan is home base for almost 1.5 million people, many of them immigrants. Jen Do Sith, an immigrant, has a question for the Immigration and Naturalization Services. By calling information, she obtains the number for the INS "Ask Immigration" touch tone service. The system promises, "Our officers are available to help you." After negotiating through several menus of selections and listening to notices about the Immigration Act of 1990, the answer to Sith's question still remains unclear. There is no way to contact an INS officer directly. Sith must listen to at least one of the INS's information lines which can last a minimum of 20 minutes, and some contain many submenus. Hit the wrong key and a caller will be disconnected. Sith could find the needed information by choosing one of the number options on the touch tone system or going to 26 Federal Plaza. Sith opts to travel to Federal Plaza.

At 11:00 a.m., the line at Federal Plaza has moved inside. The officers on guard are adept at keeping the crowd sorted properly. One side of the main lobby has a line of people snaking out into the hall, individuals clutch in their hands manila folders filled with carefully prepared documents and forms. Against the walls by the elevator banks, people lean and balance while filling in forms. The patrol for this area is stiff, no one is allowed to jump the line or get into the room that holds the INS officers without waiting. "Keep this way clear, move along," the officers call out.

Sith is representative of the many immigrants with questions and problems that need to negotiate the INS maze. Hers is typical of the experience of many different people. Not everyone is able to cope with the touch tone service or wait in line for hours. People have been known to start lining up at 26 Federal Plaza as early as 5 a.m. What other resources are there for these people? Some interesting options have developed. There are immigration and naturalization lawyers, immigration consultants, human rights committees and immigration services. Who do these organizations serve? How much does it cost? Are the lines any shorter?

LOST FILES

The problems Sith and others encounter are some of the reasons INS has become renowned for its inadequacies. The New York Times reported on September 11 and September 12, 1994 that investigators discovered piles of unopened mail forgotten in the basements of INS offices in Miami. It's no wonder so many people want to hand in their documents in person. The stories of files lost and folders missing are also overwhelming. In some cases it is these documents that may prove or disprove your ability to stay in the country. One casualty of this problem was Shabnam Kahana, who had to wait for INS to find her file or deport her. The New York Times' article also identified officers that had participated in the documents' black market. The temptation of trying to make up for low salaries was the officers' motive.

The problems at the INS multiplies as an increasing number of immigrants add to the overloaded bureaucracy. On any given day, 4,000 people; 20,000 a week; 997,000 a year, will seek help at the 26 Federal Plaza office in Manhattan. There are also the hundreds of people seeking political asylum. INS claims a backlog of 330,000 asylum petitions. From 1983 to 1986 in New York City alone, there were 266,673 green cards issued. That's almost 88,891 a year. That is a staggering amount of paper work, and without the proper form filled out and receipt of the correct filing fee the INS will not proceed with processing the information.

CONSULTING FIRMS

In her attempt to find out what form was needed and the required fee, Sith was led through this merry dance. Her next step happens when a neighbor tells her about a sign she saw in a local shop. The sign advertised Join America, an immigration consulting firm. When Sith calls the phone number, she discovers the line has been disconnected. It may be that she is lucky and has missed yet another scam. In June of 1994, when the immigration lottery was taking place, several scams were set up. During that time, handbills and notices were distrib-
uted in immigrant neighborhoods listing several locations where one could travel to find out the secrets of successful entry into the United States. Prices for help with the application ranged from $35 to $500.

The New York Consumer Affairs Department is aware of the possibilities for abuse and tries to control the situation. The problem is that it is not illegal to charge people for an unnecessary service. All Consumer Affairs can do is fine the offenders when fraudulent claims are made. The result of these fines leads to more subtle advertising by the offenders. There are also community groups and city council offices that watch the yellow pages and ethnic weeklies to detect exploitive operators.

After calling several disconnected lines, Sith is connected with Documents Unlimited, a consulting firm that has now become a law firm. They no longer assist only with submitting documents, but cover the full spectrum of immigration and naturalization problems. These areas might include representation before a judge or business problems that occur in employing people from outside the U.S. There are approximately 40 law firms in New York City that only deal with immigration concerns. Rates can vary from a one time assist fee of $35 or $40 per filing, to an hourly rate that can range from $50 to $500 plus expenses.

Her friend on the other hand is in a more serious dilemma. He has been detained at an airport holding cell awaiting the results of a request for political asylum. Sith was informed by a friend to contact an organization called Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. A helpful receptionist at the Committee connects her immediately to a case worker who assigns an attorney to her friend’s case. The Committee is composed of staff attorneys, but they also use outside attorneys that work pro bono, the service is free.

A petition for asylum is very difficult to prove. The petitioner must prove fear of persecution from the government or from a rebel organization. The entire process is decided by one administrative judge and appeals are almost certain to be denied. Mathy Stanislaus, an attorney who has experience in this area, places some blame for the inadequacies of this system on “the fact that the INS is not a humanitarian based organization.” She says asylum is often influenced by political associations between the U.S. and the petitioner’s government. Stanislaus continues, “Process is designed to keep people out.” With all these strikes against the petitioner, it is essential to have representation by any attorney familiar with the immigration process. There are other specific ethnic organizations that can help with petitions, such as the Albanian-American Civic Association.

Forms for Sale
Sith meanwhile decides to go back to Federal Plaza and stand on line to get what she needs. When she gets to Federal Plaza she decides to go to McDonald’s to get some coffee. As she walks down Broadway she notices a neon sign on a building across from INS it reads: Photos, Fingerprints, money orders and copies of INS forms. This business is called Federal National Services and is owned by Dan Klareich. He buys the forms in bulk from the INS and resells them to the general public. All forms are $1.25 each and there is a line of about ten people. The line at the back of the store is a little bit longer as people wait to get photographs and fingerprints done. Sith decides she will come back later and continues walking down Broadway.

As she crosses Duane Street, a big mural painted on the wall catches her attention. She follows the arrow and discovers A.C. Immigration Services, another service that has copies of INS forms. The owner is not forthcoming with his name or fees but the forms are readily available at a cost of only $1 each. There is no one else in the store except for a man making copies. They have not been very successful as a business and the landlord is trying to rent out the back of the store.

Sith finds out she needs form I-130. It costs her $1 for the form and the filing fee is $80. She gets assistance from the owner in filling the form out and he collects her check and documents and will submit them for her. Twenty minutes later she is on the street, mission accomplished. Hopefully nothing will be lost.
Early Thanksgiving morning Roy, Daniel and Roberto spend the remainder of the night of festivities inside the French Roast Cafe in downtown Manhattan, discussing the effect marriage has had on their lives. For years green card marriages have become the quickest route to legal U.S. residency and with the recent influx of Brazilian immigrants in pursuit of the “American Dream” the temptation of achieving legal documents illegally, has been too great for many. On paper the idea seems simple enough. A couple gets married, lives together for two years and then files for divorce. One person receives a green card while the other a pre-negotiated sum of money. It’s a cold equation that appears straightforward but too often human emotions are overlooked.

DANIEL’S STORY
A year ago, 20-year-old Daniel accepted a marriage proposal from Barbara, his girlfriend of two years. Daniel had been living illegally in the United States for several years and said that by not being a citizen he lacked financial security from the government for work as well as for school. Marriage would also be an opportunity to sponsor his parents and three siblings, all of whom have not returned to their homeland of Recife, Brazil since 1989.

In September, Daniel and Barbara exchanged vows at City Hall and a few months later they went to an INS office for an interview to see if the marriage would be accepted by the law. The “245 interview” consists of six or seven questions posed by the officer to the couple. The answers provided along with proof of a joint relationship (i.e. joint bank account, wedding pictures) is the information INS representatives use to determine the validity of marriage. According to Chip Bogdansky from the INS press office in New York, between 4,500 and 5,000 couples in the past year were required to have a Stokes interview because the investigator suspected that the marriage was not a bonified one. A Stokes interview is a second hearing which lasts from one to three hours with another investigator to decide if the alien is eligible to obtain a green card. An estimated 80 percent of the applicants were denied this status in the past year.

Immediately after their marriage was approved, Daniel was granted his temporary Alien Registration Receipt Card. With it came college financial aid and the opportunity to start paying social security for his future.

A year later Daniel reflects back and bitterly recalls how the care he once had for his girlfriend has turned into hatred toward his wife. According to Daniel, her possessiveness has made him a prisoner in his own home and he has not even been able to talk to his friends. “I have to swallow everything and accept it because of the position I am in. I don’t even want to talk to her anymore,” Daniel said. He has only one plan after the two year minimum of marriage is up—divorce. He sums it up by saying, “I’d advise anyone to get married only if there is no other way.”

ROY’S STORY
After taking a few sips from his cappuccino, Roy takes a deep breath and begins to tell about his current marriage to Gloria. After dating on and off for over a year Gloria went back home
to São Paulo, Brazil to visit a family she hadn’t seen in nearly four years. Like many Brazilians who attempt to return to the United States after living here illegally, her visa was denied. Roy, an American, flew to Brazil to help her return and when there was no other way to get her back into the U.S., he proposed.

In August of 1993 Roy and Gloria, both 21, were pronounced husband and wife. During their interview, documented proof of his tax payments and annual earnings were presented, along with Gloria’s medical report.

They lived together in an apartment in New York for about four months and all that remains of their marriage is the gold band Roy occasionally wears on his finger. Gloria now lives with her current boyfriend and Roy is left contemplating if it was all worthwhile. “I did it to help the bitch,” Roy said with a slight tone of anger. After reflecting for a moment he continued by saying, “I also did it to prove a point...that I really loved her.”

Roy knows that although he can get Gloria deported, he also runs the risk of going to jail for an extended amount of time. Bojdansky states that the penalty for entering into a false marriage contract is a maximum of five years in prison and/or $250,000. In addition, the act of willfully falsifying fact or using false documents may incur an extra fine of up to $10,000 and/or five years in prison. Instead of running the risk, Roy prefers to renegotiate the terms of their marriage contract to $3,000 in cash in exchange for his silence until another year of marriage goes by.

ROBERTO’S STORY

Roberto, the oldest of the trio, has endured the most in the green card marriages. When he got married in 1992 he made the mistake of not taking photographs at the ceremony. In addition to this error he had only been in the United States for one year. Both circumstances resulted in a rejection of his application by an INS investigator who told Roberto that the answer would arrive in the mail.

For six months, Roberto and his wife lived together while he paid $450 a month for her mortgage. In this time period Roberto states their initial platonic relationship turned sexual. He would only use her for his immediate satisfaction without feeling any emotional attachment. As time passed Roberto started to believe that his wife had begun to develop romantic feelings that he did not want to share. Without hesitation he moved out while continuing to pay her through the two years. Eventually he moved in with his current fiancée, Angela.

The couple started to live together and by the end of 1993 they were expecting their first child together. Roberto and Angela went to Brazil during Carnival in February 1994. Roberto found out in Brazil that his visa to return to the U.S. had been denied. Angela was forced to return to New York to work and deliver their baby daughter alone. Four months after his expected return Roberto obtained a visa to Mexico where he paid $500 to a 12-year-old Mexican “guide” to take him across the border to Arizona. Roberto said, “The actual crossing was easier than taking a lollipop from a child’s mouth.”

Today Roberto is awaiting the finalization of his divorce even though he never received his green card. He still blames his wife for not helping him when he couldn’t return but he is ready to begin his new life with his new daughter and fiancée. Upon reflection, Roberto says, “I don’t recommend people to do this because I’ve learned everything that we do that is wrong, people find out then you have to pay.” An eerie silence fell over the smoke-filled cafe as Daniel, Roy and Roberto got up and headed home.
A RUN FOR THE MONEY

New York’s dollar vans are challenging the public transportation system on the city’s streets

by Antoinette Coulton
illustrations by Jennifer Chiu

Stand on a street corner in Southeastern Queens and chances are the first thing you’ll see is an immigrant owned minivan, vying for business that used to go to New York city buses. Known as “dollar vans,” these West Indian imports came alive in the ’80s and are steadily establishing their position in New York’s transportation industry, by chipping away at the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s ironclad hold on the borough’s commuters.

A GROWING TREND BRANCHES OUT

Immigrants have always played an important role in the economic enterprise system that defines New York City. West Africans line neighborhood streets selling perfumed oils and jars of incense. Indians operate newsstands under the city’s snake-like subway system and Spanish bodegas are a familiar sight on many street corners. In Queens where at least 36 percent of the population was born abroad according to the latest Census figures, this same spirit of entrepreneurship has survived with a unique twist—minivan drivers are in direct competition with the city.

The MTA, the agency that owns public buses and subways, views minivan drivers as a financial threat that, according to their estimates, contributes $30 million
to its annual operating loss. On the other hand, many commuters see them as a welcome addition to an already overburdened transportation system.

Michael Johnson, a frequent commuter from Queens Village, says, “I never take the MTA buses, there is always a van when I need one. Besides you have to support your brothers.” It is this loyalty that many van drivers say is the key to survival in a business riddled with obstacles. Vitulu A. Richard, president of the Unique Van Association, one of the pioneers of the immigrant run enterprise, says, “The vans are faster and more comfortable. We provide a better service than the MTA, and the competition is good.”

Indeed, the minibuses compete directly with the MTA, operating on five key bus routes that stretch from Queens Village, Rosedale, St. Albans, and Green Acres Mall in Nassau County to the main Parsons Boulevard and Archer Avenue subway station in Jamaica. “We don’t mind competition,” says Charles Seaton, spokesperson for the public affairs office of New York City Transit. “But many of these vans illegally operate along bus routes,” he adds. Vans are reported to illegally overtake buses, putting drivers, passengers and pedestrians in danger.

“FARE DEAL” — A PANACEA?

Two years ago the MTA introduced a “fare deal” marketing plan. Aimed at commuters in the two-fare zones of southeastern Queens who need to take a bus to the subway station, it was publicly promoted by MTA Chairman Peter Stangl, as a way to keep the bus customers happy. Riders on the five selected bus routes—Q83, Q84, Q4, Q5 and Q42—were offered a special $1.50 round-trip fare to and from the Parsons subway station. Most commuters who take the bus and subway daily would save $5 a week with the prepaid ticket. According to New York Newsday, in an internal memo, New York City Transit Authority President Alan F. Kiepper explained the motivation for the “fare deal” by saying that the vans have become a headache of giant proportions, already stealing one-quarter of the business in certain neighborhoods. With the introduction of the fare deal, he says, “We’re going to beat them.”

“They are trying to put us out of business,” says Richard, of Unique Van Association. “We have a license to run, but we can’t stop at bus stops.” Van services are not allowed to operate on bus routes, only on side roads and have been allocated parking spaces several yards from the subway station. The van drivers also charge that although there are alternative parking spots near the subway station, within months these spaces became no parking or no standing zones. “They say we can coexist,” Richard continues, “and then they turn round and try to stop us from making a living.”

The MTA’s representative, Seaton, does not deny the charge. “We are not a non-profit organization,” he says. “Police sweeps on selected bus routes are just one of the ways we intend to win back customers. We are not harassing innocent people. These van drivers are breaking the law,” he adds.

To counteract the van drivers’ illegal traffic actions, the Transit Police regularly ticket violators with penalties ranging from $500 to $2,000. Van drivers claim the city is not playing fair. Richard insists the drivers in his association abide by all state and city transportation laws. “All drivers maintain proper licenses and insurance policies, undergo annual physicals and defensive driving courses, but the MTA continues to fight us,” says Richard. He further charges that MTA officials thwart the association’s attempt to obtain leases to operate additional vans. “We go to meetings armed with community testimonials confirming the need for more vans,” says Richard. He continues, “Then the MTA argues that the routes are sufficiently served.”

Despite a number of commuters who remain loyal to the vans, there are many who prefer the perceived safety of the MTA buses compared to the speed and convenience of the minibuses. Janet Gray, of Cambria Heights, echoes the fears of many commuters who only patronize the MTA. Gray, a pensioner, insists she would never take a minivan. “They are not safe,” she argues, recalling the day she saw a van nearly collide with a MTA bus one morning. “The van driver was trying to cut the bus off, that is what they always do. I bet half of them have no insurance,” says Gray. John Sanders, a van driver of five years thinks that many van horror stories are simply made up or exaggerated. “There are several illegal van services out there that do not have licenses and do not operate under any association. Unfortunately, the media makes the public think that we are all illegal, and we’re not,” explains Sanders.

UNIFIED STRUGGLE

Critics charge the vans behave like maverick individuals that compete as ruthlessly for road space against each other as against the MTA. Van Association President Richard refutes this theory saying that vans are operated in teams and are run by at least four independent organizations that exist to regulate the van service while battling the laws that threaten to undermine their existence. The van associations are in turn controlled by the Interborough Alliance Community Transportation, IACT, a parent organization formed in the mid ’80s. IACT represents the business interests of Unique Van Association and other similar van agencies in southeastern Queens. It is with this higher power that the major political and legal battles lie. “We have one common enemy,” asserts Richard, “the MTA.”

Though they accuse the Transportation Authority of using hard ball tactics, van drivers are not being harassed illegally, and therefore have no legal recourse against the MTA. The drivers claim that the MTA’s fare deal is not working, so the agency’s new goal is to eliminate them completely. “Why else would they keep bothering us?” says Trevor Bown, who in partnership with his father operates a van along the Q83 bus route. “New York Transportation officials keep changing the
laws. How can we keep up with all the new legislation?” says Browne. Prior to September 1994, van associations had lifetime permits under New York State law. As of April 1995, route licenses will be controlled by the Taxi and Limousine Commission of New York City. Route operators will have to re-apply for licenses which are renewable every six years. Presently, van drivers are operating under interim licenses that are effective during the transition period between September ’94 and April ’95.

Transit spokesperson Seaton denies the city is fighting for the extinction of the vans. Contradicting skeptics’ assertions he says, “Although customers initially showed limited enthusiasm for the ‘fare deals’ that has now changed. Ridership on the selected routes has increased by 10,000 passengers a month. We have also added additional express bus services in Queens. The ‘fare deal’ is working.” Seemingly as a testament to that fact, the MTA has recently introduced fare deals in the Utica Avenue area of Brooklyn and selected areas of the Bronx.

Though the MTA officially claims to have won passengers back from the vans, reversing the 31 percent decrease in ridership experienced on some routes, there are still those commuters who prefer to remain loyal to the van service. Michelle Thomas rushes home to collect her three children each evening from their baby-sitter. “I need fast and comfortable transportation. I can’t afford to wait half-an-hour for a bus at night, especially during the winter,” she explains.

MTA opponents say that the Transportation Authority does not care about commuters as individuals but as another token. Devon Winters, a student, says she takes the same van every day. “The driver waits for me at night, and takes me to my front door, and he does not charge anything extra either.” Winters lives several blocks from the last bus stop and relies on the van to get home safely at night. In reaction to customers complaints the Transit Authority has started a Request-A-Stop program in Queens between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Bus operators will let passengers off wherever they ask them to, provided that the place is somewhere along the route.

The van drivers also earn bonus points with the standard fare they charge. Despite the rising cost of transportation and the MTA’s fare increases over the years, the vans’ fares have remained at one dollar per ride, and there are no plans for an increase. Roy Marter, an accountant, cites this as his main reason for patronizing the vans: “I am not richer that anyone else, but the van drivers seem to care more about their passengers than the MTA.”

“We do care,” says Seaton. He continues, “The ‘fare deal’ is just one step we have taken to provide a better service for all our customers. As time goes on, we will be looking at other ways to improve the bus service in these and other areas of the city.”

The main wave of feeling among riders and van drivers however is the need to stick together. Many local residents are angry at the MTA for what they see as a disregard for community needs. Last winter community residents claim the MTA re-routed buses to carry suburbanites to their Long Island homes during the numerous snow storms. “That was devastating to our community,” says Richard. “The van drivers had to pick up the slack,” adds Richard. Seaton dispute the claim. “All our services were delayed. Queens customers were not displaced intentionally.”

**ON THE RISE AND HERE TO STAY**

Despite the concerted efforts of the Transportation Authority, minivan services are on the rise in southeastern Queens and other parts of the city. Chinese immigrants offer van transportation from Chinatown to Brooklyn and in Flatbush, Brooklyn where there was the highest concentration of new immigrants in the ’80s, the industry is flourishing.

In the Seagate community at the southwestern tip of Brooklyn, the Transit Authority suffered a 52 percent loss in ridership due to gypsy cabs and illegal vans.

Vans are often family affairs. In much the same way that immigrants settle in one area because of family ties, the van service attracts family members who arrive in New York eager for employment. Nepotism is a cure for the otherwise low-paying jobs or lack thereof that immigrants, some illegal, are forced to encounter. As minivans increase and unite with local community and political support, they seem set to permanently change the face of New York City transportation. Some believe that it is the MTA and not the minivans that are fighting a losing battle. Transportation officials claim their goal is to ensure vans are properly regulated, and that they compete fairly.

But, as Carmen Jefferson, one of the few female van drivers, observes, “They are hypocrites. They want to see us crawl away so that passengers will be at their mercy again. They can’t wait to raise the fares. But we are not going anywhere.”
Advertisers have nothing to lose in the translation.

by Katty Acosta

High growth rates for Hispanic consumers are increasingly attracting advertisers to the two existing Hispanic networks and encouraging other broadcasters and programmers to aim more shows at Latinos. The motivation stems from the 1990 census projections of a marked rise in the Hispanic population and a significant increase in their purchasing power within the United States.

Hispanics will comprise 11 percent of the total U.S. population by the year 2000 and 13.4 percent by 2010. At that point, Hispanics will be tied with African Americans in numbers and they will likely be on their way to surpassing them as the largest minority group. Currently, Hispanics are 8.6 percent of the total U.S. population.

Since 1980, Hispanic purchasing power has tripled, soaring from $60 billion to $180 billion. This is a composite estimate based on an evaluation of figures from a variety of sources. The most optimistic estimates are offered by Univision ($190 billion or more), while a more conservative assessment is provided by Hispanic Business (about $177 billion).

In New York City, Hispanics are now 24 percent of the population. "If I'm an advertiser, I'm in business to make dollars and I certainly can't afford to turn my back on 24 percent of the city," says David Kreinik, vice-president at Creative Media Inc. in Manhattan. "At 24 percent, Hispanics are not minorities anymore."

Yet what is projected to be a promising new market opportunity is being approached very cautiously by advertisers and broadcasters. Hesitant to invest significant money they are taking steps to test the money-making potential in the Hispanic television market.

TELEMUNDO AND UNIVISION

The two major Spanish-language networks are Telemundo Group Inc., based in New York, and Univision Holdings Inc., based in Miami. Telemundo consists of six stations and 22 affiliates and Univision operates 10 fully owned and 21 affiliate stations. Despite criticisms of their programming as being limited to a select group of Latinos, the two networks have long offered the widest penetration of the Hispanic market and broadest appeal to all segments of the Hispanic population.

Nevertheless, for many years advertisers and programmers were not interested in investing in the Hispanic television arena because it lacked credible, documented ratings that showed a steady increase in viewership, and they doubted Hispanic consumer spending abilities.

So, to attract the big dollars, Telemundo and Univision spent $16 million each to get A.C. Nielsen Co. to begin a national measurement service of Hispanic viewers in 1992. Univision turned out to be the ratings leader, with 63 percent of the viewing audience, on the strength of its leading programs including "Sabado Gigante" a variety show, "El Show de Cristina" the most popular talk show, and its line up of prime time "telenovelas," or soap operas.

Before the networks underwrote the Nielsen research,
measurement of Hispanic viewership was highly suspect and most advertising professionals considered any data regarding ratings provided by the companies vastly inflated. Now Telemundo and Univision CEOs agree the Nielsen service is well worth the investment, because it gives the networks credibility among potential advertisers.

Still, Hispanic TV now gets only 1.4 percent of television advertisement spending, up from 0.8 percent three years ago, according to research done by Telemundo in an attempt to analyze new marketing strategies. Univision has made a similar analysis, so there has been a surge in creative marketing by both companies to attract advertisers.

COMMERCIALS NEEDED
One obstacle for advertisers is a lack of experience in the production of advertisements for the U.S. products targeting Hispanic audiences of Spanish-language networks. Sandra Watson, a graduate student in advertising at New York University concentrating in ethnic markets, explains, "As companies try to get into Hispanic markets, they don't have Spanish-language commercials with Hispanic people doing Hispanic things like in English."

Univision has come up with a simple solution for its sponsors. Univision CEO Ray Rodriguez says it integrates product announcements right into its shows. Univision's top rated Sabado Gigante (Gigantic Saturday) for example, is a four hour variety show produced in Florida and watched by all of Latin America. Before starting a new skit or contest or breaking for a commercial, the host, Don Francisco, leads the audience in singing a jingle for Colgate toothpaste, Downy fabric softer or Nabisco Lucky Charms cereal. Throughout the show the audience enthusiastically sings these jingles for each and every sponsor of the show.

For those companies that choose to produce Spanish-language commercials, it is often much harder than dubbing an existing English-language commercial because of cultural differences between the average Hispanic household and the average American household. Yet, some companies have begun to figure out the secret of launching successful campaigns on Hispanic television.

The 1994 World Cup Soccer Championship was the first substantial advertising breakthrough for Univision. Reebok, a division of Reebok International Ltd., the athletic footwear and apparel giant, paid nearly $3 million to Univision to be the sole athletic footwear advertiser on the Spanish-language TV network's coverage of the championship matches. This was the first time Reebok had ever bought time on Univision.

Reebok was also the first to air ads on the Telemundo network in 1994. The Reebok deals with Univision and Telemundo were the first athletic footwear advertising purchases of U.S. Spanish-language television. Since the World Cup, Reebok has continued to be a major advertiser on both Spanish-language networks, promoting its highly recognizable products to Hispanic customers.

Other leading American products have also been successful in marketing to the Hispanic population on Telemundo and Univision. Coca-Cola has crossed over to air "La Ola de Hoy" spots, its translation of the now famous "Catch the Wave" slogan. And, Pepsi has recruited Mexican-American comedian and actor Paul Rodriguez as their spokesperson.

However, there is another source of advertising revenues that has a more local flavor to it. Even before the multinational marketers set their sights on Hispanic television, neighborhood business owners have always regarded Telemundo and Univision as vehicles for promoting their small Hispanic firms.

In Queens, numerous travel agencies, jewelers, restaurants and clubs, as well as telephone parlors which offer inexpensive long distance telephone services to Latin America, fax services, pager and cellular phone sales, often advertise their businesses on the two Spanish-language networks.

"Our services need to be promoted through Spanish-language mediums that cover large portions of the Hispanic community," explains Gabriel Satizabal, co-owner of two restaurants and a bar club in the heavily Hispanic populated neighborhood of Jackson Heights. "People drive in from New Jersey because they see my commercials on TV," he adds.

Without disclosing exact expenses, Satizabal says how he cheaply hires "one of those guys who makes wedding videos" to shoot footage of his establishments and put the 30 second commercials together. "I make back the money I invest in a few months but in the meantime clientele has been increasing and passing the word about my places."

COMPETITION FOR TELMUNDO AND UNIVISION
The Hispanic market is very different from other ethnic markets. Aside from their language difference, the average Hispanic household is larger, 3.5 members, compared to the national average of 2.6. Overall, the Hispanic population is younger than the non-Hispanic population and therefore is more likely to be single according to the National Planning Data Corporation.

In addition, many nationalities fall under the Hispanic umbrella in the United States with varying concentrations...
across the regions. For example, Mexican-Americans make up about 80 percent of U.S. Hispanics and live mainly in the southwestern states and California, while Cubans are heavily concentrated in Florida. New York is dominated by Caribbean Hispanics from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, as well as Central and South America. Cable companies are now making advances in trying to appeal to different aspects of the Hispanic community.

First is Galavision, sometimes referred to as the third network because of the competition it has with Telemundo and Univision for advertising dollars and viewership. This Spanish-language cable network, based in Los Angeles, is closely connected with the Mexican communications conglomerate Televisa. After two years, the 24-hour network is now seen in two million Hispanic households through 300 cable systems in 12 states.

Industry experts say that Univision reaches 85 percent of the Hispanic television market, Telemundo reaches 75 percent and Galavision reaches about 30 percent. The increased competition is hurting the revenues of the two older networks even though Galavision’s programming appears to be aimed primarily at Mexicans.

Galavision and cable operators that carry it assert that they have begun to gain a substantial slice of the national Hispanic advertising budget of more than $400 million.

A new Hispanic western regional sports network, La Cadena Deportiva, was launched in late 1994 as an attempt to reach the Hispanic male head-of-household, who according to Vice President and General Manager, Richard Ramirez, are “underserved by the female skewed Hispanic networks.”

According to Ramirez, existing Hispanic programming services offer only a dozen hours of sports programming per week, most of which is restricted to the weekend slots, well outside of prime time. La Cadena Deportiva includes basketball, PAC Ten football and international soccer games.

Hispanics want their MTV too! Also added to the growing list of U.S. programmers trying to court the nation’s 24 million Hispanics is MTV, with its spin-off MTV Internacional. The multi-talented, bilingual Daisy Fuentes, already famous as an MTV veejay, hosts weekly shows to count down the top-20 hits on the Latin music scene.

HBO was the first English-language cable company to initiate programming in Spanish and profit from a Spanish-language market hungry for popular American entertainment in Spanish.

On Oct. 31, 1993, Home Box Office announced that its paid-television network programming service would be made available in Spanish to all HBO affiliates. HBO en Español is currently available in cable systems, capable of serving up to 4.1 million Hispanic television households across the country, including markets like Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, San Antonio and San Juan.

HBO en Español features the same highly promoted HBO line-up of “the best Hollywood movies, critically acclaimed original programming and world Championship sporting events, in Spanish.” A close second in the Nielsen ratings behind Pay-Per-View sporting events, HBO’s Boxeo en Español received a Cable ACE award for its Spanish language boxing events and features a renowned Hispanic ringside team of boxing experts.
CLOSE-UP ON THE NANNY

Nannies have stepped into the spotlight, but the attention is not always welcome

by Antoinette Coulton

illustrations by Timothy I. Jones

Immigrants face many employment obstacles while making the transition from their homeland to the United States, problems that increase tenfold when these individuals are illegal. Baby-sitting or a career as a nanny is one of the most popular jobs that attracts female immigrants to child care. With the high cost of child care showing no signs of abating, many families are looking towards illegal immigrants for inexpensive household help.

West Indian immigrants have, according to the latest census figures, been the group with the second highest number of people to enter New York in the '80s. As such, their representation in the household help industry is significant. According to the Pacer Employment Agency on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, though it has no record of the number of illegal alien candidates, approximately 60 percent of prospective nannies are from the Caribbean. Many of these workers have no families who could file an application for permanent residency for them, and are forced to employ other methods that will allow them an opportunity to participate in New York life.

A survey of any newspaper shows that advertisements for nannies are widespread. A closer look at these ads indicate employers will pay from $100 to $450 per week for help. At the low end of the scale they offer another incentive, "Will Sponsor." Those magic words are music to some workers ears and to those like Jennifer, a Jamaican immigrant, the offer is one that is hard to refuse.

Jennifer is a classic example of immigrants willing to sac
office family life for the benefits of a resident visa. Jennifer works on the Upper East Side as a nanny to two toddlers. She has three children of her own, whom she has not seen in four years because she is an illegal alien and risks the possibility of not being able to return to the U.S. Jennifer came to New York on a tourist visa from Jamaica one summer, in search of work. Through a friend she quickly found a temporary position as a nanny. However, when Jennifer’s six-week visa expired, weeks turned into months and then years. After her first year, her employers offered to help her to obtain permanent residency status, but it’s three years later and there has been no noticeable progress in her case.

Jeff Silvera, an immigration lawyer in Queens says Jennifer’s case is far from unique. “The route she’s taking, though long, is one of the most secure ways of becoming a permanent resident. Employers have no special connection to the Department of Immigration, but they are willing to help. They are only acting as an intermediary and have no control over the length of the immigration process.” This does not explain why some individuals like Jennifer’s employer appear to be paying below minimum wage salaries for round the clock household and child care services.

Silvera handles many such cases, and says that the waiting list for a resident visa is severely backlogged. “Many factors are to blame; the waiting list for a particular country, the time the applicant entered the United States and the relationship of the sponsor to the applicant,” he explains. He adds that waiting lists as long as 10 years are commonplace.

AN EXPENSIVE PROPOSITION
Margaret Lloyd is an employer currently sponsoring her nanny for the past two years. Although she does not state how much her employee is paid, she regrets that she cannot pay her more. “The lawyer fees are tremendous. It’s hard to find a responsible person to look after your children, and when you do, you want to hold on to them. I’m paying what I can afford, I’m not exploiting her,” she explains.

Immigration laws are so complicated that Michael Floyd, an immigration lawyer in Brooklyn, says his clients are not the only ones frustrated with the system. “There are no easy ways around immigration laws. Lawyers do not purposely delay cases,” he says. Floyd processes cases where clients have told him that employers are mistreating them. In some cases, five-day weeks have become seven-day on-call positions. Floyd usually suggests that clients stay with their employers: “They have a roof over their head, and food to eat, it could be a lot worse.”

Sandra Bowen, a volunteer at the Devon community center in Queens, says it often is a lot worse. “Illegal immigrants need someone who is in their corner fighting for their rights. Employers want permanent help, some of them are afraid that once a nanny gets the visa, they will leave and all that money has gone down the drain,” she says.

Jennifer knows that is all she wants. “I have no allegiance to my employer. Sometimes I feel like giving up and going home, but I’ve waited too long to stop now. If she treated me well, I’ll stay after I got my visa, but I’m tired of being underpaid and overworked,” she says.

According to estimates from the Devon community center, many of these immigrant workers prefer to stay with their employers despite being mistreated. Bowen explains, “They all hang on to the notion that the United States is the land of opportunity. Now they have the chance to be here, they don’t want to leave and they are willing to sacrifice almost anything for it.”

While there are many immigrants who are willing to report cases of mistreatment, immigration counselors believe there are thousands more who are afraid to admit they are being exploited. Immigration lawyer Floyd says that people are afraid they will be deported: “They don’t realize that there are laws that protect illegal aliens. Even though an individual may have entered the country illegally, it is still possible for them to obtain a work permit while their residency papers are being processed.”

Silvera notes that some immigrants can take advantage of the amnesty law that makes special provisions for individuals that entered the country before 1982. So, amid cries of delays and mistreatment all roads seem to lead back to the Department of Immigration and Naturalization. It is here that a sea of red tape and mountains of legislation lie.
THE LAND WITHOUT GOLD

Poem by Rosario Mastrogiacomo

I was born in a distant land where the sun cries for the night where the people don't look to where they're going only where they are.

But today I live in a land of gold where those with nothing can have everything.

But I arrived late because the land of gold is not here the gold doesn't exist.

And I, like the sun, in my distant land cry for the night.

Yo nací en una tierra lejana donde el sol anhela la noche donde la gente no mira donde va solo donde está.

Pero hoy vivo en una tierra de oro donde aquellos sin nada pueden tenerlo todo.

Pero llegué tarde porque la tierra de oro no es aquí el oro no existe.

Y eso, como el sol en mi tierra lejana anhelo la noche.

Photos: (clockwise from top left) Tracy Young, Raymond Lam, Tracy Young, Raymond Lam, Raymond Lam. Background photo: Tracy Young.
AN OUNCE OF PROTECTION
The evolution of the condom industry from antiquity to “Reality”

by Tracy A Oliver
illustrations by Bill J. Tomaras

Egyptians used them 1,000 years before the birth of Christ. They were worn in Japan in the early 1500s. In 1564, the Italians started using them and now, whether you buy latex, natural skin, glow-in-the-dark or mint scented, most people have used one at least once in their lives.

Condoms have changed with the times. There have been improved methods of production and there have also been new varieties to “fit” every person’s needs. With the introduction of HIV/AIDS and other diseases into modern society, condoms have had to adapt to prevent the microscopic cells that contain viruses and infections.

OVERCOATS, CONDOMS, RUBBERS
The 16th century was the beginning of the condom in the form closest to what it is in the 1990s. The Italian anatomist Gabriel Fallopioius, who is also credited with discovering how the Fallopian tubes function, has become known as the father of the condom. In 1564, he designed a linen sheath that fit over the tip of the penis and was secured by the foreskin. The doctor himself said that the invention, which was said to have been tested on over 1,000 men, was a success.

Soon after Fallopician’s invention, sheaths appeared for circumcised men. They were eight inches long and were securely tied at the base of the penis with a pink ribbon.

There was a syphilis outbreak of epidemic proportions in Europe in the mid-1500s and Fallopious’s invention was intended to be a way of preventing disease, not pregnancy. However, the sheaths only occasionally prevented disease. They were made of linen, animal gut and fish membranes and were meant to be reused. The lack of disease prevention stemmed from the fact that they were not properly used or cleaned. Men even reused them without washing them. They were also unpopular because they interfered with the pleasure of intercourse.

In 1564, Fallopioius called his invention “overcoats.” So, where did the name condom come from? In the mid-1600s, England’s King Charles II commissioned the Earl of Condom, his personal physician, to produce a means of protecting the king from venereal disease. Dr. Condom, who might not have been aware of Fallopious’s overcoats, brought the king a sheath of stretched and oiled sheep intestine. Members of the king’s court heard about the sheath that Dr. Condom invented and named the prophylactics after him.

In 1785, a lexicon was published in London called A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue. It defined the condom as “the dried gut of a sheep, worn by men in the act of coition, to prevent venereal infection.” The entry is several lines long and says nothing about contraception.

The fourth edition of Our Sexuality, a text book by Robert Crooks and Karla Baur, published in 1990, defines the condom as “a latex or membrane sheath that fits over the penis and is used for protection against unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.”

The 1785 definition is how people viewed the condom until the 20th century when penicillin laid to rest man’s dread of syphilis. At this point, the prevention of pregnancy became the primary reason for condom use.

In the 1840s vulcanized rubber was developed. In the 1870s rubber began being used to make condoms. These were still not the modern day condoms, but they were closer than Fallopious’s overcoats. The vulcanized rubber condom was thick, not sterile and not disposable. Reusing one until it cracked or tore, a man was instructed to thoroughly wash a condom before and after intercourse. Although rubbers were effective and convenient, they were still disliked because of the dreaded dulling of sensation during intercourse. Something had to be done to make the idea of using condoms more appealing than repulsive to men.

HELLO, LATEX
At the beginning of the 20th century, condoms were being produced using latex, a type of rubber that can be produced as thin as 0.03mm. The earlier latex condoms were molded from sheets of latex and had a seam along the length of it. Since
there was fear that the seam would break, another process had to be developed.

The process that solved this dilemma was called the seamless cement process. In this process, natural rubber was ground, dissolved and heated with solvents. Glass molds were dipped into the mixture and the condoms dried as the solvents evaporated. To add strength and elasticity, the condoms were vulcanized by being exposed to sulfur dioxide. The seamless cement process was time consuming because of the steps involved in making the rubber and solvent mixture, and was also hazardous as it emitted toxic fumes.

In the 1930s, new techniques enabled rubber plantations to ship concentrated liquid latex to the manufacturers. This was less time consuming and costly. There weren’t as many workers taking days off because they couldn’t be around the fumes. It signaled the new era of condom production.

**OVER THE COUNTER**

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, condoms were looked upon as sexual devices. Development, production and selling had to be done under the counter and behind closed doors.

When condoms were marketed as prophylactics, drugstore sales were possible, but once marketed as contraceptives, no drug store would touch them. To get condoms, men would have to go to physicians, brothels or barber shops.

Merle Young, a pharmaceutical salesman, changed that. In the mid-1920s, Young got into the condom market by starting a company called Young’s Rubber that produced condoms.

Young’s connections as a salesman helped him to convince drugstore owners to start selling condoms over the counter. Although they were behind the counter and many young men were intimidated by the sometimes elderly pharmacist that they had to ask for assistance, condoms were available to anybody who wanted them. Including women.

But the condom market was hit hard in 1938. The National Committee on Maternal Health issued a statement that only 40 percent of the condoms manufactured were fit for safe and effective use. The reason for the problem was that there was no quality control in the manufacturing plants because there was no copyright or patent protection. The Food and Drug Administration was assigned to control the quality of what was produced in the condom market. The first effort by the FDA to check the quality of condoms found that 75 percent of the condoms already on the market had small pinholes caused by either improperly vulcanized latex or the existence of dust particles in the liquid latex.

The FDA started making changes rapidly. The first thing that they did was to have factories hire people who were specifically assigned to quality control. These workers stood at machines that would blow air into condoms at high pressure and fill them with water. If there were any problems, they were to notify the foreman and they were to stop production.
immediately to check the machinery and make sure that the problem was not anything that they could not control.

By the early 1960s, condoms were the most effective form of contraception and disease prevention.

The only problem that analysts could find with condoms in the early 1960s was that they still did not allow for much sensation during intercourse. Latex helped slightly, but not enough to prevent men from complaining. And although lambskin condoms, which were also mass-produced at this time, gave men more feeling, they were not considered as effective a form of birth control as latex condoms. At this point in time, people who engaged in intercourse were more concerned with preventing pregnancy than disease.

Oral contraceptives were approved by the FDA in the early 1960s. They were not as easy to obtain as condoms. They required a gynecological exam, a doctor’s prescription and they cost more than condoms. For many people, they simply viewed the pill as a way to have sex without getting pregnant and without using a condom. Condom sales declined throughout the ‘60s and ‘70s.

In the early 1980s, sexually active people in the United States started to become paralyzed with fear by a new virus that was killing homosexuals and then started killing heterosexuals. The virus, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), caused the breakdown of the immune system. HIV always leads to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). No disease in modern times has received as much attention or caused as much hysteria as HIV/AIDS.

After multiple tests were done to find out what caused the disease, C. Everett Koop, the former United States Surgeon General, issued the warning that the only sure way to prevent sexual transmission of AIDS was abstinence, but stated that if you were going to have sex, the most effective means of protection was using a latex condom in conjunction with the spermicide nonoxyl-9. After this statement latex condom sales were once again on the rise, and natural skin condoms were being targeted toward married couples.

**ALL MEN ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL**

In the late 1970s, condoms were being exported to Asia. Immediately, comedians in Asia began to joke about the size of the condoms. In Taiwan, the comedians joked that they had to use a string to tie the condom around their waist so that it would not fall off.

Population Reports released the results of a study that was done on this in their September-October 1982 issue, in an article titled, “Update on Condoms-Products, Protection, Promotion.” The report stated that the average size of an erect penis in Thailand is, on the average, 24mm shorter and 17.5mm smaller in circumference than European erections. Manufacturers responded to this by producing condoms in two sizes. Class I is 180 mm in length and 52 mm in flat width and class II is 160mm in length and 49mm in flat width.

Instead of marketing the smaller condoms by saying that they are for men with smaller-sized penises, they were marketed as “snugger for extra sensitivity.” Drug stores started selling the two different sizes. Prostitutes were starting to stock up on the different sizes and on another type of condom that was, in part, made for them.

AIDS was making any form of sex dangerous. Including oral sex. It all started with prostitutes. Prostitutes started asking their customers to wear condoms during oral sex. The problem with this was that the taste of latex was enough to turn the prostitutes off, so something had to be done. The answer came in the form of scented and flavored condoms. These condoms are latex condoms with a scent added to them. According to a representative from Condomania, a condom boutique chain, mint and strawberry are the most popular scents. Although wearing a condom during oral sex for most men is as much of a turn-on as rotating a set of tires, men don’t frown upon it as much as women frown upon the female condom.

**SO MUCH FOR “REALITY”**

Entering a market that had slipped slightly from the previous year, the female condom was expected to be a tough sell, but analysts were not ready for what happened.

The female condom was invented in 1984 by a Danish physician. Wisconsin Pharmacal, a Chicago based company, battled with the FDA for approval since the female condom was invented. In May 1994, Wisconsin Pharmacal, after complying with a list of FDA recommendations, won approval to sell the female condom in the United States. Wisconsin Pharmacal named their female condom “Reality.” In August 1994, Reality hit the shelves of drug stores across the nation. With a slogan saying, “Now, even if he’s not using condoms, you can,” Wisconsin Pharmacal has spent about $50 million in advertising.

The result? Drug stores on Long Island are complaining that the original shipment of female condoms that they received that August are the same condoms that are currently on the shelves. “The boxes are collecting dust,” said Fred Heller, a pharmacist at a CVS Pharmacy on Long Island.

And the sales at Condomania are not much better. A representative from their Los Angeles headquarters said, “They
are doing a lot worse than expected.” The representative went on to say that the figures were not in yet for the period of time that the female condom has been on the market, but that he expects the numbers to be low.

There has been talk in the pharmaceutical industry that Wisconsin Pharmacal would pull Reality from the market if the sales figures for the first six months on the market did not equal the amount spent on advertising for the same period, but Wisconsin Pharmacal denies that. “With certain products, you have to give consumers time to get used to the idea before they actually go out and buy something,” said a representative from Wisconsin Pharmacal. She refused to comment on what would happen if the female condom failed. Women are not thrilled with the idea of using one though.

The female condom, which costs $2.50 per use, is a seven inch polyurethane sheath that is attached to two flexible rings. One ring is similar in design and use to a diaphragm with a sheath that covers the cervix. The other ring sits outside the vagina and covers some of the vulva. Due to the covering of the vulva, diseases that are not protected by male condom use, such as herpes and genital warts, may be better prevented by the female condom.

A down side to using the female condom is that during intercourse the male has to withdraw his penis from the vagina several times to reapply lubrication. Women who were used in mass testing said that this was their number one complaint. This time it was the women that were complaining about the lack of sensation.

**SO, WHAT NEXT?**

Researchers are looking into new methods of birth control for both men and women. They are also looking into ways to provide more sensation during intercourse.

While they search, Lino Missio, a physics student from Italy, announced that he patented a condom that will play Beethoven if it breaks during use. As reported in *The Arizona Republic* in May 1994, this condom is coated by a substance that changes electrical conductivity upon rupture, setting off a microchip that produces sound.

Now *that* brings new meaning to the term “making beautiful music together.”
HOW TEMPORARY ARE TEMPS?

As the recession rolls on, temp agencies are finding that corporations prefer hiring by the hour.

by Mary Ellen Battipaglia
illustrations by Bill J. Tomaras

The corporation that is now the largest private employer in America doesn't produce automobiles, plastics, computers or telephone services, rather, it produces fuel for the entire nation. That corporation is Manpower Inc. and the fuel it produces is the temporary employee, the most important trend in business today.

Manpower Inc., with approximately 640,000 employees, is the world's largest temporary employment agency, accounting for more than 2 percent of all new jobs created in the U.S. As General Motors, IBM, AT&T and all of the other corporate giants cut their workforces to survive, Manpower and 7,000 other temporary agencies are taking advantage of the sea of "human capital" that companies no longer want to be responsible for.

According to the National Association of Temporary Services, the annual payrolls of temp agencies last year was $19.6 billion, an enormous increase from only $4 billion in 1983. What are these numbers saying about the state of the U.S. workplace, and who, exactly, is the temporary employee?

Temporary agencies have grown so rapidly that the government, as of this moment, has no extensive data on part-time work. It is unable to ensure protection and adequate coverage for temporary workers, and is only just beginning to grasp the whole concept of temporary work and its effect on the American workplace. Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich recently created a task force to study the trend and to oversee that labor laws are being carried out properly. Due to the last recession, global competition, technological change, the burden of employment rules and regulations concerning such items as pensions, health benefits and antidiscrimination laws, large corporations have and continue to rid their organizations of costly inefficiencies, namely, fixed labor costs. Since 1979 the Fortune 500 industrials have eliminated 4.4 million jobs, one out of every four they once provided. Not only are companies ridding themselves of workers, but in the same swing of the downsizing ax they are letting go and destroying the once solid bonds that existed between employers and employees since the Great Depression. There no longer exists the silent, mutual understanding between the two that says, in return for hard work and loyalty, employees could count on lifetime careers with good benefits, and maybe almost more importantly, workers were considered part of the corporations they served. Unfortunately, today's harsh reality is voiced perfectly by John Bryan, CEO of Sara Lee: "Any worker still expecting to hold one job from cradle to grave will need to adjust his thinking." Not only is it time to adjust our thinking, but it is also time to adjust our ideal of the American dream, or better yet, eliminate it all together.

American corporations are cutting costs by trimming the size of their permanent workers, who are eagerly replaced with temporary employees that earn less and receive little or no benefits. An economically advantageous asset, temporary workers...
help companies meet seasonal or cyclical demands, and allow companies to maintain a flexible workforce. Barry Bosworth, a Brookings economist, stated, “Years ago, American companies thought the goodwill of the workforce had some value for them. But they have gotten beyond that and now see temporary workers as a very effective way of avoiding costs and sorting out the workers they want versus the workers they don’t want. No one is going to confess that, but that is what is going on.” Are the companies right? Will workers be as efficient and interested in their company’s success if they are only temporary, and who may not even be around to see their hard work rewarded anyway? There seems to be great room for lack of morale, which undoubtedly will lead to widespread company disloyalty in the end. Businesses are proving each day that they are willing to accept this fact, which leaves only one question: Are the workers?

The other major attraction of temporary workers is their ability to disappear when there is a lull in sales or when new mandates, like health benefits or parental leave, are introduced by the government. For companies, the positive aspects of hiring temporary employees definitely outweigh the negative aspects.

**THE END OF THE JOB**

How is this affecting the workforce? Are the workers themselves the only negative aspect of the temporary phenomenon? Even in the absence of concrete data, it is clear that many of those who are working part-time are doing so because they have either lost full-time jobs or because they can’t find permanent positions. The government says that at least 4.9 million Americans are working part-time because they have no choice. As of June 1994, 379,000 people found jobs; many of which were temporary, part-time or low-paying positions rather than careers.

Lawrence Mishel, an economist who works at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, feels that the growth of temporary work “is being driven by the incentives for employers to get rid of full-time workers to avoid benefits and health and safety laws.” Essentially, this means that there are no more pensions, health insurance plans, paid vacations or promotions. According to a survey conducted by Personnel Journal in July 1994, 46 percent of temporary employees were paid only between $5.00 and $6.99 per hour, and only 8 percent received any form of health care.

A temporary worker is just that, temporary: lasting or meant to last only a short time, therefore, there is no stability or security in their income flow. How is a parent, or both parents, going to support a family under such unstable working conditions? These are people who can barely, if at all, pay for their infant’s routine medicals or their own dental bills, never mind the 30-year mortgage on their home or college savings for their children’s future.

You don’t have to possess an MBA to realize the shortcomings of this argument or what the reply from Wall Street would be. Supporters of the temping trend believe that greater use of contingent workers will eventually lead to greater job security for those workers who still exist, due to companies’ new flexibility, lower costs and greater competitiveness. Employers defend their practices as the only means for survival. “Accordion management,” which is the ability to expand and contract one’s workforce to suit business conditions, is the popular phrase at many companies when dealing with their disposable workers. The businessperson’s only priority is to ensure that the business does well and that the conditions are the best that they can be. But do employee/human conditions ever come in to play? Is it O.K. for executives to treat their workers as merely one stock out of their entire investment portfolio?

**THE HEALTH CARE NIGHTMARE**

One of the greatest fears of workers today, is the entire issue of health care coverage. The main reason President Clinton was elected president was due to his political promises to ensure that every American would have some form of health insurance and to make health care more affordable. Typically health care and other government mandates on the Clinton administration’s economic and social agenda, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act, are not imposed on small businesses. This places the burden on larger businesses, giving them greater incentive to lessen their amount of full-time employees and hire temps instead. “Temporary work has grown because of health care costs, and the Clinton plan will only make that worse,” says William Niskanen, an economist at the conservative Cato Institute. There is an obvious “Catch-22” taking place here, but who will reign in the end, government or business? On the liberal hand the government is getting involved in the private sector in hopes of retaining rights to employees and ensuring that businesses treat their employees properly and keep up with the labor laws. On the conservative hand businesses are trying to compete in a global market place and trying to keep abreast of the latest technology. In order to become serious competitors, companies must streamline themselves and get rid of any “dead weight” that could cause them to be the least bit inefficient. Unfortunately, that “dead weight” refers to some workers. Downsizing is a fact of life for American companies that want to remain major competitors in the global market place.

So who is right? Should employees’ feelings be a greater priority to businesses than cutting costs and raising profits or vice versa? Until some form of agreement is reached on this, workers will still wake up each morning wondering if they still have their jobs or where they will be working that day. In order for those searching for some kind of permanence, it seems inevitable that they will reach that destination in the sanctuary of the temporary workforce.
'Zine CHRONICLES

The alternative press is turning heads in major media organizations, and hanging on to a more and more loyal audience

by Rafael Garcia

What exactly is a zine? The term itself is a generic one, since zines come in many variations. “Underground Press” is a possible synonym, but it is more commonly associated with the underground newspapers of the '60s, publications that were created solely to challenge government authority. The “alternative press” is another possibility, but what exactly is alternative? At this point that term deserves a burial worthy of the word “def.” Some prefer the term fanzine, but that term is more commonly associated with its roots in science fiction publications.

While there is no clear origin of zines, R. Seth Friedman, publisher of Fact Sheet Five, a bi-monthly review of fanzines founded in 1982 by Mike Gunderloy, offered two possibilities in an interview with Time magazine September 1994.

The first possibility is that they originated from the beat poetry of the '40s and '50s, when artists produced creative publications called chapbooks. Another traces zines back to the science-fiction press of the late '30s, when fans of this genre circulated rough mimeographed copies of their own works.

The punk scene in the late '70s gave rise to the first fanzines, which were devoted to bands and their followers. Fanzines soon expanded to become a forum for general critiques of the mainstream, but by the '80s punk zines had found a specific antagonistic target in President Ronald Reagan.

Zines are a form of free expression that has created a network for people with the same interests. Themes can range from the literary, as in After Hours, to music, in the case of Sound Views, to spirituality, exemplified by Thanatros. They can also deal with personal thoughts and experiences, as with Balcony Of Ignorance. Zines are about anything and everything.

Most zines are independently published, with prices rang-
ing from $2 to $4, most are free in the city of publication. Prices are also subject to distribution and production costs. They are written, printed, and distributed by the publishers themselves. While the majority of zines are photocopied, some are printed. The quality depends on how much money the publisher is willing to spend.

Located in New York City, See Hear is the only all-fanzine shop in the entire world, specializing in music zines. Most distributors command a 60 percent to 40 percent split; this allows for the elimination of mailing costs.

A zine could range from a four-page handwritten pamphlet to an 80-page publication. To put it in perspective, Gunderloy offers this assessment in his book, *The World of Zines*, published by Penguin Books in 1992. "We at Fact Sheet Five have seen about 5,000 different titles over the past decade, but we're sure we haven't seen them all. There are about 40 different zines for fans of professional wrestling. Yet we only know this because they're all mentioned in the hundred or so wrestling zines we actually get on a regular basis. Apply this same ratio to our list of 2,000 or so zines, and it seems likely that there must be tens of thousands of them out there. Some zines have five readers, some have 5,000. If there were an average of 50 per zine, our estimate of 20,000 zines would indicate a million readers, scattered across the country."

Dede Shurb, publisher and editor of *Ickin‘ For Ink*, a tattoo zine based in New York, publishes her zines as well as working a full-time job. "When I first started publishing my zine, I was so naive that I had no idea what it would cost to publish it or at what rates to set my advertising. Every zine editor that I know has trouble meeting their deadlines and paying their postage rates," says Shurb.

**GETTING RECOGNITION**

In New York, two of the most popular and well respected titles are *Under the Volcano*, published by Richard Black out of Nesconset, and *Sound Views*, published by Lee Greenfeld out of Brooklyn. Both are music zines, and that is not where their similarities end. Greenfeld only wants to cover NY bands. He wants to retain a local focus and "really try to strengthen the scene and highlight people that are getting little or no recognition elsewhere. The so-called 'unknowns.'" This need to recognize the bands that were true to the underground music scene was the main reason he started his zine. He also wants to feature profiles of other people that make the New York music scene tick, people like club owners, promoters, independent record label people etc. He has also featured the local poetry/spoken word scene in his publication, which until just recently had been the only form of artistic expression that had not been commercialized.

Richard Black of *Under The Volcano* started his zine four years ago, out of the love that he held for punk rock music. "Punk rock changed my life. It taught me a new way of thinking," says Black.

*Under the Volcano* also features writers that are employed by larger publications. According to Black, they do it because they enjoy the freedom allowed in writing for a zine. If you read the zine you’ll know who they are. One of his contributors is a writer for *The Alternative Press*.

Pseudo zines are zine-like publications that are put out by record labels to promote their artists. This is definitely a clear sign that corporate America has its sights set on this underground sub-culture.

Both Black and Greenfield feel that major publications aren’t doing the music industry justice. They are just promoting the bands that sign with the major labels, while the really talented bands on independent labels get no recognition. All these magazines know about music is what goes on on MTV, or something that seems to be the latest trend or fashion statement. As Black puts it, "Pearl Jam doesn’t need us and we don’t need Pearl Jam."

**BRINGING BACK HIP HOP**

There has recently been a notable increase in Hip Hop zines. Zines such as *40 Ounces* and *A Blunt and Ego Trip* are trying to revert Hip Hop back to its counter culture status. Unfortunately, rap music allowed itself to be stripped of its originality by corporate America. When rap artists began making Sprite commercials and endorsing clothing lines, you knew Madison Avenue had swallowed Hip Hop whole.

Russ Smith, features editor at *Vibe* magazine, has only praise for them. "These publications are giving their readers exactly what they want, they are definitely a strong movement in publishing. There are so many areas of interest that people can deliver the things that really hit home. And they can do it better and more personal than the larger magazines," says Smith. On pseudo zines he offered this analysis, "People who live it, real fans, can tell the difference between something created out of passion versus something that has a hidden agenda. Nothing can imitate true passion and culture. In a way, they should be flattered that these corporations are trying to copy them and, in turn, reach them. Anyhow, they will know what’s real and what’s not. Is it live, or is it Memorex?"

While zines offer information that goes virtually ignored in mainstream publications, they are too specialized to be considered a form of press. The premiere alternative press publication in NYC is *The Village Voice*. In 1933 *The Villager*, as it was then known, was a dependable source of community news that later as *The Village Voice* had established itself as a forum for young writers, as well as a pioneer of advocacy journalism. "These publications exist for a reason, people love and live what they are writing," says Richard Goldstein, editor of the Village Voice. Zines provide a voice for today’s artists and counter-cultures, as the *The Village Voice* did back then. Just as there will always be mediums that misinform, zines will always be here to give a voice to the unheard. Whether you publish them or simply read them, as Dede Shurb put it, they will consume you.
GOLD IN

Not all economists agree on whether it can pay for itself, but the effort to make recycling work goes on

by Jessica James
art by Yanoret Saez

America discards over 80 million tons of paper a year. This doesn't pose a problem because estimates presented at the Paper Industry Management Association's 1993 meeting revealed that almost 35 percent of waste disposed of in landfills is paper and paperboard products—the largest single component of municipal solid waste in the U.S. In an effort to reduce the use of landfills, curtail the costs for waste disposal, and help supply an invaluable source of raw materials, consumers are "thinking green" by demanding recycled products.

The concept of recycling is not new in the United States. For nearly 100 years communities have recycled old newspaper, but it was not until the late 1980s that recycling became a nation-wide mission. Each arrow in the recycling symbol represents one of the three procedures involved in the recycling process. The first procedure is collecting and processing recyclable materials. Christopher Boerner and Kenneth Chilton wrote in *The American Enterprise* that the average cost of collecting and sorting recyclable materials is estimated at $175 a ton. Furthermore, the volume of materials collected greatly exceeds the demand for them. The second procedure is recycling these materials into new products and the third is the purchasing of recycled products by consumers. An increased use of recycled paper could generate a larger market for the tons of paper collected each year by recycling centers.

Savings or Consumption?
In their article, Boerner and Chilton raised the question about whether the process of converting recovered materials into marketable products saves more resources than it consumes. They pointed out that recycling, like many other manufacturing processes, uses resources—energy, water, chemicals, human labor and physical capital. For instance, about 35 to 40 percent of aluminum is recycled because collecting and reprocessing aluminum requires 95 percent less energy than mining and processing the bauxite ore that makes aluminum. For this reason paper especially, newsprint, paperboard and corrugated boxes are popular recycling materials. "By recycling newsprint you keep it out of the waste stream," says Jules Plangere, executive vice president of *The Asbury Park Press*. He buys from Garden State Paper, a New Jersey based producer of 100 percent recycled newsprint. "It also saves the energy costs involved in logging, transportation to the mills and preparation of the logs for paper making," Plangere adds.

Recycled Paper Regulation Set by Clinton
On Earth Day 1991, Presidential candidate Bill Clinton announced plans to issue an executive order requiring Federal agencies and the military to purchase office stationery and other paper containing at least 20 percent recycled fibers. Some paper manufacturers—particularly high-quality office paper companies—were not thrilled. According to *Business Week*, the industry foresees more restrictive standards concerning the content of recycled fibers in paper that estimates say will cost from $6 billion to $10 billion to carry out by 1998. Already heavily laden with debt and facing lower profits, these paper makers favor using wood from their extensive timber holdings to make paper than spending billions on recycling equipment.

Clinton's executive order, effective since 1993, is a major step towards fixing the demand for paper with recycled fibers. The 20 percent content level is expected to rise to 30 percent at the turn of the century. To be identified as "recycled" the paper must have been formerly used and reclaimed from trash. Paper mill scraps are not included in the definition. Disputes regarding how much reclaimed content is necessary to mark paper as "recycled" and the types of paper to be re-used have been put to rest.

Environmentalists have long been making their concerns known about the use of chemicals in paper, mills. The paper industry presently comes in third as producers of toxic emissions, following the makers of chemical and primary metal...
Due to these findings, environmentalists did not want the government to purchase paper whitened with chlorine or chlorine compounds. They contend that these substances cause toxic emissions, known as dioxin, that contaminate waterways in paper mill areas. Paper mill companies argue that little pollution is produced and they insist that dioxin emissions have been substantially reduced. They feel that transforming mills efficient in chlorine bleaching, as opposed to alternative methods like oxygen and ozone, would be a heavy economic burden. While hydrogen peroxide is more "environmentally friendly" in bleaching wood fibers, the peroxide does not penetrate Southern wood well enough.

In their publication, Reused-News, the Newspaper Association of America reported an environmental disadvantage to recycling newspapers. They found that when newspapers are recycled back into newsprint, the de-inking process creates non-toxic sludge than can be burned, treated for recycling or deposited in landfills. While de-inking consumes resources, the process involves less water and energy than processing paper from virgin fibers. The sludge by-product is not a factor when newspaper is recycled into other products such as tissue or paperboard from products such as cereal boxes, insulation materials and pencil barrels.

A majority of newspaper manufacturers are buying inks that are safer for the environment. These inks have a lower content of heavy metals like lead, chromium and cadmium. Also on the market are inks made of refined soybean oil instead of treated naphthenic mineral oil, which proves to be safer for the environment also. The NAA estimates that over 90 percent of daily newspapers use color soy ink, and about 20 percent use black soy ink. "Many more newspapers are likely to make the switch to soy ink in the years ahead," predicts the NAA.

**A Record First**

Paper and paperboard products may command the largest volume of trash, but the recycling rate for these products is higher than any other solid waste component in landfills. According to the American Forest and Paper Association, over 60 percent of all materials diverted from the solid waste stream are paper and paperboard products. In 1993, more paper was recovered than landfilled, a first in US history, which means that Americans recovered 40 percent—nearly 36 million tons—of all paper used. The 40 percent recovery rate was a goal set by the industry to be achieved in 1995. Being ahead of the game, the paper industry is committed to a goal of recovering one half of all paper used by the year 2000.

**Save The Trees**

Contrary to what many people believe, the tree supply for paper and wood products is not becoming scarce. Oddly enough, preserving trees is not the primary reason behind recycling. The AFPA's statistics showed that of the nation's 737 million acres of forests, about 490 million acres are "working forests"—that is, forests used for producing products. These forests are also regulated for wildlife, soil and water conservation and recreational purposes.

Americans consume over 680 pounds of paper a year for products such as books, towels, tissue and packaging, equivalent to a 100-foot tree. Each year 2.5 billion tree seedlings are planted in the United States by private landowners and companies, and 270,000 seedlings are planted by forest and paper companies. More trees have been planted by these companies than have been harvested since 1940. Recycled materials can be recycled repeatedly, but not indefinitely. Because the recycling process weakens fibers, fresh pulp is added in order to replenish the mixture.

Job loss in the forest and paper industry sparked an issue with Clinton's economic advisors. They felt jobs in this area would be threatened by the increased use of recycled fibers and the enforcement of recycling laws. The AFPA is confident the employment outlook for the industry will remain strong. At present, the AFPA declared that the forest and paper industry employs 1.4 million people and ranks among the top ten manufacturing employers in 46 states. Allen Hershkowitz, a solid-waste specialist with the National Resources Defense Council, told the New York Times that collection and separation recycling centers in cities that produce the largest amounts of trash—like New York City—will create thousands of inner city jobs for people.

**New York City—Down in the Dumps**

New York City produces up to 26,000 tons of garbage every
day, approximately one ton of garbage per New Yorker each year. Of the tons of garbage discarded, 16,000 tons are collected and transported daily to the city’s sole remaining landfill in Fresh Kills, Staten Island. With the landfill space approaching capacity, impending laws restricting out-of-state trash and mounting waste disposal costs, New York City finds itself in the dumps.

Collectively, the United States is recycling at record-setting rates. On the other hand, New York City’s recovery rate is drastically lower. In 1989 New York City made a commitment to recycle at least 25 percent of its residential refuse, about 4,250 tons a day, by April 1994. But according to The New York Times, the city was recycling only 15 percent, or 2,526 tons a day. Due to the low recycling rate, the city was brought to litigation by the State Court of Appeals last February for not adhering to its own law, and now the city has until July 1996 to boost its recycling activity. The Sanitation Department estimates that New York City spends $11 million a year to recycle, and if forced to comply with the new law, it would cost as much as $139 million more a year.

Interestingly, some New York City residents are more open to recycling in certain areas than others. As reported in New York Magazine, Upper West Side residents register a capture rate of 73 percent. Neighborhoods with a large number of people, particularly housing units, may recover only 10 percent. The city-wide capture rate is 42 percent, and a goal of recovering 62 percent is set for the year 2000.

After being in violation of the recycling law for the past three years, the Board of Education is actively issuing regulations to steer schools towards better recycling habits. Audits estimate that the 1,069 public schools generate 120,000 tons of waste a year. Of the metal, plastic and glass thrown away, 33,000 tons could have been used as recyclable materials. Once schools begin to teach their students the importance of recycling and encourage them to participate, they will be inclined to seek the involvement of families and neighbors.

On September 30, 1993, restaurants, offices, stores and other businesses were included in New York City’s mandatory recycling regulation. Collectively, they produce 12,000 tons of waste per day, about 45 percent of the city’s total. Because most businesses use private waste collectors, their recycling efforts would have little impact on saving the city’s remaining landfill space. However, with the ban on refuse imports under way, it is not too soon for businesses to begin using alternative ways for waste disposal.

Fresh Kills, the last landfill, is expected to be filled to capacity within 10 to 20 years. Mayor Giuliani is searching for landfill space in other states receptive enough to take in about one-third of the garbage the city creates each year. Anne Canty, a Sanitation Department spokesperson, told The New York Times, “Any landfill chosen would have to be legally permitted to accept municipal solid waste.” With no plans set in stone, Pennsylvania and Ohio are prospective candidates. Transporting the immense quantity of garbage over bridges and tunnels presents a problem the city will analyze further.

**Recycling Police on the Look-Out**

There are over 100 Sanitation Police officers to enforce compliance with the recycling regulations city wide. These officers have to check whether signs and labels are placed on containers in buildings, to verify that tenants and employees have been given written notices describing how to recycle on premises, to look at garbage and recyclables set out for collection, to determine whether materials are properly separated and to inspect waste transfer stations to ensure that recyclables are properly separated.

In 1993, 4,000 tickets were issued by these recycling enforcers. The fines usually start at $25 and may increase to as much as $500 for repeat offenders.

If the city’s efforts to recycle do not work, there are plans to build a massive, technologically advanced incinerator in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It would burn 3,000 tons of garbage a day. Undoubtedly, there will be public opposition to the news of its construction.

An ideal remedy to the waste problem would be to create less waste in the first place. Recycling helps because it is a continuous process that works not only by diverting existing materials from the waste stream but by buying products labeled with the recycling symbol.
COOL RUNNINGS
Changes in the global economy could finally lead to the economic integration of the Caribbean
by Fernando Luján

Ever since the collapse of the former Soviet Union, and consequently the death of the term “third world,” developing nations have sought to find new economic strength through new trade associations in an effort to assert their financial stability in the world market. Perhaps the North American Free Trade Agreement and the unification of Europe have been indirectly responsible for this coming together of several developing nations, but what is clear is that in the Caribbean at least, there has been a heady talk of a $500 billion market that might soon make of it the world’s fourth biggest trading block provided they can overcome the limitations experienced in the past.

Traditionally, this region has been divided by language barriers. Belize is the only ex-British country where Spanish is spoken easily, and Colombia’s San Andrés and Providencia are among the few English speaking islands owned by a predominantly Spanish speaking nation. To further promote new associations some Caribbean firms are making it a point to put their top executives through language classes.

Trade, let alone communication, had been scarce among the nations of the Caribbean until last year when a new telecommunications network was implemented to connect the English and Spanish speaking nations of the region. The move towards progress and trade integration seems to be taking hold as more and more Caribbean governments are now sending delegates to other Caribbean and Central American countries to sign new trade pacts despite their limited resources.

The latest figures from the Caribbean Community, a 13-member trading group established in 1975 that aims to remove external tariffs on imports, indicate that the total gross domestic product from Trinidad, Jamaica, Suriname and others is currently worth $13.2 million—a small figure when compared to the GDPs of other trade agreements in the Americas but, taken at face value they seem to indicate that the zone is slowly showing signs of economic solidarity and growth.

Tourism and agriculture continue to provide the main economic impetus for Caribbean countries like Barbados and Grenada, but now the trend seems to be branching out or investing in what they’re best at outside their own domain. One Barbadian company, for example, runs a catering service in Central America, a popular Jamaican hotel chain has set up shop in Cuba, and a Mexican cement company has bought into a Trinidad firm.

Still, there are some countries whose political instability has delayed this excursion into an economic promised land. Haiti, with its newly empowered democratic government, will be taking its crucial first steps towards economic development, but it remains to be seen how far President Jean Bertrand Aristide’s administration can get to fruition of that goal with the country’s scant resources and limited foreign aid. International financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are likely to play a large role in the reconstruction of Haiti.

Cuba is still Castro’s Cuba. In this region of liberalized trading regimes then, Cuba remains an anomaly. Long seen as a pariah, it has been excluded from such organizations as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States, and although Cuba has intensified trade negotiations with the CARICOM nations, the trading group’s leaders are suggesting that Cuba make greater strides in the area of political liberation before larger trade negotiations can take place. A change in Cuba’s political position could represent the crucial missing link to the full economic integration that has long missed the Caribbean. At present however, this idea still seems over the horizon.
The economic hardships that helped drive more than 30,000 Cubans and Haitians from their homeland in rickety boats is nothing new to the nations of the Caribbean. Twelve years ago, President Ronald Reagan unveiled the Caribbean Basin Initiative, a multilateral trade accord comparable to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, touting it as a way to help spur job and wage growth in two dozen Caribbean and Latin American countries. Today, much of the Caribbean remains a sea of poverty lapping against American shores.

According to studies conducted by the University of Miami, since the implementation of CBI, over 650 companies have invested more than $2 billion in the Caribbean Basin. Caribbean Basin nations widely viewed CBI as the answer to such problems as high unemployment, foreign exchange shortages and heavy debt burden by opening U.S. markets to exports and inducing greater foreign investment in the region.
ILLUSORY ADVANTAGE
The preferential treatment for exports of beneficiary nations, supposedly the centerpiece of the Initiative, is largely an illusory advantage. Even before CBI, 87 percent of the region's exports entered the U.S. duty free, either because they did not compete with American products or they passed through the Generalized System of Preference. Of the other 13 percent, nearly half were textiles and sugar, expressly excluded from free-trade benefits. The exclusion of these items is especially troublesome for Caribbean countries as it is in these industries that they have experience and potential for fast expansion.

Only about seven percent of the region's trade was affected by the removal of tariffs under CBI. Some critics now charge that the CBI may have done less in its first decade for Caribbean workers and companies than for their U.S. counterparts. Since the CBI's provisions took effect in 1984, U.S. exports to the region have grown far more than Caribbean shipments to the U.S., and some of the poor countries seem to have taken on additional debt to help pay the difference. "The U.S. is the one that has benefited from CBI, not the Caribbean countries," says Anthony Bryan, director of the Caribbean Program at the University of Miami's North-South Center.

In fact, the U.S. increased its regional market share, registering a $2 billion trade surplus with the region in 1991, compared to a $3 billion trade deficit with the region in 1983.

The Caribbean Basin is the only area in the world where the U.S. has consistently recorded no trade deficit. Notwithstanding CBI, the island nations of the Caribbean have experienced average unit price declines for their exports. Consequently, they will have to export more goods over time to achieve the same level of income.

Other hurdles continue to hamper the ability of countries in the Caribbean Basin to attract investors. Inadequate infrastructure, insufficient affordable financing, producer inexperience with U.S. distribution and marketing techniques, small domestic markets, as well as investor perceptions of political and social instability in the region, all remain deterrents to investments.

"The CBI has been responsible for a decade of unparalleled growth in trade between the U.S. and the Caribbean, acting as a catalyst for exports, investments and employment creation," says Richard Bernal, Jamaica's ambassador to the U.S. Jamaica shipped $710 million worth of goods to the U.S. last year, an 80 percent increase since the CBI provisions took effect. It is of note that U.S. exports to Jamaica have surged 121 percent during that time, reaching a record $1.1 billion in 1993. One way less developed countries pay for such a trade deficit is by borrowing money. Jamaica's external debt rose 19 percent to $4.3 billion between 1984 and 1992, according to the most recent World Bank figures.

COSTA RICA'S SUCCESS
The best success story of the CBI is Costa Rica. Unlike those countries that have failed to benefit under CBI, Costa Rica exemplifies the program's design. Since its decision to embrace the mandate of CBI, by shifting to a diversified export-oriented economy, Costa Rica has shown marked improvements. Robert Rojas, minister of trade of Costa Rica, says, "Costa Rica has been one of the countries that has benefited most from CBI. We have been able to produce new manufacturing goods that are duty free and increase our exports quite a bit." Costa Rica is now a member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and is supporting the Uruguay Round.

Proped by a well-educated labor force, a modernized infrastructure providing dependable electric power, communication capabilities and transportation, Costa Rica successfully invested in CBI-eligible, non-traditional agricultural products and low-capital, labor-intensive industries, requiring medium-skill and complexity in production. The success of Costa Rica's major shift from agriculture becomes even more apparent when one compares the 123 percent increase in Costa Rica's traditional exports to the U.S. between 1984 and 1991 with the explosive increase of 497 percent in its non-traditional exports during the same period.

While certain industries were excluded from CBI treatment, the Initiative has, in fact benefited some of those sectors, if only indirectly. Tourism is a prime example of a sector which has indirectly benefited from a CBI agreement intended to favor a CBI-eligible industry. Because the tourism and hotel development industries represent some of the fastest growing business in the region, they were not included in CBI. Yet, through the Agreement on Convention Tax Credit, which provides a tax deduction for U.S. companies that hold business conventions in CBI beneficiary countries, CBI indirectly promotes tourism. Both the tourism and hotel industries in CBI countries have experienced an increase in travel as a result of the Agreement on Convention Tax Credits.

The phrase "Caribbean Basin" is itself a misnomer. In reality, the nations of Central America and the Caribbean are very different in their characteristics and needs. They form a basin only on the maps of American politicians. The consensus among those in the region is that the initiative has grouped different nations with varied needs into one program, making it incapable of addressing any of these needs sufficiently. "Lumping Central America and the Caribbean together carries the risk that aid will be channeled mainly to those countries where it can do the least good," says Lee Issa, a Jamaican businessman.

SETTING PRIORITIES
If the desired effect of free trade is to be achieved effectively, a priority for the U.S. should be to channel funds through regional institutions to finance infrastructural improvements. Another should be to make it clear that special interest groups must not derail the profit potential of CBI investors since Caribbean Basin producers are unlikely to upset producers in...
the U.S. whether they are granted protection for the most sensitive products or not.

At the core of CBI are two acts: the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, enacted in 1983, and the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Expansion Act of 1990. These two legislative acts represent the CBI program as a whole, encourage the expansion of non-traditional exports and the diversification of the region’s economies, while simultaneously enhancing U.S. national security.

Export products not specifically excluded or governed by special rules are eligible for perpetual duty-free treatment under CBERA and CBI II if: they are grown, produced or manufactured in one or more of the 24 countries and are exported directly to the U.S.; the direct processing costs in one or more of the qualifying countries total at least 35 percent of the article's custom value, or 20 percent with no more than 15 percent of the appraised value attributable to U.S. parts or components; and the final product is an article of commerce new and different from any foreign material used in its manufacture.

With the signing of CBI II by President Bush, from the perspective of business, the most important component of the new legislation is that it is permanent. Under the new law, products assembled or processed in a beneficiary country, and containing only components or ingredients of U.S. origin, will be treated as U.S. products. These products will not be subject to import quotas or custom duties. Duties on some items presently ineligible for duty-free treatment have been reduced in five annual tranches since 1992.

The second component of CBI concerns U.S. economic assistance to CBI countries. This aspect of the Initiative is handled primarily by the U.S. Agency for International Development and includes financial assistance for short-term stabilization and economic recovery programs in order to improve the business climate for long-term growth.

The third component of CBI consists of structural programs, initiated by both the U.S. and CBI countries, to improve and encourage investment in the region. One of the most significant programs involves the exchange of tax information between the U.S. and CBI countries through bi-lateral negotiated agreements known as Tax Information Exchange Agreements. TIEAs ensure each signatory access to information to enforce its respective tax laws.

**NAFTA FEARS**

There is a fear among the region’s nations of losing their preferential trading status under current U.S. law. They also fear the prospects of unrestrictive competition from larger nations. The North American Free Trade Agreement, a major cause for concern, will create the world’s largest free-trade zone, with a population of more than 350 million and a gross domestic product in excess of $6 trillion.

Caribbean countries are lobbying strongly to be included in the accord, which threatens the preferential treatment they get under the CBI. For countries such as Jamaica, without parity the nation’s vital textiles industry is in jeopardy. Textiles are a $400 million-a-year industry and the country’s second fastest growing economic sector. It represents 25 percent of the labor force. “We are very concerned that firms currently in Jamaica might move to Mexico, or others now considering setting up off-shore production sites, might decide to avoid this region,” says Pamela Coke, minister counselor, embassy of Jamaica.

Parity legislation would provide NAFTA-like access to the U.S. market for textile and apparel imports from Caribbean countries. The Caribbean Basin Free Trade Act, was introduced in both houses of the U.S. Congress, aimed at granting the 24 CBI beneficiaries parity with Mexico for three years. In the upcoming Western Hemisphere Summit, in Miami, of the 35 elected Caribbean, and North, South and Central American presidents and prime ministers, President Bill Clinton is expected to pledge to CBI beneficiaries that the White House would push the Republican-controlled Congress early next year to approve NAFTA parity for the Caribbean Basin so they could enter the U.S. markets on terms similar to those extended to Mexico and Canada. “The President has made an absolute commitment that the so-called Caribbean-Basin parity issue will be taken up at the very beginning of the 104 Congress,” says Ron Brown, secretary of commerce.

Law makers in favor of providing benefits to the Caribbean countries in sectors where NAFTA provides superior benefits to the CBI, feel the best opportunity for realizing these goals would be via legislation implementing the Uruguay Round of the GATT negotiations.

As the world move towards global liberalization, and with the advent of the son of GATT—the World Trade Organization that went into effect in January 1995—trade preferences currently enjoyed by CBI beneficiaries will begin to erode. Many Caribbean countries are scrambling to join with other nations to create clout. Recently, members of the Caribbean Community agreed with Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela to increase trade and investment and to form a new Association of Caribbean States. The WTO’s first task will be to finish what the Uruguay Round of the GATT talks left undone. Perhaps with new legislation, and a firm commitment from the U.S., the Initiative will realize some of its goals and the Caribbean Basin’s ship will come in.
An Island of Hope and Fear

For Haiti, a dreadful past is prologue to a hopeful future

by Nyslie Guerrier

illustration by Yanoret Saez
As President Jean Bertrand Aristide prepared for his return to Haiti, Haitians eagerly waited with great expectations. While the poor of Haiti dreamed of peace and economic possibilities, the rich dreaded his return. They spruced up their homes with new coats of paint, and cleaned their yards for the arrival of their chief. The rich beefed up private security patrols around their homes and businesses. Mothers dreamed of finding work and sending their children back to school. They looked forward to prices going down and salaries going up. Small businesses that had been closed for months, even years, started to spruce up their shops awaiting the lifting of the embargo. The poor have nothing left but hope. For three years they wept, hid, despaired, hopeless and terrified of the brutality that symbolized their lives. The rich also fear that Aristide will come in and destroy everything they have.

THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

Haiti is a society in which the gap between the haves and have-nots is very wide. The social ills that face this country are great and reinforced by the gap. Joblessness, overpopulation, lack of medical facilities and illiteracy have increased over the last three years.

Haiti's economy is centralized. Most of the jobs are located in two major cities. A greater percentage of jobs are in Port-au-Prince, the capital in the southern section, and a few jobs are in Cap-Haitian the northern part. Because of the migration to the North and South, both cities are overcrowded. Most of the industries are owned by wealthy American businessmen who pay their workers $3 a day. A large percentage of jobs are in the civil sector with 55,000 workers on the payroll, their salaries make up 80 percent of the National Treasury. Another large group of women and children work as domestics. It is impossible to obtain a precise number because there are no accurate records. The situation in Haiti is such that young people with various college degrees have nothing to do but sit around all day playing cards and trying to keep busy. Haiti's problems are many, yet they all revolve around the economy which is controlled by the elite Haitians, Lebanese and Palestinians who make up 40 percent of the population. Funds, grants, and other assistance sent to Haiti to alleviate the poverty were taken by officials and resold to the people. Subsequently, many large projects were cancelled by the international community. In 1984 the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and U.S. Agency for International Development made numerous attempts to influence the financial policies and practices by introducing different bills such as the sales tax of 1983 and a fiscal austerity program. These policies were not very effective.

Haiti's economy relies heavily on tourism. At one time it was described in *Travel Weekly* as "the most exotic vacation spot in the West Indies—or anywhere else, for that matter." With dazzling and attractive landscapes, exotic art, rhythmic music and creative and friendly people, flocks of visitors landed on the shores of Haiti at Port-au-Prince where the best hotels, restaurants and art galleries could be found. However, since the 1986 revolution, tourism declined rapidly and totally deteriorated by September 1991 after the coup. Because of constant political upheavals, many tourists have stayed away, which resulted in the loss of foreign exchange.

With all of Haiti's ills, the political instability has been the most destructive. Since 1957 Haiti's political state has been less than democratic. During the reign of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son Jean Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, who governed the country for a total of 30 years, Haiti suffered the greatest repression. The dictators ruled Haiti with iron fists. It is estimated that approximately 60,000 people were killed and countless others exiled. The murders and tortures were horrifying. People disappeared, houses and businesses were burned down and anyone thought to be against the Duvalier regime was sought out and destroyed. The political state of Haiti hit an all-time low when Baby Doc succeeded Papa Doc on April 22, 1971. His reign was even more corrupt.

THE WAY AHEAD

Now that the door to democracy has reopened and Aristide has returned to Haiti, he has a major task ahead of him. He has to heal, reconcile, restore and rebuild the country. To accomplish these goals, Aristide will need to show that he is willing to work with the Parliament. He will have to persuade the elite, who despise him, that he is not out to destroy them because he needs them to contribute to a new Haiti. He will have to diffuse the anger and lust for revenge of his followers, and support the American soldiers. The most crucial part of Aristide's job will be to reform the judicial system from the rural areas to the cities, and restore the Haitian people's faith in the justice system, making sure the law is used to repudiate abuses and injustice. He will need to create a stable political environment where nonviolent political discourse and different political ideals can coexist. Aristide, in his inaugural speech, proposed to "permit national reconciliation across the land where we will no longer have over 7,000 men absorbing 40 percent of the national budget." He plans to permanently separate the army and police force, a first in Haitian history. In order to create a civilian police force, he must reconstruct all government institutions. He will also need to shift the balance of power away from the executive branch and put more responsibility in the hands of local government. Before Aristide can achieve any of these goals, he must find a way to appeal to the people's sense of realism and remind them of his humanity. If the expectations of the people are higher than he can achieve there's no telling what can happen.

The U.S. occupied Haiti from 1915-1934 and subjected Haitians to the most humiliating experience in their history.
There were massive uprisings because of the racial and cultural tensions. Finally on August 1, 1934 the U.S. transferred control back to the Haitian government. From 1940 to 1957 the Black Power movement was in full swing, and there were many civil and racial incidents. By 1945 distribution of power was solely on a color basis. The blacks felt the mulattos were exploiting the country and the mulattos felt the blacks were incompetent to run the country. In 1957 Francois Duvalier was elected president and soon after, he declared himself president for life. His platform was to restore the black man to power and restore Haiti to its rightful world position. Since then, Haiti’s history has been disastrous. His government became a reign of terror and ruthless dictatorship. After his death his son succeeded him. The Duvaliers reigned Haiti for 30 years until finally on February 7, 1986 Jean Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier and his family were flown out of the country. Between 1986 and 1988, three governments ruled Haiti. On October 19, 1988 Leslie Manigat was elected president and within months he was overthrown and went into exile. On December 16, 1990 Father Jean Bertrand Aristide was elected president of Haiti in what observers called “the most democratic elections Haiti has seen in decades.” Unfortunately, on September 30, 1991 he was forced into exile by a military coup. The military government murdered, burned, raped and tortured anyone who was thought to be a sympathizer of Aristide. Every day bodies were found strewn all over the street, cut up in pieces. Since then the country has been plunged into the darkest era it has seen since even the days of Duvalier. Finally, in June of 1993, the international community decided to step in and enforce a trade embargo on Haiti, but through it all the rich just got richer and the poor suffered endlessly and carried the brunt of the embargo. The people tried to escape by boarding dinghies and boats.

**AFTER THE EMBARGO**

With the lifting of the embargo, many Haitian business people are scrambling to start over and pick up the pieces. The hardest hit of all businesses have been the gasoline companies and agriculture. Most factories with foreign buyers have gone out of business, many others are unable to rebuild since their buyers have already signed other contracts. Others are unable to get any credit from banks even after 30 years of business. Despite all the problems, merchants are ready and willing to try again and workers are lining up outside factories looking for work. Merchants are travelling to Jamaica, Panama and Florida to purchase merchandise and restock the stores.

Despite the embargo the black market was well stocked with supplies including champagne and caviar. According to Oliver Nadal, a well-connected and wealthy businessman, “Everything was still available, we were O.K. It was the poor that suffered.” Although the embargo has been lifted, merchants and business people in Haiti still have major problems. Claudette Joseph, a realtor/developer and factory owner in Haiti says, “Since President Aristide returned, nothing has really changed. Everyone is really afraid to make any major investments.”

**MILLIONS FOR JOBS**

According to The New York Times, Brian Atwood, administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, says the United States will give Haiti $216 million during the coming year. This is part of the $550 million program which the World Bank has agreed Haiti will need to rebuild. This $216 million will be used to provide jobs and job training for members of the armed forces who will not be chosen for the new 1,500 member military. The $216 million also includes $32 million for development of the local police; $42.2 for food programs and health care, $11.3 to help prepare for the upcoming elections, $7.5 to reform the justice system, $15.7 million for local and social programs, $45 million to stabilize the currency, $25 million contribution to the repayment of the international debt, $17.3 million for emergency economic recovery aid and $5 million for the military. Atwood also says the funds will provide 90,000 textbooks and other school supplies, pay for child immunization programs and set up programs to reverse soil erosion and deforestation. This financial plan will make the biggest impact within the first four months of aid and aid is expected to drop to $90 million in the second year.

Despite the problems and the poverty, Haitians have decided to have faith instead of fear. They are hopeful and they are willing to climb one more mountain because they know that when all else fails, there is only one person they can go to. Lucrece Pierre, a store manager in Haiti, says, “I don’t look to Aristide or anyone else for help, I know that the same God who abolished slavery has been keeping us and will continue to do so, and at the appointed time he will establish a fair government. I have great expectations, and I know that peace, prosperity and happiness will return to Haiti and its people.”$
WHEN, CUBA, WHEN?

Though Castro is still in control, businesses and political leaders are already mobilizing for a market economy

by Ernie Gonzalez

illustrated by Dany Peña

Hay que tener fé que todo llega.” The old motto, once called out to Cuba’s Catholics, means to have faith that all will come. This motto, however, cannot be applied to the much anticipated downfall of Cuba’s President Fidel Castro. After thirty-five years in power and eight U.S. presidents later, Castro is still very much in control. It is the escape from this control that pushes rafters to risk their lives in making the ninety mile journey to the southern-most tip of Florida. In 1993 some 3,600 Cuban refugees crossed the Florida Straits. In 1994, some 19,000 were rescued in the month of August alone. However, the biggest difference between this wave of refugees and previous ones cannot be found in mere numbers. The difference may be found in a law dating back to the 1960s which granted Cubans privileged asylum status as political refugees upon entering the United States. It has become apparent there is not only an increase in numbers, but there is also an increase in the ambiguity of American policy towards Cuba. This law dating back to the Kennedy years has always been strictly upheld by U.S. presidents. But the current wave of Cubans seeking what their predecessors pursued before them are at the mercy of an administration which is allowing Castro to dictate American foreign policy towards his little Caribbean country.

THE RAFTERS AND THEIR STORIES

Who are these people that choose to risk their lives in shark infested waters on days when temperatures constantly reach the 100 degree Fahrenheit mark? Can the deterioration of basic living conditions drive men and women alike to take such a dangerous gamble? Many who decide to take this risk never make it to south Florida. Only one in four survive the unforgiving waters of the Florida Straits. Not very good odds considering you pay with your life if you lose. After three days at sea, Ramon Camejo Rodriguez had no food or water, and the inner tube that kept his raft afloat had popped. “I thought I was going to die,” he wrote in a letter from the refugee camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. “I drank saltwater when I saw that all was lost.”

Another miraculous story of survival is that of Mr. Camejo, who is from Havana. Camejo set off at dawn and by late afternoon he had paddled about 18 miles. On the following day, after a storm hit, he found himself just seven miles from Havana, almost back to his point of departure. On the second day, he came across other balseros (rafters) testing their fate to reach the promise land. He was alerted that his vessel was taking in water and was offered a ride. Camejo refused, but fellow companions didn’t and boarded the other vessel. The United States Coast Guard rescued the other group within a day. But Camejo writes, “My situation was different, I was rowing Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and part of Monday, and my condition was bad.” On the fourth day he gave up hope and began drinking seawater. Incredibly enough he saw some other rafters and among them was a brother who rescued him. That afternoon they were picked up by the Coast Guard, 65 miles from Cuba. The boat people are fleeing a government that has failed its people. The very system that has raised the literacy rate in Cuba to 94 percent has enabled this wave of thousands of refugees to describe their ordeals with great accuracy and detail.

ECONOMIC WOES DEEPEN

Although each man tells a different story, their experiences are gripping for the same reasons. Both individuals cite economic reasons for leaving the island, and rightfully so. The
world has seen the Cuban economy shrink almost in half. The former Soviet Union was providing over $80 billion dollars in aid to Cuba. This generosity made the U.S. economic embargo almost insignificant. However, in 1991 the aid was cut substantially and in 1992 it was eliminated. This left Cuba fending for itself. To further add to the crisis, Cuba’s raw sugar production hit a historic low, reaching only 4 million tons in 1993-94, half the production of five years ago. This lack of production has cost the island around $1 billion in lost revenues and has slowed exports to Russia. In return, Russia has held vital supplies of oil and traded in barter style for sugar. The lack of oil is leading to power cuts throughout the country and breakdowns of generating plants. Unfortunately for the Cuban people, little reform has taken place and the people continue to suffer miserably. A report, commissioned by the U.S. State Department, says, “Castro is attempting limited free-market reforms modeled after those undertaken in China.” The report goes on to say, “That a number of factors from Castro’s highly centralized rule to a reluctance to unleash market forces will deny Cuba the economic benefits of the Chinese scenario.” This stubbornness and failure to welcome change are major reasons for the shortages of food, fuel, spare parts, medicine and many other necessities required for day-to-day living. Further support for the urgency to reform may be found in an analysis conducted by Carlos Solchaga, a former Spanish finance minister. He was invited to Havana to conduct a study on what had to be done. Solchaga recommended, with great urgency, “An end to vast state subsidies, and the closure or sale of unprofitable state factories.” The report emphasizes, “Unless reforms were carried out immediately, Cuba could face total degradation and generalized chaos.” As expected, the Cuban hierarchy received his report with little enthusiasm.

**WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?**

“This is a system of government that is worse than Batista,” says Mr. Cano, who identified himself as head of the United Radical Party. “There are dozens of small opposition groups that can be found in Cuba. We are in favor of anything that works to keep pressure on this government. This is not because we are opposed to Fidel, per se, it is because we are opposed to a system that in 34 years has brought us the worst situation this country has ever seen.”

With or without Castro, change is inevitable. This change may come as a product of a peaceful transition like the one that took place in the former East Germany. The current government may choose to move towards a more open political system with new respect towards human rights. It must consider sweeping reforms with a market economy as its ultimate goal. Elizardo Sanchez, a human rights activist who has spent 10 of the last 12 years in Castro’s prison system, said, “There is only one way the transition can begin without bloodshed, and that is if Fidel Castro initiates it. Those who say they want to see peaceful reform in Cuba without Mr. Castro are ignoring harsh reality.” Without these much needed changes, many believe public unrest will ensue. In this scenario, bloodshed and loss of lives are sure to occur.

**HISTORY REWRITES ITSELF**

It would be wrong, however, not to acknowledge the government’s accomplishments. These include an extremely high literacy rate, a health care system available to all Cubans and an educated work force that is well trained.

Castro’s dream of eliminating all social classes and having people live equally, despite skin color, was his motivation for change. He realized President Fulgencio Batista was corrupt and was using government for his own personal gain. He thought of the dictator as just another puppet of Uncle Sam. Castro wanted to fix this. He envisioned Havana streets free of prostitutes, women selling their bodies due to lack of education and employment opportunities, perhaps victims of racism. It was for these reasons why so many Cubans originally backed Castro and his movement. Thirty four years later, Cuba again is at a crossroads. When a kid was asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up? he replied, “A tourist or a foreigner.” This supplies evidence that Cubans have less opportunity in their own country than tourists. They have no dreams of the future like the ones Castro had. They are simply existing day to day. Castro must realize that he is taking his country in the same direction that Batista did: Back to an era of black markets, corruption and repressive government.
IN GRENADA, THE TICKING CONTINUES

Critics and believers know Grenada is going to explode. Will it be an economic boom, or a political bombshell?

by Elnorma Baptiste
illustrations by Deborah Zaken

Where is Grenada, anyway? Just 21 miles long and 10 miles wide, Grenada is a rugged island located at the southern tip of the Windward Island chain approximately 90 miles from the coast of Venezuela.

Grenada has a population of about 100,000, the majority of whom are of African descent. These Africans were brought to the West Indies by the British to work as slaves on the sugar plantations. The rest of the population is comprised of descendants of the Cibony tribe and Arawak Indians, whose origins can be traced to the Orinoco Valley of Venezuela, and the Carib Indians originating in the Guyanas.

Today, like many other small island nations, Grenada is struggling for its economic survival. In a recent United Nations resolution, the General Assembly recognized that Grenada and many other island developing countries experience handicaps ranging from their smallness to heavy financial burdens. The action is likely to lead to UN and other aid packages as the international community attempts to come to the aid of Grenada.

Many of these factors result in economic and social vulnerability and dependence for countries like Grenada. In 1988, Grenada was considered to be a credit risk by the World Bank, making the island ineligible to participate in the World Bank's numerous economic development programs. In order to restore its credit worthiness, a voluntary restructuring plan was implemented. The fiscal deficit was reduced from 25 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1992 to 11 percent in 1993. Today, it is at 9 percent. In comparison, the neighboring island of Dominica's deficit went to 50 percent of GDP from 125 percent in the period.

Economically, Grenada depends on agricultural exports such as cocoa, nutmeg, bananas and spices. Revenues from nutmeg, its major commodity for export, sharply decreased in the last two years because of a drastic fall in price, from $1.60 to $0.30 per pound. Over the last four years, a joint marketing venture between Grenada and Indonesia collapsed because of the reduction in the global demand for nutmeg. The development of biotechnology has driven down the demand for nutmeg since the fat that is obtained from nutmeg to produce trimyrestin, a product used in the making of glycerin, is now produced in laboratories.

The market for bananas, at one time another major export, is also slipping. The preferential treatment secured in trade negotiations for African Caribbean Pacific countries to export bananas to European countries may no longer be continued since the passage of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which calls for fair trading practices on a global basis. Many other countries which also produce and export bananas are crying foul at this preferential treatment.

What can Grenada do to solve its trade problems? Eugene Pursoo, Grenada's ambassador to the UN, says, "We can either fight for an extension to this preferential treatment or diversify by using other natural resources to our advantage."
But fighting GATT is no simple matter, especially given its Euro-centric power base. The World Trade Organization that will oversee GATT is headquartered in Geneva. As Pursoo notes, “Since the other banana producing nations have great clout, and Grenada has lost its place as the number one producer and exporter of bananas, tourism is the best bet.”

COUNTING ON TOURISM

Why tourism? The tourist trade is viable because of Grenada’s location, its friendly people, unspoiled beaches and lush, virgin vegetation. Grenada also has a 99 percent literacy rate, giving it a distinct advantage over many other destinations. With the strong growth in the economics of world tourism, and the constant pressure for tour companies and cruise lines to “discover” new locations, Grenada stands to reap an irresistible reward for opening itself up to the tourism business. But it is a Faustian bargain, with severe consequences for the politics, environment, and infrastructure of a tiny island nation.

Fishing is another growing industry, and Grenada is now exporting more fish than ever before. With a more organized distribution system, there are two companies which export fish to North American and European markets. There is joint fishing with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, under an agreement in which each island is responsible for adhering to fishing within its 200 mile offshore limits. Each island is also responsible for the management of the marine environment.

On March 13, 1979, The New Jewel Movement under the leadership of Maurice Bishop, a young lawyer, overthrew the Eric Gairy dictatorship and formed the People’s Revolutionary Government. The reaction to the change was mixed within the Caribbean community. John Compton, then prime minister of St. Lucia, went so far as to ask Britain for troops to put down Bishop’s regime. Trinidad and Tobago’s position on the situation was clear and uncompromising. Its minister of Caribbean Community Affairs said, “So long as there is no properly elected government in St. George’s, there is no possibility of cooperation.” Officially, diplomatic relations continued: “We recognize countries not governments. We are not telling Grenada what to do or what not to do. All we are saying is don’t come to us for loans or assistance until you clear up this situation,” the minister said.

Bishop requested security assistance from the United States, which was initially cautious in recognizing the PRG. Gairy asked the U.S., Canada and Britain for help to retake Grenada, but they refused. The PRG received aid in the form of rice and arms from Guyana, economic experts from Jamaica, and a visit from a Cuban delegation on April 7, 1979. They offered to help. The U.S. showed its displeasure at Grenada developing closer ties with Cuba. Grenada’s request to the U.S. for economic help in rebuilding the island was met with an insulting offer of $5 million from the Carter administration.

After Cuba and Grenada developed diplomatic ties, the U.S. defined Grenada as being communist and a threat to its interests. A threat of blockade was never put into effect. The U.S. state department warned against traveling to “unsafe” Grenada.

Since the invasion in October 1983, when the U.S. claimed to have liberated Grenada, its attitude towards the U.S. is really no attitude. Grenada is taken for granted today, because since the end of the Cold War Grenada is no longer of strategic importance.

As a developing country, much lies ahead for Grenada. The Grenadian people will have to become aggressively innovative, especially in the health care field.

Grenada’s elections in March of 1995 brought out a wide spectrum of candidates and political positions. There are many people and parties running for office. “If you have an idea, you run,” comments one political pundit. Whether or not it is politics as usual, the world will see what the changing of the guard brings. No matter what the outcome of the election, most politicians believe that the next significant chapter in Grenada’s economic history will concern the development of the country’s tourism. Like adding a bit of nutmeg, Grenada is hoping it can blend just the right ingredients to make it work. 

MAY 1995
No More Pencils, No More Books...

New York City tries to balance its budget on the backs of schoolchildren

by Luz N. Ortiz

illustration by Timothy I. Jones

Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani's 1995 New York City budget is larger than the budgets of all but two states, California and New York. With a local per capita tax burden larger than Detroit and Los Angeles combined, it’s clear that New Yorkers are taxed more than most of the citizens of this country, but also spend more on services such as education. Although city funded expenditures for the Board of Education have grown by 23.1 percent since 1990, it appears that those gains are being reversed in the face of an impending budget deficit.

After the Mayor and City Council approved a balanced city budget of $31.2 billion for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1994, new cuts were announced to fill a $1.1 billion budget deficit, with the city's school system hit especially hard. Cuts to the New York City Board of Education, totalling $190 million come after the school system absorbed a reduction of $360 million in 1993 out of a total school budget of $8.5 billion.
Although human resources takes up a larger portion of the mayor’s budget dollar, in reality education is the most expensive of all city services because human resources includes social and youth services and public assistance, among other things, and the education portion of the dollar goes only to education-related items.

**PROPOSED 1995 NYC BUDGET (in billions)**

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One of the ways the Board of Education’s $7.7 billion budget will be reduced is by trimming 504 assistant principals and raising the price of school lunch by $.28 to $1. In his budget, Giuliani promised to support the role of teaching and learning in the classroom. As a result, staffing at the board of education will be shifted away from administration to teaching. Over 1,000 new teachers will be added to the classrooms, while at the same time non-teaching positions will be reduced by over 2,500. But Giuliani knows that more teachers alone will not solve what has been called by parents, educators and business leaders a crisis, especially of confidence.

Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines asked for $7.5 billion for the capital budget, the part of the budget that covers construction and repairs, but the mayor allotted only $3.4 million. As a result, Cortines says that although the schools are in dire need of more space and upgrades, 75 percent of the budget will have to go to repair old buildings, boilers and plumbing, with the remaining 25 percent dedicated to creating seats in the most overcrowded school districts. Even with 75 percent of the capital budget allocated to repair, thousands of deteriorating classrooms will get no repairs.

School officials have to decide which of the 33 new schools and hundreds of building renovations contemplated in the request to salvage. Under the plan, $327 million will be spent on new construction, enough for eight of the 33 schools the board had hoped to build, and new wings at four existing schools. Cortines says that if annual enrollment projections prove accurate, the reduction in construction means that the school system will have 220,000 more students than classroom seats within a decade.

**STANDING ROOM ONLY**

This is because the number of kindergarteners has increased 16 percent over the last four years—twice the rate of the student body as a whole. There are now almost as many kindergarteners in New York City, 76,479, as students in the entire Washington, D.C., school system. The Parents Coalition for Education, a children’s advocacy group founded by concerned parents, is suing the school system for violating the health code by not providing enough space or supervisors to kindergarteners.

And there is plenty of danger in overcrowding, especially in high schools. The United Federation of Teachers, the 95,000 member labor union which represents public school teachers, passed a resolution seeking to keep all high school classes to under 34 students. Budget cuts and a surge in enrollment have made the problem more acute. John Ferrandino, head of the high schools division of the UFT, says the schools are considering everything from overlapping sessions to longer school days. “The only choice is to let students take less subjects.” Not every school wants overlapping sessions and evening classes. School safety director Zach Tumin says that the city’s high schools “are so jammed packed, the slightest spark can set students off,” and added that the overcrowding has stretched his staff of safety officers to the limit.

For example, the Chelsea Vocational High School in Soho has an enrollment of 1,173, but its cafeteria seats only 139. Even with three lunch periods, it can serve only 417 students. A solution seemed forthcoming in 1993, when the Board allotted $38 million in its capital budget for renovations and construction of a new wing in 1999. That plan, first proposed in 1975, would have more than doubled the floor space and would have included an ample cafeteria, a gym, an expanded library and new laboratories. Then during the summer of 1994, came the budget cuts. Janice Medina, the principal, says the proposal is dead, for now at least. “It’s a big disappointment,” she says.

Angry with all the cuts, the City Council took advantage of the new City Charter, which went into effect four years ago and vastly increased its authority. Faced with a second round of enormous budget cuts and pleading constituents, it has threatened to test the limits of its own budget authority, a move that has pitted the Mayor and the Council against each other in court.

The Council voted to restore $24 million to the Board of Education, nearly the $30 million that Schools Chancellor Cortines recently said was the minimum needed to avoid more cuts in the classrooms. At the same time, the Council
approved an equal amount of spending cuts, largely by consolidating some departments, reducing overtime costs and cutting administrative positions in a variety of mayoral agencies.

MAYOR BLAMES ALBANY, WASHINGTON

In announcing his cuts, Giuliani laid the blame for the city's shortfall on Albany and, to a lesser extent, on Washington. The city, he says, is repeatedly sending more tax money to the state and federal governments than it receives. In particular, he notes that the city has about 37 percent of the state's schoolchildren, but receives only 28 percent of the aid the state gives to local governments to subsidize their rides on mass transit.

Tax revenues in the first quarter of fiscal year 1995 fell below expectations. At the same time, several sources of help anticipated in the budget have not arrived, including new federal aid and legislation in Albany that was projected to save millions of dollars. Thomas L. McMahon, director of the City Council, says that the Council still holds out hope for increased aid from Washington, of as much as $200 million, that can be used to minimize some of the cuts.

Fraud also contributes to the Board's fiscal difficulties. Six Board of Education employees, ranging from assistant school principal to administrator, were charged with improperly using school supply dollars this past October. They ordered school equipment that was never delivered. Televisions, barbecue grills and leather furniture was bought with money meant for school supplies.

Edward F. Stancik's office conducted a two-year probe into the scam with the U.S. attorney's office in Brooklyn. Stancik, the schools' investigator, says he found purchasing and inventory practices "so lax they leave the door wide open to fraud." The fraud was discovered in 1992 when a confidential source employed as a purchasing agent for the Board informed his office of a fund scheme involving a salesman who had conducted $7.8 million worth of business with the Board from 1990 to 1993. After the salesman was arrested he agreed to cooperate with Stancik and provide information on Board employees. As a result, he was able to obtain $125,000 in Board money from illegal transactions between the sales representative and Board employees.

Another racket is the Board's book-buying practices. Newsday reported that after years of blowing 40 percent discounts on library books, Cortines has ordered his aides to cut the red tape that has squandered millions of dollars and meant fewer books in the public schools. Bookstores that sell at a discount, such as Strand, which prices books at 50 percent off the list price, have tried for over 10 years to submit bids for school contracts, but have been sent through a bureaucratic maze. The most wasteful problem has been that even though library books are now used for many class assignments, instead of textbooks, the rules require that the books be bought from more expensive textbook suppliers. At stake is about $40 million a year.

The Board may also need to revamp, in view of budget constraints, the current efforts to educate tens of thousands of non-English speaking students in their native languages. A study released by the Board concluded that the current efforts are flawed. The study found that students who take most of their classes in English generally fare better academically than students in bilingual programs, where little English is spoken.

In the last 15 years the city has developed an array of programs to teach children everything from math to history in their native languages. Current bilingual programs are given in Spanish, Chinese, Haitian, Creole, Russian, Korean, Vietnamese, French, Greek, Arabic and Bengali at a cost in 1993 of more than $300 million. According to a report released by Herman Badillo, city hall's special counsel for school finances, per-student spending on bilingual students is $7,289, compared with $5,149 for regular students.

DAWN OF A NEW ERA?

Now that the new post of chief operations officer for the system of 1,100 schools will be filled by Barry F. Sullivan, who served for the final year and a half of the Dinkins administration as deputy mayor for finance and economic development, New York City schools may look forward to innovations such as those implemented by Sullivan in Chicago. Cortines says that Sullivan's fiscal experience and his ties to business would be valuable to schools. He will have oversight over the Board's budget and its 135,000 employees.

Sullivan's appointment comes at a time when many business leaders have criticized the school system for failing to provide the well-educated labor force the city needs. John Fager, co-chairman of the Parents Coalition says Sullivan, as chairman of First Chicago, helped push an act through the Illinois Legislature in 1988 that led to Chicago's radical decentralization of the school system under which committees of parents, teachers and administrators manage the schools. "If he's going to bring the kinds of changes to New York City that he helped bring to Chicago, then it's an exciting appointment," Fager says. "If he's simply being brought in to manage the status quo then it's disappointing," he adds.

Perhaps encouraged by the prospect of working with Sullivan, Cortines has already started looking for creative new ways to give schools the incentive to perform better. If Cortines has his way, individual schools will receive incentive money of $5,000 to $10,000 this spring for showing improvement on math and reading scores. He wants to commit $500,000 in aid money, using money from the schools' improvement budget that he hopes will be augmented by private donations.

The problems facing the Board of Education will certainly not all be solved overnight. As Mayor Giuliani put it, "It took us 16 years to get here, 16 years of overspending. It's going to take longer than one budget, and one budget modification, to cure it all."
THE LOST WAR

After decades of losing the nation's battle against drugs, advocates are calling for the repeal of drug prohibition.

by Fernando Luján

illustration by Rafael Ortiz
(after Picasso)
The costly battle against drugs has been so dogged by controversy that it has spawned much debate on whether different measures—including legalization—should be taken to solve the biggest problems facing America’s society today. From an economic viewpoint, the United States’ drug control policy, which has eaten up $50 billion in five years, has reaped few rewards. Because of this and the social implications wrought by it, drug legalization advocates like Nobel laureate novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Nobel laureate economist Milton Friedman are proposing that the federal government re-evaluate its current anti-drug initiatives and follow the lead of other countries such as the U.S., Colombia and other countries which have called it a day on the international war on drugs.

In a recent essay published in Cambio 16 Colombia, Garcia Marquez declared the world drug war futile and said that both producing and consuming countries should “grab the bull by the horns and concentrate on the various possible ways of administering legalization.” Marquez’s comments are mirrored by Patricia Lara, president of Cambio 16 Colombia, who criticizes the effect of the U.S., Colombia and other countries on the matter. “The struggle against drug trafficking has failed. Obviously. For a simple reason: because they are trying to shoot down with bullets the law of supply and demand,” she asserts.

Nowhere is the demand for illicit drugs as great as in the U.S., the world’s top consumer. It is estimated that Americans spend $49 million on illegal drugs annually and drug consumption is increasing at an alarming rate. One of the most solid indicators of use is hospital emergencies involving cocaine, which are up 25 percent since 1991. As it stands, the current administration’s “war on drugs” promises only to be more costly and more repressive, all in the name of stopping crime. At the current rate of expenditure, the drug war will have consumed $150 billion in tax dollars by 1997.

A recent survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice reveals that 75 million Americans have at some time consumed illicit drugs. The Alliance for a Drug-Free America has estimated that six million of these are “avid” consumers. In 1992 there were 11.4 million drug abusers, and 11.7 million in 1993. It’s estimated that in 1993 there were 2.3 million heroin consumers; that’s roughly 500,000 more than in 1992, 60 percent of which were young people who range from 18 to 34 years of age.

**CRIME NEVER PAYS—TAXPAYERS DO**

State Department officials argue that legalizing drugs will only lead to higher crime rates. Though some illegal substances have been linked to overall changes in behavior that may or may not be responsible for criminal action, there is still not enough evidence to support that crimes are committed directly through the influence of drugs consumed. Former Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders noted that 60 percent of violent crimes are drug-related. “But, many times they’re robbing and stealing and all of these things to get money to buy drugs. I do feel that we could markedly reduce our crime rate if drugs were legalized,” Elders said last year, a comment for which she was lambasted and which later contributed to her dismissal.

Still, whether drugs are eventually legalized or not, today prohibition makes drugs expensive, making them harder for addicts to obtain, so addicts will take whatever measures, criminal or otherwise, to get them. Pro-legalization advocates fear that the federal government refuses to accept that prohibition will only add to higher rates of offenders in jail which costs tax payers millions of dollars that could go to more noble causes like relieving overcrowding in schools.

According to Milton Friedman, “The huge investment of tax dollars failed miserably to halt skyrocketing rates of burglary, robbery and crimes committed largely by addicts. We’ve put a lot of users and dealers behind bars, but for what? Drug offenders were 22 percent of federal prisoners in 1980, now they’re 60 percent. Each federal prisoner costs taxpayers $20,072 annually.” Friedman believes that full legalization is not the only alternative, and several other options should be considered but given the statistics, it would be far less expensive to treat an addict with a criminal record if methods of federal regulation and distribution of drugs were established.

In a state with large budget problems like New York, spending money to keep drug offenders in jail makes little sense. Former New York State Governor Mario Cuomo (D) admits that the $1 billion a year the state spends on research, treatment, prevention and law enforcement isn’t defeating drugs nor the crime associated with them.

On a more positive note, in some countries, more relaxed drug laws have yielded less crime. Douglas Longshore, a Rand Corporation behavioral scientist who researches international drug laws, says that the Netherlands has seen less crime among drug users since its government introduced its radical drug policy in 1976.

**THE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE**

Countries like the Netherlands and Colombia are already realizing alternatives to continuing the war on drugs. Though the two nations’ policies on the matter differ, the move towards full legalization appears likely in the near future. To advocates of drug decriminalization, the Netherlands’ drug policy is a model for the future. In Amsterdam, there are approximately 650 authorized coffee shops with menus that include everything from a cheeseburger and fries to “soft drugs” like marijuana and hashish. Currently there is a debate going on in the Netherlands about putting cannabis and heroin on a par with tobacco and alcohol and other countries are intending to follow suit.

Germany, Switzerland and Great Britain have already adopted elements of the Dutch law on drugs and Germany’s National Drug Council is currently considering the consequences.
of legalization. Though most narcotics are still illegal, most offenders in the Netherlands are not prosecuted for possession or consumption. In fact, the only individuals penalized are those who deal outside of a licensed establishment. These licensed coffee shops are not allowed to advertise that they sell drugs.

In an effort to set forth its new initiative, last year Colombia’s Constitutional Court decided to decriminalize possession of “personal doses” of narcotics, a motion which outraged members of the government including former president Cesar Gaviria Trujillo and launched a slew of moral rhetoric from the media that has done nothing to revoke the law. As in Holland, people over 18 are not penalized as long as they are found with less than 30 grams of hashish or marijuana.

Legalization and its alternatives remain near heresy in the United States and the issue is in jeopardy of being dismissed altogether. On one hand, Bill Clinton is against studying the issue, while the Republicans like Senator Jesse Helms and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich are moving towards cutting aid to drug producing countries like Colombia, the former Soviet Union, and the Asian republics.

A STRATEGY OF FAILURE
If the U.S. crusade against drugs has not been successful domestically or abroad, the reasons lie in the ineffective methods that have been employed. To date, the police have only seized a mere 5 percent of the one thousand tons of cocaine that are known to enter the U.S. yearly from Colombia alone. Colombian officials allege corruption within U.S. law enforcement agencies. Part of the strategy of failure, they feel, is that the public has not been made aware that very few U.S. officers are arrested for possession or distribution of seized illegal substances, money laundering, and taking bribes.

Jails in drug producing countries like Colombia, Peru and Bolivia are filled with former cartel capos, while others have been killed or extradited to the U.S. Still, that’s not enough to momentarily halt the law of supply and demand. Prior to his retirement, former Colombian Prosecutor General Gustavo De Greiff, that country’s most prominent advocate of ending the war on drugs, said, “We kill the big capos, we put them in jail, we extradite them to the U.S. and yet prices don’t even move overseas.”

Taking the U.S. advice, these producing countries have attempted to attack the problem at its source, the cultivation of these harmful crops. Colombia’s DAS (High Security Department) reports that despite spraying and manual eradication, the areas of cultivation have not diminished, but have increased. The drug element will continue to find new strength as it will invariably search for new ways to prosper. Colombia’s government itself has not been able to eradicate the narco-violence that has plagued the country for over eleven bitter years. An unfortunate circumstance this, which is due in part to the far-reaching influence the drug element has attained there as well as the country’s questionable enforcement of the law. But as De Greiff concedes, “This war does not have victories, only failures.”

A MODEST PROPOSAL
According to Princeton professor of politics and public affairs Ethan Nadelman, the repeal of drug prohibition laws promises several economic advantages. “Between reduced government expenditures and new tax revenue from legal production and sales, public treasuries would enjoy a net benefit of at least $10 billion per year and possibly much more,” says Nadelman. He continues, “Thus billions in new revenues would be available for much-needed drug-treatment, educational and job-training programs.”

In addition to possible economic advantages, Nadelman feels that legalization may produce positive trends in consumer behavior. “Perhaps the most reassuring aspect of legalization is what we have learned from our experience with alcohol and tobacco. We now know that consumption taxes are effective in limiting use. So, it seems, are advertising regulations, restrictions on time and place of sale and consumption, prohibitions of use in public places, packaging requirements, mandated adjustments in insurance policies, crackdowns on driving while under the influence, and laws holding bartenders and hosts responsible for the drinking of customers and guests,” says Nadelman.

“Finally, Americans are switching from hard liquor to beer and wine, from high-tar and nicotine cigarettes to lower levels and even from caffeinated to decaffeinated beverages. Legalization might produce a similar trend in drug use,” says Nadelman.

Until the federal government is willing to discuss the various alternatives that can be applied with respect to legalizing, it is doubtful that the U.S. will avoid the fate recently forecast by Gabriel Garcia Marquez: “We will rot alive, in a war that cannot be won.”
The stories in this section belong to all of us. The writers give you a part of themselves with each word they paint. They share their convictions in the hope that we may all see a little more clearly in the light of day and grow a bit wiser through the night.

The people depicted in the photographs are not those referred to in the stories.

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Rest in Peace Albert. The words stared at me from across the street. I've always wondered who Albert was— if he had a sense of humor, if he liked sports, how old he was when he died. The words are part of a mural dedicated to Albert after he was killed. Unfortunately these murals are a common sight around the Brooklyn neighborhood I grew up in. The murals are each unique; some depict religious symbols while others have a favorite sport painted on them. As I looked at the murals, I saw not only the words and images but all the unfulfilled lives. The doctors that never made it, the artists that never painted, all the promise that never bore fruit.

The violence that grapples our society is astounding. Kids are thinking of ways in which they might die and they are planning their own funerals.

When I was nine years old, I don't remember ever thinking of my own death. All I really cared about was hav-
ing fun and pestering my sisters. Life was simple. I thought death only happened to really old people, not me, I'm just a kid. What has become of our world when children cease to be innocent? In a society where art, literature and music are loved, is there still no one who loves a child? The lives of children today are very different from the ones we think they lead. They are full of violence that can grab them at anytime but most of all kids are engulfed in a fear that shakes their souls. They no longer have the luxury of being free to grow and play. My childhood was not filled with friends dying at the tender age of twelve or thirteen and there was not a fear of a bullet ready to strike me. It was far from idyllic but it was a safe and happy one. I cannot fully understand what is happening to our children; maybe it is because I never had a best friend killed while walking home from school or had to explain to a child why a friend is dead at the age of twelve. Growing up amidst violence and death should not be the norm, yet it is holding a new generation of children hostage.

While I worked at a youth center, I met a bright 12-year-old girl; she is full of life—and sadness. She dreams of one day becoming a nurse so she can cure people, especially, she says, kids who are bleeding. Kara has grown up fast; she’s had to. Life for her is an endless maze of finding safer ways to get home from school in one piece. It’s hard enough attending school with kids hanging out on the corner taunting her almost every morning. They yell names at her and every now and then try to persuade her not to go. One day Kara frantically ran into the center. “I saw them, I saw them! They were painting it on,” she screamed. I bent down to hug her and tried to calm her down. I took her hand and we walked over to a couple of empty seats. We sat facing each other and I couldn’t shake the desire to cup her face and hug her again so I did. She calmed down enough to speak to me clearly. “I saw them paint the wall. I don’t know what happened. Tisha was in school Friday. Tisha said she was going to take the long way home; the long way home is better, they said. Why did they shoot her? She didn’t do anything wrong,” she yelled. As she recounted what happened to her best friend, I sat there knowing I could do nothing to stop her pain or explain why her best friend had died because she took the wrong way home. The mural of Tisha was painted on October 16, 1994, a couple of blocks away from where she was shot once in the chest. I have not seen Kara since that day at the center. I wonder if she is still alive.

I still have a lot of the anger and pain because of that day with Kara. I shouldn’t have to come to terms with the death of an innocent girl; her death did not have to happen. The words of Dylan Thomas seem to bring me some kind of hope if not peace: “Do not go gentle into that good night, old age should burn and rave at close of day. Rage, rage against the dying of the light... Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright their fall deeds might have danced in a great bay. Rage, rage against the dying of the light... And you, my father, there on the sad height cure, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

Diana Cabral

Cuddles Corner

On a cold afternoon in Brooklyn, the sun beams through an apartment located in the Farragut Houses in downtown Brooklyn. I have just arrived for my 12:30 p.m. appointment. I am anxious to find out what lies ahead for me.

I walk through the maze of these 17 buildings, a housing project built in what appears to be a “M” shape. As I approach the front door of one building, I notice young kids playing in the piles of raked leaves lining the pathway while older kids play baseball against the iron-gated windows of the lobby. Inside, the smell of urine and strawberries fills my nose. I wait for the elevator and I try not to lean against the graffiti covered walls. Once again, the smell of urine makes me nauseous as I rise to the third floor and I try to avoid the stains decorating the elevator’s floor.

After two knocks on the door, I am greeted by a young cheerful woman, Nakeisha, who welcomes me into her home. I am 10 minutes early and she is finishing up with her 11:30 appointment. She shows me to her living room and I await my hairdresser as she fixes lunch for her 3 1/2 year old daughter, Shavera. That is when the battle of the beverage begins. Shavera wants something to drink; Nakeisha wants her to eat her food. Shavera whimpers, Nakeisha waives. Shavera cries, Nakeisha coos. Shavera wails big time, waving her arms and stomping her feet for emphasis, Nakeisha switches over into a mama don’t want to play mode.

And then she gives her the look. You can probably recall receiving the look a time or two during your own childhood. Nakeisha, however, goes beyond the look and utters the line. Clearly and emphatically she looks Shavera in the eye and declares, “I... am...the...mommy. Now go sit down and eat that food.” To which Shavera does the sensible thing, she chillis. Then Nakeisha proceeds with her customer.

Welcome to Cuddles Corner, Nakeisha's home and place of business. And welcome to the daily intervention by her daughter that every customer must deal with because Shavera does not want her mother's attention diverted from her. I sit in awe as I observe my surroundings and admire the dedication of this 24-year-old woman. Hair blowers, dryers, towels, artificial hair and combs are in every direction. I am in what many consider the “hidden” salon.
Hidden deep within the housing complex, Cuddles Corner is on an upswing. What started out as a hobby evolved into a lucrative entrepreneurship, the neighborhood hair salon. It wasn’t but three years ago, after the sudden passing of Nakeisha’s mother, that she had to take on more responsibility than she expected. At the mere age of 21, she was forced to find ways to make money. That is when she became more serious about her hobby.

As she confirms the price with her previous customer, she is disturbed by the sudden ringing of the phone. It is one of her customers. She verifies their appointment for the next day and apologizes for having to cancel their prior meeting. Angrily, her eyes shift to her daughter who is playing with her lunch. She yells and instantaneously her daughter shoves a small spoonful of Spaghetti-O’s into her mouth. I laugh as Shavera wants to play with her mother but Nakeisha can not and so she does the next best thing; she annoys her.

While Nakeisha attends to my hair, she is once again interrupted by the annoying ringing of the phone. But this time she grimaces as she realizes who is calling; her case worker. Nakeisha is a public assistant recipient and must report periodically to her case worker about her employment status. She is apparently disturbed after this phone call. She confides in me that she feels her case worker knows what she is doing. She is distracted for a few minutes as she puts a pail under her sink to catch water from leaky pipes.

Cuddles Corner has been in existence for two years. The promise of this entrepreneur has climbed with the help of the project’s tenants. On an average this hair salon has at least 10 women per week. The housing project hasn’t seen something so convenient since the installment of cable.

The constant interruptions are annoying yet show how popular Cuddles Corner is becoming. The unexpected arrival of a customer sheds light on Nakeisha as she excuses herself to attend to her unexpected visit. Within an hour, her living room is filled with customers and their friends and children. She places me under the hair drier and grabs the remote control out of a one-year-old’s hand. She disciplines her daughter who has been jumping on the couch. She then reaches above the kitchen sink for a bottle of Tylenol. She takes two, grabs her forehead, and motions to her next customer to sit in the chair.

After two hours, she is exhausted and I am ready to leave. With a new hairstyle, I reach into my pocket and pay her. She smiles and I smile back thinking of the money I just saved due to her low prices.

Nakeisha reaches for her appointment book to schedule my next appointment and I thank her again for my new look with her famous saying “More Hair.” I walk out her door and am smacked in the face with the reek of urine. I walk past the incinerator and step over some table scraps left on the floor. As I exit the building, I overhear two women talking about Cuddles Corner. They talk about the low prices and flexibility of this neighborhood salon. I nod in agreement.

Adrian Bumper

Dollars and Sense
It's Not Black or White

Curly, blond and tan, the little girl lets go of her daddy's hand and steps resolutely up to me. "Are you his baby-sitter?" she asks. She pokes a pudgy finger at my little boy who hides in the folds of my skirt.

"No," I answer, "I'm his mommy."

Her baby blues widen, her chest begins to swell and she bellows "But he's black!" The bustle around us of new kindergarten parents abruptly stops.

I lean toward my little inquisitor with what I hope she'd take as a kindly smile. "Anthony is brown, just as you and I are."

"I'm white! You're white!" she protests. I hold out my hand to hers.

"We are all shades of brown, some people are lighter, some are darker. See, you're darker than I." With that she snatches her hand away and back into the sea of legs behind her.

Anthony is obviously brown. It was not her eyes which informed the little girl's perception of him. He too, can see that he's brown. He sees that "black" is a special word which doesn't mean what it says when it's applied to people. The same goes for the word "white."

The little girl knows something more about these words. She knows that black and white are opposites. Her innocent assumptions demonstrate the polarizing effect of such language. It means that Anthony and I couldn't possibly have a child-mommy relationship. Such language slices through families, neighborhoods and nations. Like a gas, language expands and sometimes poisons. It's a good idea to take a reading of what's in the air and to monitor the effect it's having on us.

In the 1960s, "Black is Beautiful" served as a necessary and powerful revolutionary slogan. It was the right idea; however it failed to make black beautiful. Check it out in Webster's dictionary: "White: free from spot or blemish, pure, innocent...not intended to cause harm, a person of light-skinned race. Black: soiled, dirty, lacking light, wicked, evil, dismal, gloomy, sullen, a person of dark-skinned race."

Even if the dictionary said otherwise, usage and image dictate the value of those words. When my children hear a grown-up chastise a child for having a dirty face with words, "My, you're as black as sin," the message is not lost on any of them.

Over and over again, the TV says "black" and shows a young man in handcuffs. My children get the drift. The word "black" means "crime."

From the start, we distort a child's self-concept. First we applaud them when they identify colors correctly. Then we twist the facts in full view of their little crayon boxes and tell them, "You are white" or "You are black."

Of course, very few things in life are white or black. My nine-year-old, for instance, wants to know why her classmates are identified as Japanese, Spanish, Jewish, Korean, German, Swedish, Polish, Greek, French, Italian, Chinese or combinations of these, but she's just plain black. What country is that? Colombians are from Colombia, the British are from Great Britain and the Jamaicans are from Jamaica. And why must her African heritage be concealed in the word "black?" After all, the Haitians and Jamaicans aren't all black.

When a conversation flies so com-
pletely in the face of logic, it must be serving some secondary or hidden agenda. The only possible aim that makes sense when people define themselves as black or white is to segregate the two. Certainly, it's not an abiding interest in genetics that influences the "race" questions on application forms, where the categories read like a list of territories except for those headed "white and black." When I get a "race" question, I draw a little box for my check mark and write in the category, human.

In some cases, however, there is no escape. On New York City's public assistance forms it is stated that, "Completion is optional. However, if not completed the interviewer may have to record it by observation."

In America we have a so-called "black" culture but not a "white" one. This is absurd. What kind of culture survives the annihilation of family, language, dignity and freedom? The culture of poverty maybe. Cornbread, grits, greens and pig's knuckles are poor, rural, Southern. People don't eat pig's knuckles when the whole pig will do. It might have been different if the 40 acres and a mule had held sway.

We understand the diversity apparent in the "other" half. Nobody confuses Russian borsch with Irish stew. Yet, Africa, a massive continent with such breadth of diversity is hardly represented. At all. To say one is African is as non-defining culturally as to say one is European or Asian. A few scraps of Kente cloth, and a handful of singers a la Paul Simon does not a culture make. Jazz, Blues, Gospel, Rap? Ask any European—these are all considered American music.

So the word "black" does not describe anybody's actual physical characteristics, does not signify any particular country, does not identify a culture but carries a negative connotation, and it's still widely used.

Recall the old Sunday school song, "Red and Yellow, Black and White, they are precious in his sight." In America today, we don't read newspaper accounts of red or yellow men. There are no bulletins to warn towns of an escaped red or yellow convict. We haven't needed red since we took the land all the way to the Pacific. We don't need yellow unless we go to war with another "peril." We don't even need white, since white is understood whenever race is not designated. The only word this nation needs is the word "black" and it must be that the only reason we need this word is to perpetuate an underclass for that seems to be its only accomplishment.

No wonder the little girl snatched her hand away when I showed her she is darker than I. Bronzed by the sun, she could see that her skin tone was closer to Anthony's than mine. Would they call her "black" too?

Leni Miller

One Way Out

Every moment of the day another black man's life is wasted for the love of money. My cousin Andre was 21 when he died on June 18, 1991 from twelve bullet holes to his chest—some drug deal gone bad in North Carolina. His funeral, held at Mount Zion Baptist Church, was closely guarded by four young black men all dressed alike with blue and white slacks, shirts and sunglasses. They were Andre's second family. They were supposed to have guarded his back to prevent his ultimate departure, but you know how that business goes...

Andre was raised by his grandmother—my great aunt Dottie. He, along with his sister and four cousins, lived in a two bedroom apartment on DeKalb Avenue in Brooklyn: Andre, Tanya, Sherrie, Doreen, Thomas and Nikki. Aunt Dottie had to raise them since all of her children were caught up in drugs and other mischievous activities.

Aunt Dottie's oldest daughter, Mozelle, was Tanya and Andre's mother. She died on May 19, 1985. Drug overdose. No explanation, just hooked up with the wrong crowd. Three years later, her sister Adrienne died. Drug overdose. Rochelle, her oldest brother, spent most of his life in jail. When he was released in October 1992, he quickly returned to his addiction—heroin. The next month he died from a heart attack. Drug overdose. Artie, the youngest brother, grew up in Spafford and then graduated to bigger and better crimes, so now he resides at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. The boys live in a life of crime; everybody, a life of drugs.

You could say that it was Aunt Dottie's fault for she was the only one to blame. However, she was the one who was consigned year after year and death after death.

Andre's death did not come as a surprise. We all saw it coming. I hate to say it but he was destined to die. He was the stereotypical young black male, hanging on the corner of DeKalb and Malcolm X Blvd. until the early morning hours. Cutting school was as normal as attending. No one dared to discipline Andre's six-foot-three, two-hundred-pound muscular build. He was intimidating and did what he wanted.

Another black man's life wasted in the hands of drugs. One would think he chose that route as an escape from a life of poverty. One would think that life for him was so bad, it seemed that there was no way out, except for drugs. Selling them, that is. But to be honest Andre had no choice. Drugs surrounded his life at every turn. He was no dummy. He knew he could make a lot of money fast. So, he chose the easy way out. At least that's what he thought.

Andre needed to escape the infested life around him. His aunt, Adrienne, was a crack addict. When she got pregnant, it didn't make a difference. A few months before her death, she gave birth to a baby girl, Nikki. Nikki was a crack baby. After three days in maternity,
Adrienne got dressed and discharged herself from the hospital, without Nikki. Adrienne abandoned her daughter to embrace the crack on the streets. Once Aunt Dottie heard the news, she went down to the courts and fought for custody of Nikki. Aunt Dottie became foster grandmother and received a check from the state to care for her.

Aunt Dottie tried hard to raise her grandchildren. However, she put a lot of responsibility on Tanya, Andre and Sherrie to watch little Doreen, Thomas and Nikki. Since Tanya and Andre were much older, Sherrie was forced to care for the little ones. Besides, they were siblings. She had to dress them for school, feed them for dinner, wash them and put them to bed. Sherrie might as well have been their mother. But, she wasn’t (their mother), and hated every moment of every task she carried out for the love of her brother and sisters.

So, out of revenge, at age sixteen, Sherrie got pregnant. She dropped out of Maxwell High School to devote her life to caring for the life inside of her. Nine months later she had a girl—Sytobia. Two weeks later she broke up with the baby’s father. Two days later she met Tyrone. Eighteen months later she had Alfonzo Tyrone, Junior. Three months later, Alfonzo Tyrone Junior died. Crib death they say. Another death, another funeral, another life wasted.

Every moment another life is wasted. Tanya, Andre’s sister, is wasting her life away. She’s 27 with three children and married to a drug dealer. Somebody has already tried to kill them, another sour drug deal. But life goes on. Will it take twelve bullet holes in her husband for her to wake up?

Andre made his decision to sell drugs. He alone made the decision to sell the poison that is destroying his family. The money was quick. The traveling was nice. The girls were marvelous. The only thing he didn’t anticipate was a jealous rival who wanted him dead. All Andre wanted was a better life. He wanted to get out of that overcrowded apartment with the broken toilet seat, runny kitchen faucet, and torn couch he called his bed. He wanted a way out and he finally got it—Heaven!

Oniqueka Lopez

My Father’s Tear

Something about airports make me feel a bit melancholy and excited at the same time. Watching all those people, coming and going, there is a sense of adventure, and yet a sense of sadness. Sadness for loved ones who depart, and excitement for trips to new places. I was reflecting upon all these things as I watched another plane take off, when my father broke into my train of thoughts, “So you take care of yourself, okay?”

I just smiled back. Yes, I will do my
best to take care of myself. My family had come with me to New York a couple of months ago, to help me settle into college in this foreign land, and now it was time for them to go back home. Home, for them, was half a world away. They were really leaving me now, alone, and the reality of the moment sank in. Despite the fact that I have spent all my life living with my family, this feeling of solitude was all too familiar, and I let the coldness course through me, like so many times before. My parents have always been around in all the moments of my life, yet I felt distant from them, a distance that always separated us, much like the physical distance that separated me now from home.

I reflected upon all those times, long ago, when I would approach my parents, sometimes in tears, frustrated with how things were going in my life. My father would chastise me for crying, and my mother would watch in silence. My father was not a believer of emotions. "Wipe your tears and face it like a man," he would often say, and as I turned to my mother questioningly, she would silently agree with him. They always considered such raw showing of emotions as highly inappropriate, no matter what the circumstances. I remember watching my father, as he faced all the problems that came to him each day, with a stiff upper lip. I always felt weak, realizing that I could never be as unaffected as he was. But I taught myself to hide my feelings, to be brave as he was, and I was able to achieve some measure of success. I believed that in being like him, he'd be proud of me, and maybe show me that he was. I waited every day.

There was the time, when I was about seven-years-old, and my dog died. I had felt so sad, I could not help but shed a tear. He had seen this, and once again, told me not to be silly. It was just a dog. I realized then that he didn't understand what it was like to lose something very precious to you. I believed that he had never really felt what it was like to be so attached to something or someone that it was just hard to let go. I believed that he would probably not cry if I were to suddenly disappear. Of course, I told myself I was being unreasonable, he just wasn't used to showing his emotions. But the seed of doubt was planted that day, and I have always wondered about it since then.

"Flight 46 is now boarding all rows," announced the public address system. It was time for them to go. I gave my mother an awkward hug, and turned to say goodbye to my father. As I looked at him, I realized I did not know what to do. I was sure he did not wish to receive a hug, for that seemed unnecessary. I felt the uncertainty wash over me once more. They are leaving me here, and I will not be able to see them again for a long time. Does he even care? No—I reasoned—he never did, why was I even thinking about it? So I took his hand and shook it, mumbling a half-hearted farewell. That's when I turned to look at his face, and I saw a single tear rolling down his cheek.

I could not recall ever seeing such a thing, but there it was. He was crying, and that was the first time I actually saw my father. I saw the wrinkles forming around his eyes, the white hair slowly proliferating on his head, among the youthful black strands. I saw in his eyes all the years that have gone by, his watching me grow from a timid child to the present, a young adult out to form my own, separate life. I saw the pain in his eyes, the utter sadness that can only come from too many times of holding it in, of letting the pain grow inside of you. And yes, I saw that this overflowing of sadness was in no small part caused by me, by the fact that I will no longer be around him, to bother him with all my needs.

I turned away, embarrassed and guilty for seeing my father in such a vul-
nerable state. He then pulled me back and gave me a hug.

"Whatever you do, don't forget us, okay?" he whispered into my ear, and before I could respond, he let go, took my mother by the hand, and boarded their plane.

I was left alone in the middle of the airport, stunned by the events that just occurred. All alone, this time I really felt the coldness settling upon me with alarming speed. But the feeling dissipated as fast as it had arrived, and I straightened up like I had never done before. My father does care about me, and he believes in me. I felt a new found strength stir within me, and I knew that the loneliness I had often felt all my life would never haunt me that severely again. I walked out of the airport a different person, with a lighter step. All the heavy baggage of doubt, the dark questioning suspicions that lurked within me, all gone, wiped away by my father's tear.

Vernon Hokiao

Victim?

Do you think my breasts are too small?" she asked. My head jumped up in surprise. I was at my evening job, printing news stories from the computer. It was a tedious task that hardly required any brain activity. As a result, I usually fell into lapses of semi-consciousness while letting my hands do the routine. But this question came crashing into my dreaming mind like a runaway train. It was not directed at me, but it was announced loud enough for everyone in the room to hear, and I could not help but pay attention.

"Well, what do you think?" she prodded him again. She was one of the day shift workers, so I didn't really see her often, much less know her personally.

But when she was around, her behavior made it impossible for me or anyone else, not to notice. She always managed to gather everyone's attention, like a farmer during harvest time. Now, she was questioning one of my fellow evening shift workers, apparently enjoying it as she watched him cringe with the question.

"What's the matter, don't you like my breasts?" she asked yet again, and gave her breasts a quick push upwards with the palm of her hands.

"Oh yes, I think they are fine," he replied with a shy smile.

I shifted uncomfortably in my seat. She was obviously making a show of their conversation, for the benefit of everyone in the room, but I still felt like a peeping tom, hearing and seeing something I should not be part of. And yet, somehow, Joe, the guy she was talking to, seemed to feel exactly the same way.

She was the only woman in the room at the time, and I realized that everyone in the room was watching them, amused faces all around. They reminded me of vultures, aware of an imminent kill but not approaching until death comes. She seemed to enjoy the attention.
came the expected compliment from somebody else in the room.

“How about I hit your butt with a ruler?” another guy asked, and he then stepped forward and gave her a loud slap to the back that reminded me of the sound of meat falling on the chopping board. “You like that?” he asked.

“Yes,” she smiled coyly. “Joe, you slap me with the ruler now,” she continued. Everyone started laughing at this comment, and Joe, who looked to me like a cornered animal, took the ruler and gave her a tap as everyone cheered him on with their smiles. She yelled mockingly and told him to do it again, and everyone burst out laughing, including Joe. I failed to see the humor in the situation, and I was amazed to find I was the only person in the room who appeared to be bothered by it. I chose then to leave the room unnoticed, so as not to be considered a stick in the mud.

There was only one thing flashing through my mind, like the neon ‘applause’ sign flashed to an audience, as I left that room: sexual harassment. I felt stupid for sounding like such an overreacting idiot. But I couldn’t shake the ugly picture in my mind’s eye, of her just turning around and pointing to anyone in that room and mouthing those words, “he harassed me,” and no one would really be able to prove her wrong. The line between innocent horseplay and harassment has increasingly blurred, especially with the recent attention to this situation brought about by a series of high-profile cases. The days of black and white rules are long gone, and all we seem to find in every situation we face is something in between. Shades of gray, I heard a song say, are all that I see. And it is true. With increasing demand for special rights in every aspect of our lives, there seems to be no proper line to follow anymore. Even criminals are elevated to icon status. It is saddening to see that sensationalism today has more often than not overtaken justice. I like to believe the attention on sexual harassment has helped to bring improvement to the relationship between men an

“What about my butt? Do you think it’s too big?” She was actually a very attractive young woman, and I wondered why she craved this kind of attention. It was evident to everybody that she was merely fishing for compliments. Of course, no one would accuse her of doing so. They were all enjoying the show. “I can do push ups, you know,” she was saying, and suddenly she was down on her hands and knees in front of Joe, doing push ups.

“I think you look great, very fit,”
women. But sometimes I wonder which direction we are actually going.

The next day, she was in the room again. This time she was complaining endlessly to another guy about one of the office workers in the same company.

“Younana know what he told me,” he says that I looked ‘hot’ in this skirt.” She expressed disbelief, and it truly appeared that it bothered her to no end. She went on to complain about how he kept hitting on her for a date.

“He’s just a dirty old man,” the guy she was talking to replied.

“I bet if you threaten him with a sexual harassment suit, he’ll back off.” She smiled at this idea, and I saw the picture in my mind’s eye seemingly come to life.

“Yeah, why not?” she said. “That should scare the shit out of him.”

Vernon Hokia

My Choice

While I was down south, visiting Washington, D.C., I found myself in the midst of an abortion demonstration quite by accident. People from all over the country were uniting together and choosing sides. There was a cemetery made of little graves with crosses on them and it hurt to look at them. Faces screamed murder and signs with pictures of semi-formed fetuses were all it took to get me very upset. I wondered how many of these people knew how it felt to have an abortion done? If they knew the kind of pain and turmoil a woman suffers when she has no choice but to have one? I know because I suffered through an abortion and it was the most difficult decision I would ever have to make in my entire lifetime.

I always thought there were many routes my life could have taken by age eighteen. Being a single parent wasn’t one I planned on so early in life. I always thought I would get married and then have children. Although I wasn’t ready to have a child, I felt it was my duty to take on this responsibility. I felt that things could work out if I just made a few adjustments and worked hard. Not so for my partner. He was dead against it. Our relationship had been going through some major changes the last few weeks and I felt him pulling away from me. He told me that he needed space and time to think things out. In other words: he was seeing someone else. One thing he was sure of was that he could not be a father and that he wouldn’t acknowledge the baby at all. He literally turned my world upside down and I couldn’t believe what he was telling me. I loved this man very much and when he left I lost control. Every day I would just lie in bed crying and asking myself “Why?” How could he do this to me? My depression caused me to miss work and I hardly ever ate. When I did go out in public, I was a mess. I would cry all the time and spent every minute thinking about my problem. I felt angry, hurt and betrayed, but most of all I felt alone.

My family was another dilemma and I thought of how they would react if they found out about the baby. I had to tell my mother and I knew she would be disappointed in me. My father would disown me and the rest of the family would just talk about me like we did when some other family member did something “wrong.” I felt ashamed and there were few people I could turn to or even trusted enough to be willing to talk about what was happening to me.

It hurt to tell my mother, but I did. It was such a load off my shoulders because she helped me tremendously. Knowing that she didn’t hate me was all that mattered and I leaned on her for support, but I had to make a decision on my own. I felt that having an abortion was immoral. If I made my bed, I thought I should lie in it. The Catholic in me battled with the radical in me. I thought about school and financial stability. I had none of those. I thought about raising a child on my own and I didn’t think I deserved it or that I wanted to do that matter. I didn’t want to use that baby as a link to my ex-boyfriend because I knew it was wrong. I didn’t know what to do and it tore at my heart to know that my easiest solution was to get rid of it. It made me hate myself for not being stronger or wiser. Yet I knew at the time that it was my only solution.

After the abortion I tried to come to terms with myself. I went to see a priest and confessed. I told him that I couldn’t deal with the pain of what I had done and that as a Catholic I had failed. I didn’t know what to expect or why I had even come to my childhood priest. I guess I was seeking guidance and comfort, but he offered none. I cried my heart out to him and he remained distant. I almost lost faith in my religion right then and there. I wish he could have understood that being alone and pregnant was not easy for me and that I did what I felt was right at the time. Most of all I had depended on him to make me whole again. I realized then that no one could ever. It was then that I had to take a long look at myself.

I know now that it was a mistake to have become pregnant and I am glad that I had a choice, but in no way do I take pride in what I caused to happen. I have found a medium in which I can live with myself again. I know that I am in no way a bad person and I take comfort in knowing that there are others just like me. Being alone and pregnant could not be easy for any one woman and I pray for those who find themselves in such situations. Abortion is not an easy choice and there are those who will call it murder. I cannot say that I agree or disagree with them. I can only say that a part of my life has been changed forever and I will never forget it for the rest of my life.

Ibis Lopez 87
Daily Planners

Are you always wondering where your time goes? Benjamin Franklin discovered two hundred years ago that he was able to construct his day by putting his daily schedule in a book that he always carried with him. Today millions of people are finding that they can better manage their time with a daily planner, a refillable binder that consists of weekly, monthly or annual calendars. It also contains various personal management sections such as a telephone directory and a goal-setting section. Two companies producing these planners are Franklin Quest Co. with annual sales in 1993 of $130 million, and DayRunner Inc., with 1993 sales of $82 million.

Franklin Quest provides time management seminars to clients as well as producing many styles of the Franklin Planner. Its product is marketed through a catalog, 39 company operated stores and a small direct market sales force. Their Classic edition ranges in price from $59.95 for the vinyl cover edition to $274.95 for the woven calfskin leather binder.

DayRunner provides paper based organizers for the retail market. Office supply stores such as Staples carry the Classic kit, which retails for $29.99 with a vinyl cover and $9.99 for the smooth leather edition.

The popularity of these planners exploded in the '80s. People everywhere were putting their plans in these organizers. The trend has not waned. "I bought my DayRunner about a year ago. I had it on the floor of my apartment for a year before I decided to use it. Now I use it to write down my plans for the day and keep track of upcoming school projects. I can't get along without it," says New York University senior, Zina Barrera, with enthusiasm. She is not alone. Sales at Franklin Quest have increased about 110 percent since 1991 while DayRunner's sales have increased almost 60 percent during the same period.

Both companies were incorporated less than 15 years ago, Day Runner in 1980 and Franklin Quest in 1983. They benefited from the interest in time management, enabling each company to solicit consumers with their time management tool, the planners. By the late 1980s, the electronic organizer was introduced.

For lovers of electronic gadgets, a paper planner is just not enough. So the digital age has come up with the electronic version of these invaluable instruments. Electronic organizers are able to supply the same time savings devices that their binder counterparts offer. However, these electronic organizers have many advantages. They can store hundreds, even thousands of telephone numbers, have calendars, alarm and schedule functions. All this information is retrievable at the touch of a button. Size is another key advantage. Most electronic organizers are the size of a calculator, enabling users to carry them in their pockets. Sharp is a dominant player in this market. The Sharp pocket-size 10K organizer costs $39.99 and the Sharp Wizard Organizer, with built in word processor and fax modem, retails for $499.99. Consumers are really hooked on these electronic gizmos. As Carlos Rodriguez, who works for a large New York-based bank, says, "My company had me take the Franklin Time Management class. I received this big daily planning book but I'm not going to use it. I've been using a Sharp Wizard for about two years. It does the same thing and can fit right into my suit pocket."

— David Arias

Gourmet Beer

Tightly nestled into a nook in Greenwich Village is perhaps the most notable retreat for gourmet beer, a wide assortment of specially brewed and malted alcoholic beverages. On Bleecker Street between Thompson St. and LaGuardia Place lies The Pecullar Pub. This grungy but cozy little hideaway comes closest to heaven for the drinking connoisseur. Established in 1981, the Pecullar Pub offers more than 270 imported beers and ales, and nearly 100 domestic brands. Prices range from $2.75 to a hefty $13.
Out of the 40 different countries that export beer to the U.S., Belgium, England, Germany, France, Holland and Canada are among the largest shippers. They collectively account for over 60 percent of the total imported brands. “Most people ask for Amstel, Sierra Nevada or Watney’s Cream Stout,” says Kelly, a bartender at the pub. While Amstel and Sierra Nevada are certainly tolerable, the Watney’s Cream Stout is sure to challenge the boundaries of taste. Somehow, it brings back childhood memories of castor oil. Another dreadful taste-buster is Australia’s Foster’s Lager. Two hands are required to hold up this huge canister and its bite is bigger.

Although the interest in gourmet and exotic beers still exists, the market continues to be dominated by domestic brewers. According to the Modern Brewery Age Blue Book, United States beer makers commanded a 68 percent market share in 1992. Among the top ten brands were Budweiser Lite, Coors Light, Busch, Miller and Old Milwaukee. U.S. brewers sold 180.7 million barrels that year compared to a meager 8.3 million by importers. Anheuser Busch was the biggest winner in 1992 with 86.8 million in barrel sales, a 46.9 percent increase from 1982. Although the Coors Co. reported only 19.5 million in barrel sales for 1992, they accomplished the biggest ten-year gain by boosting sales nearly 65 percent. This propelled Coors from the number six position in 1982 to number three in 1992.

The beer industry originated in Germany and England during the Middle Ages, long before its manifestation in the U.S. The basic procedure of brewing has not changed much since those times. The natural processes involved in the production of beer are complex, although the actual mechanics of brewing are simple. It takes the experience and talents of a fine cook to master the art. First, barley is crushed into a malt. Roasting the malt produces a darker beer. After the malt is cooked in hot water, hops are added. These are garden plants that serve to flavor and preserve the beer. The boiling method is of particular importance since it causes the greatest changes in the nature of the brew. For example, the Stroh Brewery Co. in Detroit, uses a direct flame method in order to produce a smoother flavor. The level of heat, duration and kettle material will also affect the final texture of the beer. To bring about fermentation, yeast is added. Salt, sugar or rice can be used to balance the water or tailor the taste. The cooling, storage and filtering of beer gives it its distinction. Most beers and lagers are stored for months at a time, which renders them lighter in color. Ales, on the other hand, undergo a much shorter fermentation, usually lasting only a few days and resulting in a darker hue.

Surprisingly, the diversity and abundance of beer has not proven to be the major catalyst for competition. The industry’s fiercest rivals are soft drink producers. This has prompted aggressive modification of product strategies to counteract fizzling beer sales. In fact, people are turning to drinking tap water again. According to a report in Beverage Industry, per capita consumption of tap water rose to 34.1 gallons in 1992, a half-gallon increase over 1991. This has been evident in past recessionary climates as well. In 1991, peak beer consumption amounted to 24.0 gallons per capita. In 1992, that figure decreased to 23.1 gallons. On the other hand, soft drink intake increased from 47.2 gallons in 1991 to 48 gallons in 1992. Ten years ago, there was a per capita consumption of 40.8 gallons of soft drinks, compared to 23.8 gallons of beer. While beer consumption is stabilizing, soft drinks consumption has also been increasing rapidly.

Analysts had originally predicted that beer sales would grow two percent annually from 1984 to the year 2000. The next three years however, marked a stabilization, and then a mild decrease for two years. After a brief rise in 1991, consumption fell once again in the following year. From 1984 to 1990, forecasters were gambling on a rise in the 18 to 34 drinking age group, in which alcoholic consumption is highest.

—Reginald E. Tucker

Cigars

Cigars are back. The demand for cigars relented almost overnight has allowed the $12 billion business to emerge as a dominant force in the tobacco industry. Culbro Corporation, a domestic cigar manufacturer, posted 1993 tobacco sales well over $12 million, compared to the prior year’s sales of $1 million. Such a performance makes Culbro one of the pre-eminent leaders among the 43 major domestic cigar manufacturers. Currently, Culbro holds approximately 24 percent of the global cigar market. Other domestic manufacturers such as John H. Swisher Inc. (privately owned) and National Cigar Corporation have also enjoyed similar growth in sales, averaging between two and four percent per year.

The cigar originated in the Caribbean somewhere around the 10th century. The Arawak Indians would smoke a long, thick bundle of twisted tobacco leaves wrapped in a dried palm leaf. For them it was a sign of manhood. It was subsequently brought to the United States by Christopher Columbus, who was introduced to it in Cuba.

Cigars are made from cut tobacco tightly rolled inside tobacco leaves. The wrapper leaf, the most expensive leaf used in cigars, must be strong, elastic and silky in texture. It must also possess good burning proper-
ties. The tip, called *perilla* in Spanish, is perfectly rounded and cut and then sealed with *goma*—an adhesive specially made for cigars. Hand made cigars are considered the best. In state-of-the-art factories like Culbro’s, cigars are rolled out mechanically.

Cigars can be found at most street corners in packs or bought a stick a piece. Prices range from under 20 cents—the cheapest—to as much as $30 a stick. The Macanudo brand sells for between $7 and $8. The Aniversario, a European brand, demands a price of $20. The average length of a cigar ranges between five and seven inches. They come in various colors, ranging from dark to light brown. The most highly rated cigar in the world is the contraband Cuban cigar. The Havana and the Cohiba brands are rated for their spicy and earthy flavor.

The sudden upsurge in demand for mostly expensive cigars is said to be due largely to the promotional efforts of one avid cigar smoker—Marvin Shanken, a successful entrepreneur and publisher of *Cigar Aficionado*. The work of Shanken has resulted in a total transformation of the negative image of the cigar smoker. Over the years, the cigar smoker had been perceived as an unsuccessful and downtrodden old man. Now, he is seen as a successful and powerful individual. The new image has been accompanied by a remarkable increase in demand, despite mounting criticisms and government threats. According to the Cigar Association of America, over 1.2 billion sticks of cigars were sold in the U.S. alone during 1992 and 1993. An average price of $7 puts gross revenues at over $12 billion.

Cigar makers are pleased with this new image and have no intentions of allowing their billion dollar industry and its new found image to go up in smoke.

— Wrenford Phillips

**Contact Lenses**

If the eyes are the windows to the soul, then shouldn’t the view be beautiful? Contact lenses have gone beyond just correcting defective vision. They are worn to protect the eyes against radiation. They make a great fashion statement, matching the chic outfit to the color of your eyes. Even veterinarians are prescribing medicated contact lenses for dogs.

The contact lens market is a $2 billion a year industry. The top three manufacturers are Bausch & Lomb, Ciba-Vision Optics, a unit of CIBA-Geigy, and Vistakon, a Johnson & Johnson subsidiary. Each manufacturer sells a variety of brands, claiming differences in usage, and charge from $70 to $350 depending on the prescription and whether kind of individual deal you are able to get from the seller. One of the most popular brand names is Acuvue by Johnson & Johnson; one of the least recommended is Naturessoft, made by Ciba. Generally, most eye-care specialists agree the quality of all brands is basically the same.

There are two types of contact lenses, hard and soft, with the soft lens being either a daily wear or extended wear. The daily wear lenses last for about a year and go for about $90. A six month supply of extended wear lenses also costs the same.

Contact lenses must be prescribed and are sold mostly through nationwide optical chains and local eye doctors. Since the mid-1980s, competition for contact lens sales has become increasingly keen. Nationwide optical chains have been joined by new-comers such as Wal-Mart, K-Mart and mail order outlets such as Lens Express. Customers benefit from lens prices that average 50 percent lower than those from opticians and optometrists, a savings of roughly $300 over two years.

The arrival of mail order outlets and other non-traditional retailers has prompted fierce competition. For years, independent opticians and optometrists have monopolized the distribution of contact lenses. Now consumers are increasingly viewing contact lenses as a commodity rather than a “medical device,” which has led to a lowering of the profits of optometrists.

A contact lens is a thin artificial lens worn on the surface of the eye to correct refractive errors in vision. The first contact lens made of glass was developed by Adolf Fick in 1887. The early lenses were uncomfortable and could not be worn for long. The modern contact lens, developed by Kevin Tuohy in 1948, is made of plastic and rests on a cushion of tears. It covers the cornea over the iris and pupil.

Contact lenses most effectively neutralize visual defects arising from irregular curvatures of the cornea. They are the preferred treatment for some varieties of astigmatism, which prevents proper focus, and aphakia, absence of the eye’s crystalline lens. Contact lenses are also cosmetically appealing substitutes for eyeglasses to treat myopia (near-sightedness), and other visual defects.

The hard contact lens has a limited wearing time because of potential irritation of the cornea and may require a period of adaptation when first worn.

In the 1970s, larger “soft” lenses made from a water-absorbing plastic gel for greater flexibility were introduced, and in the 1980s extended-wear soft lenses came on the scene. Soft lenses are more comfortable because they allow oxygen to penetrate to the surface of the eyes. Their large size makes them more difficult to lose than the hard lenses.

There are three methods of manufacturing soft lenses: spin casting, cast molding and lathe cutting. Spin casting is the technique used by Bausch & Lomb for its Soflens. A combination
of spin casting the front surface and later cutting the back surface is used for the Bausch & Lomb Optima lenses. Cast molding is the method used for the American Optical lenses, now owned by Ciba. Most other lenses are cut while in a dehydrated state, then rehydrated.

How do you care for your lenses? "It is like caring for a child, expensive and worrisome," says Dermont John, a Baruch College student. The process requires a few items. You need a disinfectant solution, a saline solution, a cleaner to clean off the protein deposits on the lenses and some enzyme pills.

Mail order is the fastest growing segment of the contact lens market, with cataloger Lens Express, who advertises their catalog on television, controlling a four percent market share. Disposables are the current rave, with Johnson & Johnson unveiling the first disposable daily contact lenses, called "1-Day Acuvue." Based on the company's estimates, patients would pay about $1.50 a day, including doctors' fees.

Last year, Bausch & Lomb signed an agreement with IBM to jointly develop new technology that would shorten the period between the time doctors order lenses and when the final product is received.

With over 25 million consumers and the aging baby boomers needing more vision aid, the contact lens business will continue to see great profits.

— Monique Evans

Ice Skates

Winter is near and so is the opportunity to skate in an ice rink. But, how much do we really know about ice skates?

The term "skate" should be confined to the metal runner, consisting of a tempered steel blade attached to the sole and heel plates by vertical supports.

The difference between speed, figure and hockey skates lies in the structure of both the blade and the boot. The figure skate blade projects only slightly at the toe and heel, and the bottom of the blade is ground to a complex curve from front to back. The rounded front section contains a series of sharp cuts known as "toe rakes" or "toe picks," which are used in certain types of spins and jumps. The beginner's tendency to catch these in the ice is due to the faulty return of the foot after the thrust. Running the length of the bottom of the blade is a groove known as the "hollow," which divides the cutting section into two distinct edges. The figure boot is sturdy and relatively high both in the shaft and heel. A stiffened section known as the "counter" supports the arch of the foot.

For speed skating, the blade is thin, has relatively little curvature, projects considerably in front of the toe of the boot and is ground completely flat. The boot is low and quite flexible.

The ice hockey boot is also somewhat low but is quite tough, having a reinforced toe cap and a vertical leather section at the back to protect the Achilles tendon. The blade is thin and sharply curved at the front and rear and has a middle section varying in curvature according to the player's preference.

Amid the many small companies that make skates, two publicly-owned giants stand out, Canstar Sports Inc., based in the Montreal suburb of Ville Mont-Royal, is the largest manufacturer of ice skates. The majority of National Hockey League players wear Canstar's Bauer, Micron and Daoust skate. Canstar also makes in-line skates, competing with Roller Blades and Ultra Wheels. Canstar was acquired by Nike in March 1995.

The other leading skate maker, CCM, which has about 30 percent of the NHL market, is one of the three divisions of SLM International Inc., a New York-based company that makes toys and fitness equipment, as well as hockey jerseys.

The history of ice skates is surprisingly long. Bone skates tied to the feet by thongs were known in prehistoric times and continued in use until the end of the 12th century. By the late 14th century, skates with iron blades set in wood were in general use in the Netherlands, where skating was a practical method for getting from village to village along the frozen canals. Hollow grinding and curvature of the blade from front to back had been introduced by the end of the 18th century. During the early 19th century, the blade was extended to the heel of the boot, thus facilitating backward skating. In 1848, E. W. Bushnell produced in Philadelphia the first all-metal skate, which was attached to the boot by clamps. The first skate to be screwed to the sole of the boot was invented by the American skater Jackson Haines. Subsequent important developments were the joining of the toe section of the blade to the sole plate and the introduction of the toe rakes.

Today, skating is a popular sport and hobby. Whether figure, speed or hockey, ice skates are good business.

— Sandra Villasenor

Timothy J. Jones
An American Bistro

Nelson Mandela, Mohammed Ali, Donald Trump and Spike Lee. If one were to guess what these famous individuals have in common, a good answer might be that all have been dinner guests at the White House. This answer would be partially accurate in that all of these individuals have dined at a common place, but surprisingly, that place is not the White House. That common place is Sylvia’s Restaurant of Harlem, New York. Located in a setting not known for attracting some of the most famous as well as wealthiest individuals in the world, Sylvia’s has become synonymous with catering to a multitude of patrons worldwide desiring soul food. It is Sylvia’s distinction of catering to the multitude of foreigners, as well as the rich and famous, that arguably distinguishes her as the “Queen of Soul Food.”

Owned and operated by three generations of Woods’ family members, Sylvia’s serves as the foundation to a small empire that consists of real estate holdings, a banquet/dining hall and a recently promoted line of food products which include such items as barbecue sauce, canned vegetable goods, syrup, ketchup and salad dressings.

“It’s the work of God,” explains Sylvia. “It didn’t just happen by itself.” Notwithstanding the efforts on the part of the Woods’ family, the patriarchs point to a particular article in New York Magazine by Gail Green written in 1979, which brought the initial success. However, all this diversification of clientele and all the famous dignitaries that frequent the establishment, has tarnished Sylvia’s to a degree.

Sylvia Woods: Cooking with a lot of soul.

Some African-Americans view Sylvia’s as a Benedict Arnold-type establishment because they believe Sylvia’s has turned its back on their own people. Claims of not being able to get in and the existence of separate menus for foreigners are some ways in which the image of an otherwise tremendously successful business is blemished. For Sylvia, these rifts are a total misunderstanding. Although she sympathizes with her people, she recognizes very well that there is room for all at her establishment. She knows that the collective patronization of foreigners, as well as African-Americans, is the primary reason that her restaurant and dining hall employs approximately 65.

Standing about five feet four inches, Sylvia is a rather youthful looking 68 years old. Her persona relates an undeniable accumulation of knowledge and wisdom. But, it hasn’t always been peaches and cream for Sylvia and her family. Born in Hemingway, South Carolina in 1926, Sylvia’s origins are far cry from her status today as the ‘Queen of Soul Food.’ Growing up on a farm about 90 miles away from Charleston, a major city and seaport town, Sylvia was initiated into the farm life at the tender age of five. Her family planted cotton, corn and tobacco. She explains, “Tobacco was our money crop.” When asked if it was hard work, she laughingly replies, “Very hard. That’s why we left.”

In August of 1941, Sylvia and Herbert, her life-long acquaintance, separated for one of the few times ever when Sylvia followed her mother, to Brooklyn, New York where a large part of her family was located. At the youthful age of 15, Sylvia attended high school during the day and went to cosmetology school during the evenings. She graduated from cosmetology school in 1942 and at 16 years old was the youngest graduate ever in the state of New York.

Success for the Woods’ family did not arrive overnight. Sylvia and Herbert married in 1944. They built a family beginning with their first son, Van followed by Bedilia, Kenneth and Crizette. While maintaining a household, Sylvia intermittently worked doing domestic work and factory work. Losing her zest to become a beautician, she began working as a waitress. After a seven-and-a-half-year stint in waitressing, she bought out the business from the owner, who had two other restaurants at the time.

—Terry Campbell

DOLLARS AND SENSE
Mexican Food Empire

Jorge Urzua came to New York for a one-week vacation 22 years ago. He decided to stay and ever since has been working hard to establish his traditional Mexican cuisine restaurants as a mainstay of the Big Apple's already ample variety of exotic bistros.

"I work like an employee," says Urzua who makes a yearly salary of $50,000. He has ambitious plans to expand his business. In a few weeks the ambitious Mexican is going to open his third restaurant near Columbia University. This new restaurant is going to be the headquarters of his enterprise, where all the food will be prepared and distributed to the rest of the chain's restaurants. Urzua expects to open six more restaurants within the next year. He will also open a taqueria restaurant named "Taqueria." If Urzua gets investors who support his idea and everything turns as planned, he expects to have 100 restaurants within five years. That is his goal. "To accomplish the dream of 100 restaurants, to live completely fulfilled and be able to say that at least I did what I thought that I could do," Urzua says.

The restaurant on the Upper West Side is located in a 98-year-old building which was part of the Bretton Hotel. Urzua spent about $10,000 to open this large room, and pays $8,000 a month rent for it. He has a secret for saving money. Urzua says, "I have not spent money because I do most of the work myself." The man who admits that in Mexico he did not even know how to fry an egg, started working in a French restaurant in New York. Eager to obtain skills, he either showed up in the restaurant as early as 5:00 a.m. or stayed late without getting paid. His purpose was to observe, and learn from the cook the process of preparing different kinds of food.

In 1984, Urzua became the owner of the restaurant after having washed dishes, waited on tables, cooked, and managed the restaurant. "I believe that everyone has the opportunity, but one's effort influences people you know, to help you in one way or another," says Urzua whose endeavor and dedication made him worthy of his boss's sympathy and appreciation. Urzua's boss sold the restaurant to him for $15,000, and gave him two years to complete payment.

Melissa Johnson, Urzua's associate, invested money in the business that she had saved from her acting career. While Urzua cooked, Johnson answered the phone, and attended to customers. Their teamwork made him able in 1987 to inaugurate La Cocina in Midtown Manhattan. The place where the restaurant now stands had formerly been a Chinese restaurant, then Italian and finally Japanese. Urzua laughed when he remembers that people tried to warn him about an unexpected failure when they said, "Good luck—you are the fourth."

Through La Cocina, Urzua emboisse the Mexican culture in New York. "Mexico has not only the big hat and the shawl of colors to show, it has art that many people don't know," says Urzua. The decorative style of the restaurants is defined by the crafts and masks that the Mexican Indians made years ago. The primitive art contrasts with the contemporary painting expressions of Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo and Tamayo. The tables are a unique aspect of the restaurant. Urzua's idea was to have a distinguishable characteristic, something that was not in any other place. The square surfaces of the tables have four or five compartments, each containing colored beads, rice, beans, corn, cinnamon, eucalyptus and cloves among other spices and groceries, which are covered with glass. "I like to be original," says Urzua, who designed the tables to be a representative symbol of the restaurant.

A company with the same logotype, foods, uniforms and tables is what Urzua pursues. He would give 25 percent of his restaurants to those employees, that have worked honestly and constantly with him, which means that his present employees are his future associates. "They don't have the money, but I'm going to give them the opportunity," Urzua says.

Urzua's parting words are, "You must take out of life what life did not give you."

—Andrea Lilian Garcia
Car Alarms

If you haven't heard much about them, you sure have heard from them. It's those annoying multi-tone car alarms we all fall asleep to every night in New York City. Howard Ewart, a resident of Flatbush Brooklyn, describes them as "electronic lullabies from hell."

Ever since they invented cars, people have been stealing them. The single most likely time and location for a car to be stolen is on a street close to home at night. This accounts for 30 percent of all car thefts. Many of the cars sold today offer basic factory alarm systems as one of the varied features to consider when buying a car. Some of the hottest selling names in alarms competing in the U.S. are the Viper, Prestige and Exceliber brands. Auto security today, is a $300 million market, growing at a rate of 20 percent a year. There are over 63 companies selling their devices to the auto-public.

"Installing certain systems in an automobile can entitle consumers to a 10 to 15 percent insurance discount," according to Rick Joseph, an insurance broker for General Accident Insurance Company.

Most brands come with door sensors that detect when a door is opened, shock sensors, glass sensors, ignition cut-off relays and starter-kill protection.

There are three types of alarms: active, passive or a combination of both. In active, the alarm has to be manually activated upon exit just like an alarm system for a house. This is done by turning on the system when you leave the car.

Active/passive systems give the user the option of arming the vehicle instantly. If you forget, no problem, the unit will arm itself within a minute.

Many of the alarms on the market today are passive. Passive alarm systems are highly recommended by law enforcement agencies. Prices can range anywhere from $100 to over $1,000 for the more complex systems.

Apart from protection, some of the alarm systems sold today offer elaborate features that range from opening the windows to starting the car while you finish your morning coffee. Other features include keyless entry, pager alert and remote trunk unlock. Most of these features are available from the touch of a button via micro-sized remote transmitters, smaller than a business card.

The average person has no idea how these alarms are installed. "Just drop it off in the morning and it will be ready in the afternoon," one technician said. Actually, a lot of work goes into installing some of these high-tech computerized gizmos. Choosing the right alarm depends largely on how much protection is needed and for what kind of car. In other words, you wouldn't want a system designed for a Mercedes to be installed in a Yugo.

For the average four-door car, a basic alarm could run about $150 to $200 installed. Most systems come with door pins that trigger the alarm when the hood, trunk or a door is opened. These pins are usually wired into the fuse box and work with the courtesy lights of the car.

The first step is to install these trigger pins in the trunk and hood. In many cases individual installation is not necessary if the vehicle already has a courtesy light that comes on whenever a door or the trunk is opened. In this case it could be wired directly into the car's existing fuse box. A siren is mounted where possible on a panel under the hood. These sirens can have frequency ranges of over 120 decibels.

Optional shock sensors can be mounted on the engine wall or under the dashboard. These shock sensors can be tuned to increase or decrease the sensitivity of the alarm. The sensitivity is how the alarm responds to tampering, which sometimes has to be adjusted for heavy trucks, emergency sirens and various other loud noises.

Valet switches are almost standard on every alarm today and are used to override the system whenever the car is given to a parking attendant. "Many parking attendants don't have a clue as to how my alarm system functions and I shouldn't have to show them, so I just put it on valet and leave only the ignition turn-off option turned on," says Mr. Ewart.
key with the attendant,” says Richard Gordon, a salesman.

This device is usually well hidden in the car, where only the owner knows where it is. The switch is also used to turn off the system when the car is being repaired or taken out of service for long periods of time.

Other components include that little flashing light that you see dancing on the dashboard. This LED (light emitting diode) has to be placed strategically where it will be seen by anybody looking into the vehicle.

All these components are then connected to the “brain” of the alarm system. The brain is usually about the size of a small wallet and is located where all the different components, relays and sensors are plugged in, allowing the system to be controlled by a single remote control.

Now the vehicle can be armed or disarmed by remote from within a range of a hundred feet. In some cases the remote transmitter can be used to help locate your vehicle in a crowded parking lot. Pressing the button will trigger the alarm while flashing the car’s lights.

The transmitter could also be used as a panic button in times of trouble. By pressing a button and holding it down for a few seconds the transmitter will automatically trigger the siren, thereby drawing attention to you or the vehicle.

It takes about two to three hours to install the average alarm system into the average car. Depending on the system and the car, it could take more or less time.

Car owners who install a “LoJack” tracking device stand a 95 percent chance of recovering their vehicle. This system boasts the highest recovery rates in the country. Police praise the system and many insurers offer huge rebates on LoJack equipped cars.

—Gerald Daily

Mini-Disc Players

Bopping around with a portable compact disc player is like walking in a strait jacket. Any sudden moves or shocks to the compact disc player and it shuts off the music. Is there an alternative where the music does not shut off when you shake it? The answer is yes. The mini-disc player is that alternative. More interestingly, portable mini discs can record and give you the same music quality as a compact disc player. It was created and marketed by Sony two to three years ago. In the U.S., the mini-disc player is a relatively new concept, but in Japan thousands of people already own them.

Portable mini-disc players range in price from $300 to $600. The ones that do not record music cost less than the recordable mini-disc players like the Sony MD-Z2. Perhaps the most novel concept behind the mini-disc player is that they are small. They’re conveniently sized at a mere three and a quarter inches. The portable mini-disc player is about the size of a compact disc storage case. One of the features offered in the mini-disc player is the LCD (liquid crystal display) screen, which shows the title of the song that is currently being played. The other features are similar to those of the compact disc player.

The sales of mini-disc players are slow because of their high price and low consumer awareness. Compact players were first introduced more than a decade ago, but consumers were reluctant to buy them because they were already content with their cassette decks and record players and the price was too high. As advertising increased and the prices of compact disc players began to decrease, consumers flocked to electronic stores to buy this superior product. Since then, the sales of compact disc players and discs have increased dramatically. If mini-disc players’ prices are lowered and consumers are aware of the product, mini-disc players have the potential to become as successful as the compact disc players.

Today, on the floor of electronics and music stores, mini-disc players can be seen on display where customers can sample them. Most consumers who try mini-disc player love the idea of a machine that gives the same music quality as compact disc players, that is recordable, shock resistant and has a ten second memory function.

Although consumers are fascinated by the concept of mini-disc players, they are still too expensive for most pockets. Last year the prices fell slightly but only on some of the older models. Though the mini-disc player is a new technology that has yet to capture the attention of the average audio consumer, it is not in danger of going the way of the eight-track.

—Chung Wai Kwan

Carlo Brown
UPDATE

Time Warner

In an attempt to restructure and boost its stock price, Time Warner Inc acquired Cablevision Industries for $2.7 billion. This makes Time Warner the nation's largest cable company along with Tele-Communications, with over 11.5 million subscribers. The company also plans to sell $3 billion worth of assets to pay its debt. Time Warner's chairman and chief executive officer, Gerald Levin made it crystal clear that, "There will be no sale of Time Warner's five major businesses, which include Warner Music, Warner Bros. studio, HBO, cable and publishing."
— John Moscati

Thomas Nicely, a mathematician professor at Lynchburg University, found the flaw in June but it wasn't until October that Intel officially announced the flaw amid rumors and accusations over the Internet. The chip gave the wrong answer when it performed certain division problems.

Once the news hit the Internet, many home personal computer users panicked and demanded a recall. But Intel continued to deny the news and would replace chips only for customers that could prove they needed a flawless chip for heavy calculations. This outraged customers even more because they saw Intel as just another arrogant large company that doesn't care about its customers.

Finally, in late December, after International Business Machines announced it would stop selling its Pentium-based PCs and continued outcry from customers, Intel gave in and said it would replace all faulty chips at no cost to the customer.

Intel recently announced its new P6 chip. This new chip is said to outperform even the fastest Pentium chips. The new P6 chip, although fast, is still too expensive (roughly $6,000) to enter the home computer market. It is estimated, however, that the prices will come down to about $2,000 by 1997.

With the new P6 chip, Intel will not make the same mistake as with the Pentium. Intel showed "poor judgment and bad customer relations," according to Thomas Nicely.

After the rush to replace the faulty chips, it was found that Pentium-based computer sales did not greatly decrease. However, they did suffer some setbacks when larger purchase orders were placed on hold until the faulty chips were replaced.

In the midst of its problems with the Pentium, Intel decided to replace only those chips that "were absolutely necessary," reports an industry magazine published in Sebastopol, California. Intel will now print monthly reports about the Pentium and all of their products that may have any new updated information, including bugs, to help its customers.

Even though Intel is trying to recover from its past market decline and faulty decisions, their market share is up 31 percent from last year. An analyst at Dataquest Inc., a market research firm in San Jose, California, says, "What Intel gained from this experience is just that: experience." And even though IBM and Apple are continuing work on the Power PC chip, for now, it looks like Intel will continue to hold the microprocessor market.
— Annamarie S. Goldstein,
Victor Montesinos & Rosario Mastrogiacomo

Video Games

Video games are cashing in on the big screen. The popular video games Street Fighter II and Mortal Combat are now movies. Street Fighter II was released a few months ago by Capcom and starred Hollywood heavyweights Jeanne Claude van Damm and Raul Julia. Street Fighter II grossed over $3 million the opening weekend. Mortal Combat, one of the hottest selling video games for Sega and Super NES, will be released soon. This opens a new market for makers of video games that is a long way from the arcade. Now they are marketing the sales of action figures of characters from the games and movies. Video games are emerging as one of biggest forms of entertainment.
— Anthony Saviano

DOLLS AND SENSE
Who's Who

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