

FINCH NEWS

March 2007

A Publication for Finch College Alumnae and Friends

Number 21

Visit Portugal this Fall!



We are planning another international trip—this time to Portugal! The tentative dates are October 12-18, 2007.

Finch alumna Yvonne Roome lives part time in Portugal and is helping to plan a six-day trip in this wonderful country at the best time of year. We will stay at a seaside hotel, 30 minutes from exotic Lisbon and 15 minutes to the largest casino in Europe.

► Day trips to historical monuments, the Jeronimus Monastery where Vasco da Gama is buried, and to the Gulbenkein and Tile Museums will be scheduled.

► Visits to Sintra, the fishing village of Cascais, and Estoril are planned.

► Yvonne will host one evening at her lovely home, located at the most western point of Europe.

► Beautiful golf courses are available, too!

Join us and enjoy the people and food of this marvelous country and meet old and new Finch friends.

If you are interested, we need to hear from you soon. Contact Cheryl Deknatel at: jandcdeknatel@yahoo.com or call Yvonne at 212-861-7140.



SAVE THE DATE

★★★ COSGRAVE AWARDS ★★★

May 8, 2007

Cosmopolitan Club
122 East 66th Street

Cosgrave winners just announced:

Dr. Charles Bahn
Pamela Dammann Adams
Shea Gordon Festoff
Margaret Stein Nakamura
Susan Embree Parker
Virginia Wattiker Sheerin

An invitation will follow.

Please Note
We have a new address!

.....
Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation
PO Box 213
1471 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10028

A Cabaret Night Held at Friars Club

One of the memorable events of fall 2006, Finch Swings, featured singing performances by Finch grads Tennie Leonard, Yvonne Roome, and Maria di Giovanna. It was held at the venerable Friars Club, a showbiz landmark on East 55th Street. Brian Gari, a songwriter, music producer, author, and grandson of entertainer Eddie Cantor, was master of ceremonies. Yvonne, a long-time member of the Friars Club, arranged the evening, and Ceil Ainsworth, Margaret Nakamura, and Magda Katz produced the printed "Finchbill" program.

The evening opened with hors d'oeuvres and cocktails in the beaux-arts George Burns Room, hung with portraits of Friars Club celebrities. Afterwards, guests were ushered down the grand spiral staircase and through the imposing gothic doors of the Milton Berle Room, a vaulted ceiling, mahogany-walled cloister that is a state-of-the-art auditorium.



Yvonne Roome, Maria di Giovanna, Brian Gari, and Tennie Leonard

Cabaret Night continued

With Finchbills in hand, the audience heard welcoming remarks from Finch President Cheryl Deknatel who reminded patrons that the event's proceeds benefit the Alumnae Association Foundation.



Tennie Leonard

MC Mr. Gari then introduced Tennie Leonard, who appears at cabarets coast to coast including The Oak Room, Judy's, Don't Tell Mama, Town Hall, Eighty-Eight's, and Tavern on the Green in New York, and Cinegrill and Gardenia in Los Angeles. The vivacious Tennie, who characterizes her voice as "belt-legit," performed numbers in a spirited, sometimes comedic style, perfect for the venue. Accompanied by her talented pianist, David Brunetti, Tennie opened powerfully with One Step, and thrilled the audience with numbers like Fifty Percent, The Ferris Wheel, My Ship Has Sailed and Arthur in the Afternoon, her finale, for which she donned bright

yellow eyeglasses and a Brooklyn accent - and had 'em rolling in the aisles!

Yvonne Roome, whose velvety voice, according to Hugh Wyatt of the *Daily News*, "fluctuates from that of a torch singer to that of a jazz crooner," took the stage next. A seasoned cabaret performer with six CDs to her credit, Yvonne sang touching and witty songs like Let's Face the Music and Dance, How Did He Look?, Autumn Leaves, Insensitive, a hot Brazilian number, and I Did Everything Right With the Wrong Man, a real show-stopper. Her musicians were fabulous, too. Her pianist, Neil Kirkwood, stayed on to play for Maria Di Giovanna.



Yvonne Roome

Maria or "Chicky," a former administrative law judge who Dr. Margaret Maxwell has called a "provocative performer," is a veteran of top nightclubs here and abroad. On this October evening, she was all glamour and glitter, as she delivered songs ranging in style from swing era to Brazilian jazz in a voice that combines fragility and Brooklyn toughness. Maria dedicated her first number, You and Me, a Brazilian song to which she adapted English words, to Dr. Maxwell. Her other songs that included: I Don't Know Enough, If You Go, Everything I've Got Belongs to You, a med-

ley The Wind and Gone With the Wind, her Halloween number No Moon At All, which she sung while wearing a mask, and They Say It's Wonderful, were all...well, wonderful! ➤ MARGARET NAKAMURA

The performers' CDs are available:
 Tennie Leonard: www.tennieleonard.com
 Maria di Giovanna and Yvonne Roome:
 through their distributor www.cdbaby.com
 Brian Gari: www.BrianGari.com



Maria di Giovanna



DID YOU MISS FINCH SWINGS? THEN, BUY THE DVD!

The Finch Swings evening was recorded and is available on DVD for \$11, including shipping and handling. Proceeds benefit the Finch College Foundation. Featured are the performances by Tennie Leonard, Yvonne Roome, and Maria di Giovanna and footage of the cocktail party. So, if you couldn't attend or if you want to relive the wonderful evening, send a check payable to the Finch Alumnae Association with your request to:

Finch College Alumnae Association
 PO Box 213
 1471 Third Avenue
 New York, NY 10028

Parlez-vous Français?

Last summer, while enjoying dinner at Les Gamins, a French bistro in Greenwich Village, Ceil Ainsworth, Dr. Margaret Maxwell, and Robert Diffenderfer had the idea to start a French class for alumnae. Former Finch French professor Robert Diffenderfer, who many may remember as “Diff,” agreed to preside over the weekly meetings. And so, a small informal group with French-speaking abilities ranging from *un peu* to *bien sur, je parle le français* began to meet regularly.

The first half of *le cours de français* was an immersion into French noun and verb exercises, and readings in poetry and prose. Diff is a capable and considerate teacher who makes us feel accomplished and cultured. His warm charm is such that he could assign the reading of a prescription bottle, and we would be delighted.

Afterwards, dinner rivaling the finest restaurants in New York or Paris is served in the beautiful homes of



among others, Ceil, Yvonne Roome, and Barbara Glickman who graciously host these *soirées formidables*. Animated conversation, coupled with *les bon mots* and the singing of Yvonne, Maria “Chicky” di Giovanna, and others make for memorable evenings reminiscent of bygone days in *un grand salon*. *Vive Diff et les Dames de Finch!* If you want to join the weekly class, e-mail ceilains@aol.com

► JOANN KUBAT

New York City Inspires Landscape of the Imagination

Landscape of the Imagination was the lofty title of this year’s Finch in the City—an educational evening that “stars” Finch scholars. Former Finch English professors Jane Ross and Ardelle Stryker, both of whom hold Ph.D.s from Columbia University, and Finch alum Mosette Broderick, a member of the NYU faculty, focused lectures on New York City during the years that Finch existed: 1900-1976.

To begin, former Finch Dean of Admissions Sally Arthur, who produced the program, introduced Sybille Ngo Nyeck, a Finch grant winner. Sybille spoke beautifully of how important the Finch grant has been as she has made her way from LaGuardia Community College to Swarthmore. Next year she will attend the University of Virginia where she will seek a Ph.D. in political science and international relations. Sybille immigrated from Cameroon, arriving here speaking no English.

Mosette set the stage with a short history of neighborhoods where artists and writers lived during the 1900s, including Washington Square Park and Harlem. According to Mosette, Soho in the 1970s was the first neighborhood that artists helped to gentrify. Since then, increasing real estate prices seem to follow the development of neighborhoods by artists.

Jane Ross, who spoke on “Images of New York City in 20th Century Fiction” noted that during the first half of the century most writers did not live in nor did they use New York as a subject, pointing to authors like William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and John Steinbeck.

According to Jane, those who did live in New York “enjoyed what the city offers everyone – freedom – the freedom to both be alone and, at the same time, to seek and enjoy the camaraderie of fellow artists and hangers-on—to



Cheryl Deknatel, Mosette Broderick, Sally Arthur, Jane Ross, and Ardelle Stryker

write all day in one’s garret and to party all night in the clubs.” She quoted from many beautiful works of fiction and poetry that described the energy in New York.

During the second half of the century, more and more writers focused attention on New York as a character and a metaphor for the single soul. Jane said they used New York “to express what is essentially the writer’s concern – the exploration of the human heart.” She used James Baldwin, Saul Bellow, and F. Scott Fitzgerald to explain her thesis.

Ardelle Stryker gave an historical overview of acting and experimental theater, focusing her talk on the actor as “an instrument that makes the text come alive.” She took the audience through a short history of the theater district, which moved from 14th to 23rd Streets at the end of the 19th century to Broadway between 39th and 54th Streets 30 years later. The lively descriptions of the Astor Street Theater riot that left 28 dead, to actor Edwin Booth, to the transformation of plays from melodrama to naturalism, realism, and art theater, kept the Finch audience in rapt attention.

More than 60 people attended and enjoyed the reception following this stimulating evening.

► SUSAN DAVIS

LaGuardia and Finch Team Up to Educate Women

Since the Finch Foundation began awarding scholarships to community college women entering four-year colleges, several of the recipients have been graduates of LaGuardia Community College, a part of CUNY. That is due in part to the efforts of Dr. Cecilia Macheski, an English professor who coordinates the honors program at LaGuardia. She also sits on the Finch College Scholarship committee that selects recipients. Recently, Cheryl YOUNG Deknatel and Lois MORAN Zeigler met with President of LaGuardia Dr. Gail Mellow and Dr. Macheski for a tour of the college to see first hand the environment that generates so many Finch Foundation scholars.

Located in Long Island City, the bright airy college is carved from two huge factory buildings, joined together by a central garden. Students can gather in the atrium between



classrooms for casual conversation or to study. The facilities are equipped with the latest computing systems. Classes are scheduled throughout the day and evening to accommodate the many students who hold full-time jobs or have demanding family responsibilities. Students are serious about getting an education and an atmosphere of intensity prevails.

► LOIS MORAN ZEIGLER



Sybille Ngo Nyeck, Finch grant recipient and LaGuardia graduate (see also Landscape of the Imagination p. 3)

Finch Comes up in WOR Radio Discussion

Lois Zeigler was listening to radio personality Joan Hamburg on WOR Radio 710 recently. The discussion was about the role community colleges play. Many students begin their post-secondary education in two-year colleges because it suits their lifestyles and financial needs. Many then go on to four-year colleges. Lois called in to tell Ms. Hamburg about the Finch College Foundation Grant program. Ms. Hamburg was impressed that although Finch closed long ago, its alumnae association was still active and helping students.

A Thank You from a Finch Grantee

The following is excerpted from a letter written to Dr. Mary Raddock of Norwalk Community College, a Finch Grant judge, from Norwalk graduate and Finch Grant recipient Deborah Villamia, who is now at Smith College:

Well, I absolutely love it here! It is a dream come true.

My first year was challenging since the level of work was like nothing I had ever encountered. However, I had a great semester and found out I could handle it well. I did think it would get easier but I was mistaken since the classes only get harder. My biggest challenge has been juggling my children's needs with my professors' demands. My children have always come first and I have had to deal with not being able to rewrite that paper, or finish reading an assignment here and there.

First semester I took my first drawing class. One of my drawings was selected and printed in the Smith Botanical Garden newsletter. I was excited about that achievement. My second year, I decided to major in Architecture and Urbanism. I have always loved the built environment, particularly landscape architecture, but Smith does not offer a landscape studies major. I applied and was accepted to the Harvard Graduate School of Design Summer Program in

Landscape Architecture. It was a tremendous experience and I did exceptionally well. One of my designs was commended as being exceptional and I was told that I was a perfect candidate for Harvard's graduate program. I knew I was on the right track but needed more time at Smith. I applied and was accepted for an internship at Smith's Botanical Garden. I am also interested in garden management and I wanted to investigate this area more.

I was also part of Habitat for Humanity for the first two years but couldn't participate in any of the builds since my children were not allowed to come with me.

My daughter wants to go to Smith and both of my children have been affected in a positive way. They understand how important it is for me to finish school so I can take care of "us" and I know they understand I am fulfilling a lifelong dream.

The money I received from Finch came at a crucial time when I was afraid I wouldn't be able to go to Smith with all the expenses that were required. Every small or large amount helps me in countless ways.

Sincerely,

Deborah

Cosgrave Legacy Honored by Birch Wathen Lenox Headmaster: Finch College Scholarship Awarded to Middle School Student

Dear Mrs. Deknatel and Mrs. Van Dorn,

It was a great honor to meet you and the other alumnae ladies who came to present me with the first Finch College Alumnae Award for women in leadership. I can't thank you and Finch College enough for this award, and for my beautiful Tiffany pen. It means so much to me!

I'm only 12 years old, but I think that leadership starts early. In fact, when I was little my grandfather used to say that some day I would be president! Maybe it was because I always bossed my little brother around, or that I had my own way of thinking, but I always wanted to help people too. I think that being a leader means overcoming certain obstacles in life, and being able to help people see that you can make your goals no matter what—even if you are born poor or rich, or have a learning problem or a physical handicap, or if you think you don't fit in with a certain group at school, you still can be a leader by doing the best you can and being true to yourself. I enjoy helping others and I believe if I study hard and do my best to help people, I will succeed in being a leader.

I am also very excited to be attending in December The Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington D.C., where I hope to learn more about the history and future of leadership in America. It was an amazing honor to receive this award, and I would like to thank the Finch College alumnae and the headmaster at BWL for giving me this honor.

Sincerely,

Dominique "Nicki" Ramirez



Clockwise from left: Nina LaBruna, Elise Smith, Cindy Schaeffer Van Dorn, Christy Schaeffer, Marjorie Shulman, Cheryl Deknatel, Barbara Glickman, Frances Fish Tompkins, Dominique Ramirez, and Margaret Maxwell at the BWL Scholarship Tea in November 2006.

Editors note: The following excerpted remarks were given by Frank J. Carnabuci III at the Birch Wathen Lenox (BWL) annual Scholarship Tea, where Dominique Ramirez, Class of 2012, received the Finch Scholarship. Her thank you note is excerpted on the left.

During the earliest part of the twentieth century, Jessica Cosgrave established two institutions for young women on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. One was the K-12 Lenox School for Girls, and the other was Finch Junior College. The two schools were one corporate entity until 1939. While the two schools were separated, they continued to enjoy a friendly sibling relationship.

The Lenox School for Girls went on to become the Lenox School for Girls and Boys and later evolved into the Birch Wathen Lenox School, or BWL. Finch went on to become a four-year college.

Finch encouraged young women to immerse themselves in the rich cultural life of New York City. In addition, Ms. Cosgrave believed that international study was important and began one of the first college "junior year abroad" programs. I would like to think of BWL's Overseas Studies Program as the successor to this tradition.

While Finch closed officially in 1975, its alumnae association is as strong as ever: They do fundraising, hold special events, award scholarships, publish a news magazine, and maintain a Website. And the relationship between Finch and its sister school, BWL, has never been stronger. The Finch Alumnae Board meets regularly at BWL and in 2006, BWL and Finch established the Finch College Alumnae Association Award, to be given to a middle school girl who shows great potential for community leadership.

Finch, Lenox, and Birch Wathen Lenox have all drawn from the legacy of Ms. Cosgrave. It is our belief that the Finch Scholarship will make a difference in the life of an individual learner, and in the community in which she lives.

Frank J. Carnabuci III has been the headmaster of the Birch Wathen Lenox School since 1992. Previously, he was assistant headmaster at the Dalton School. He holds degrees in psychology and education from Drew, Columbia, and Harvard University.



BWL Headmaster Frank Carnabuci and the first Finch Scholarship winner, Dominique Ramirez

Class Notes

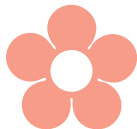
'40s

Phyllis GREGORY Heard graduated from Finch and went on to receive a B.S. from Columbia University in 1948. She was a member of Dr. DeMarco's staff from 1950–51 and was president of the Alumnae Association in the early 1950s, too. She is living in Nashville, TN.



'50s

A number of Finch alumnae attended a preview of **Pat Addiss's** latest show, the off-Broadway musical *Shout*, which *Good Morning America* called "the Hottest New Musical." Pat also featured a reading of Marilyn Gelber's adaption of *Of Human Bondage* at her reading series at the National Arts Club. Pat reports that **Evangeline GRIEF Michell** married John Slauson in August 2006. The newly-weds are living in Westport, CT.



'60s

Shea GORDON Festoff had a one-woman show of her drawings and paintings at the Epsten Gallery in Kansas City, MO, where she lives with her husband, Barry Festoff.

'70s

Ann M. Holmes's new book, *There's a Business in Every Woman*, published by Random House, went on sale February 27, 2007. It is a seven-step guide to discovering, starting, and building the business of your dreams. **Diana APPEL Klevens** is living in the lake area of Minneapolis, MN. Her sons live in the area as well. **Alexandra LALLY Peters** lives in New York and sends "thanks" for keeping the Association going.

Faculty

Dr. Carol Hawkes, associate vice president for academic affairs at Western Connecticut State University, has been named the founding dean of the University's newly formed School of Visual and Performing Arts. Upon its completion it is hoped that the school will make WestConn, located in Fairfield County, the premier regional center for cultural, intellectual, and artistic excellence. The school's proximity to NYC and Boston allows the University to draw faculty from leading professionals in the arts. Dr. Hawkes said in an interview that the new school, scheduled for completion within the next five years, will bring "students and faculty in music, theater, and the visual arts to work in a single school with a common focus and vision."



Bulletin Board

Wondering where all those old year books go? Found on EBay: Finch College Skylines, class of 1961, \$45.

A Reminder

The Finch College Alumnae Association is run entirely by volunteers who attended Finch College. We look for your participation and are always eager for your help. We also appreciate your being kind and courteous to your fellow alumnae if you receive a call from them.

Keep Us Posted

Send us news of weddings, publications, recordings, new positions, recent travels, and more. We want to know!

Looking for A Finch Friend?

Contact us and we'll ask if anyone knows her whereabouts in the next newsletter.



PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR DUES

Annual dues are \$50. They are crucial to funding events sponsored by the Finch College Alumnae Association and to the Finch Scholars and continuing college education grants provided by the Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation. Now you can pay your dues for life! Make one payment of \$300 and you become a Lifetime Member of the Association. Please send dues to:

The Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation
1471 Third Avenue, PO Box 213
New York, New York 10028

THANK YOU!!



This Year Make a Tax-Free Charitable Donation to Finch from your IRA



Support your alma mater! The Pension Protection Act allows traditional IRA owners who have attained the age of 70 1/2 the ability to make charitable contributions of up to \$100,000 per year directly from their IRA without incurring any income tax consequences.

The donation must be made to a qualified tax-exempt organization--Finch College Association Foundation qualifies--and may not be made to a private (non-operating) foundation, a supporting organization or donor-advised fund operated by a public charity or an entity such as a Charitable Remainder Trust where another person would have an interest. Ask your tax advisor about this possibility.

Letter from the President

Dear Finch friends,

As my first year as president draws to an end, I look back and am excited about how many events have been held and new initiatives launched.

Our Website is up and running and worth a visit if you have not been there yet. Please take a moment to do so at www.finchcollege.org.

Here are some of the past year's highlights:

- Our first Annual Giving letter raised \$17,425 in life-time memberships and donations. Many thanks to those who contributed to this first campaign.

- We had a small fashion event at the Doncaster Showroom where Wendy Reider, our hostess, donated 10% of sales to Finch.

- Our three Divas showed us what talent lies within our group. We applaud Tennie Leonard, Yvonne Roome, and Maria "Chicky" di Giovanna for great performances at the Friars Club.

- Our second Finch In the City event, arranged by Sally Arthur, felt nostalgic as we sat at school desks listening to lectures about Finch and New York in times past. We also had the opportunity to meet one of our scholarship recipients.

- Our scholarship program continues to thrive. This year, in honor of our close relationship with the Birch Watham Lenox School, Headmaster Carnabuci awarded a

full scholarship to a middle school student in the name of the Finch College Alumnae Association. We should all thank Headmaster Carnabuci for taking the leadership on this wonderful initiative.

- Eileen Sherman is making great progress with a mentoring program. She is in touch with all of our Finch Grant recipients and is putting them together with Finch alumnae who share similar interests or backgrounds. The hope is that the mentor can aid the mentee in their career choice and more. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, let me know and I will pass the information on to Eileen.

- School days have returned for those of us who are taking French lessons every Tuesday with former Professor Robert Diffenderfer. You can join us too!

- We are starting to make plans for another Finch Fling in Europe. This time it will be Portugal with Yvonne Roome. Call or e-mail soon to reserve a place.

- Our main annual event, The Jessica Cosgrave Awards ceremony is just around the corner on May 8th. We hope to have a record turnout this year. Please join us at this wonderful evening, chaired by Barbara Glickman.

I would like to thank all of those who have helped me through the year. I look forward to what the new year will bring.

Sincerely,

Cheryl YOUNG Deknatel '70



Alumnae Association Lifetime Members

BARBARA ROBINSON BUCKLAND

AMY CARD-LILLIOS

DONNA MILLER CASEY

MELANIE ROSE COHEN

CHERYL YOUNG DEKNATEL

DARCIE DENKERT

STARR GARNETT EZRA

JAMEE JACOBS FIELD

ELEANOR WHITWORTH FINNEY

MARGARET REEVES FOREMAN

CHANTI RIVERA GROSSO

DR. CAROL A. HAWKES

MARGARET STEWART HEDBERG

SUSAN WRIGHT HIGHT

LAURA ROLLINS HOCKADAY

JULIE VASQUES HORNS

BARBARA KATSOS

SUSAN WYLIE LOVETT

MARY MOUNT MAHAFFEY

INES "INGE" HOHNER MAHON

SUZANNE GLASSER MATHEWS

DR. MARGARET M. MAXWELL

LYNN MORRIS MICHAELSON

JESSICA MORRISSEY

RITA CASTORE O'HARE

ANTONIA FRANCESCA GEIS OLIVER

ALEXANDRA LALLY PETERS

BARBARA FILENBAUM PIERMONT

FREEAR POLLARD BARNWELL

ELAINE SCHREIBER

MARJORIE R. SCHULMAN

WENDY DAVIS SCHWAM

VIRGINIA WATTIKER SHEERIN

EILEEN BLUESTONE SHERMAN

SUSIE SOLOMON

SUSAN MAU SOONG

FREYA MOSKOWITZ STERN

MARCY SYMS

JOANNE BACH THOMAS

FRANCES FISH TOMPKINS

ALICE PIRIE WIRTZ

JERRY ANN MCFADDIN WOODFIN



Photo Gallery



Carol BARNES Ross, Margaret Maxwell, and Cheryl Deknatel celebrate Margaret's birthday at Ceil Ainsworth's home last summer.



Birthday guests included Robert Diffenderfer and Betty Low.



Susie STERN Salomon, Vilma POLAKOVA Weisenmaier, Magda Katz, Audrey Green, and Lois MORAN Zeigler having cocktails in the George Burns Room at the Friars Club in October 2006.

FINCH COLLEGE ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

- **GENERAL MEETING** • Next date to be announced soon • Birch Wathen Lenox School, 210 E. 77th Street (between 2nd & 3rd Aves). All are welcome.
- **FINCH GOES TO PORTUGAL** • Tentative dates: October 12-18, 2007. Call to reserve your place.
- **COSGRAVE AWARDS CEREMONY** • May 8, 2007
Cosmopolitan Club 122 East 66th Street

The Finch College Alumnae Association Foundation



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