



In this Issue:

Happenings at Hunter	2
President Raab Visits Mideast	3
Grads Star on TV	4
President Raab, Alums Honored as 'Powerful Women'	6
Social Work School Helps Vets	6
10 Questions For... Diana Reiss	7
Pamela Stone's Book Makes News	8
Tom Brokaw Speaks at Hunter	9
In Memoriam: Floria Lasky	9
Alumni News	10
Class Notes	10
Susie Case Joins Foundation Board	12



Photo by Tess Steinkolk/Brown Dog Productions

Abbe Raven, president and CEO of A&E Television Networks, with Hunter intern Jason Bernstein.

Alumni Help Students Land Top Internships

Four prominent friends and benefactors of Hunter College helped students land top internships in New York City this past summer.

Abbe Raven, president and CEO of A&E Television Networks; Avinash Mehrotra, managing director of Goldman Sachs & Co.; Evelyn Lauder, senior corporate vice president and director of Estée Lauder, Inc.; and Lew Frankfort, chairman and CEO of Coach, Inc., all provided students with incredible learning experiences in their companies.

"It was awesome to work at A&E," said Jason Bernstein, a senior media major at Hunter who spent three months in the cable network's on-air promotions department. "We got to be part of the creative process. They really let us get hands-on experience. Some people there didn't even know we were interns."

"My department did on-air promotion for all the shows that are on A&E and the commercials and the rest. You see these things all the time on TV, but you don't realize how much work it takes behind the scenes. The people were so creative and so capable. The editors are magicians."

Bernstein said his first step toward getting this great job came when he met Abbe Raven — who received her MA in cinema and theater in 1977 from Hunter — after she spoke at the College. The College's Office of Student Services then arranged for him to have an interview that eventually got him the position at A&E.

continued on page 8

Frankforts Give \$1M to Hunter

Teacher training at Hunter College has taken another leap forward, thanks to an extraordinary \$1M gift from Lew and Bobbie Frankfort.

This gift supports an exciting new video system, known as the Frankfort Teacher Video Initiative, that uses state-of-the-art, remote-controlled cameras to record student teachers as they interact with children in classroom settings.

"Because of the Frankforts' generosity," said David Steiner, dean of the School of Education, "Hunter is on the cutting edge nationally in the clinical preparation of teachers."

continued on page 12



Lew Frankfort, chairman and CEO of Coach, Inc.

At Hunter is published by Hunter College. Please send comments and suggestions to: Hunter College 695 Park Avenue, Room E1301 New York, NY 10065 or telephone 212.772.4070 or e-mail publications@hunter.cuny.edu For mailing address changes, please call 212.772.4087 or e-mail alumrelations@hunter.cuny.edu

From Fashion Executive to Matchmaker

Hunter grad Lisa Ronis (BA '75) has a full-time job these days playing Cupid to successful single men and women looking for romance.

The onetime fashion executive is now the head of Lisa Ronis Personal Matchmaking — a high-profile role that has put her on national TV. She has also been written about in publications like the *New York Times* and *USA Today*.

"I've always had a knack for connecting people with the right partner," says Ronis, who worked in the fashion industry for 20 years — the last seven as VP of design for fashion accessories at Liz Claiborne — after graduating from Hunter with a degree in fine arts. "I've literally been practicing to be a matchmaker all my life."

Since leaving the fashion world and turning her matchmaking hobby into a thriving business, she has appeared on many top TV shows such as *Good Morning America* and *Dateline NBC* to dispense dating advice. "I just felt there was a need for me," she explains.

"I've always had a knack for connecting people with the right partner."

— Lisa Ronis

She recently became the star of her own TV dating series called *Manhattan Matchmaker*. It was filmed in Vancouver and appeared on the W network throughout Canada and also on the Fox Reality Channel in the U.S.



Lisa Ronis interviews client for a match.

Ronis has also been featured in the national press talking about her top romantic picks for stars like Ben Affleck and Jennifer Aniston; giving advice on how to be a smart cupid in *Redbook*, as a matchmaker on the *Gastineau Girls*; and making numerous other TV, radio and media appearances.

"There are babies born because of me," she likes to tell people, pointing out that her matchmaking has been responsible for many happy long-term relationships and marriages.

Her client list includes top lawyers, investment bankers and other successful 30-plus singles who simply don't have time to find the right romantic match. Describing herself as "a good listener," Ronis determines what they

want and then seeks to find the right match from her ever-changing list of potential dates.

"If there's a guy who becomes single, in 20 minutes I'll know about it," she laughs. "It used to have a bit of a stigma to hire a matchmaker, but now it's not only acceptable but a great way for ultra-busy people to find someone. I do all the work for them."

In addition to fixing up the client on dates, her personalized service at lisaronismatchmaking.com offers them tips on everything from grooming to fitness to diet in order to put their best image forward. "Men are visual creatures," she lectures her women clients. "Get your hair blown, get a manicure, dress up. Do the best with what you've got!"

Ronis herself is single after an early marriage while in college that lasted seven years. She recalls her days at Hunter with great fondness, saying the school helped put her on the path toward all the successes she has achieved.

"Hunter really helped me connect to the world," she says. "I felt that the Art Department was very inspiring. I got a fabulous liberal arts program. I minored in communications and also took some acting and improv classes."

"One great thing about Hunter was that it allowed me to come to Manhattan. I still lived in Brooklyn at the time. Each day I would travel to Hunter and my campus was Madison Avenue and Bloomingdale's and everything else around there. Being at Hunter gave me a taste for fashion, it gave me a broad perspective and it helped shape all the wonderful things I've done since."

She Keeps Order in Judge Young's Court

Hunter alumna Tawya Young (BS '00, MSW '07) plays a bailiff on TV in the new daytime syndicated court show *Judge David Young*. If she seems convincing in the role, that's because Tawya is a real life New York court officer too — a lieutenant assigned to Brooklyn Civil/Small Claims Court.

For Tawya, getting the opportunity to play herself on TV is the best of both worlds: "I'm having a blast," she says. "TV court is different from being in real court though. You don't get to do retakes in real court."

She won the television job last year when she answered a tryout call while working full time as a court officer in Brooklyn at the same time she was about to graduate from Hunter with a master's in social work — and a perfect 4.0 GPA. She had earlier earned a 3.7 GPA when she got her bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology at Hunter, also while working full time in her court job.

"They were looking for someone with an upbeat personality, a quick wit and a good sense of humor," she recalls. "People I worked with said: 'That's you. Go for it!' At the tryout, I was just Tawya. They thought I was hysterical. Judge David interacts with me very often on the show. He'll ask a question or make a comment, and I make a comment. I do a lot of facial expressions too. It could be a silent movie with me."

"Hunter gave me a chance when I really needed one."

— Tawya Young



Tawya Young on the job in Judge David Young's television courtroom.

Judge David Young (no relation) is a former Miami judge with a reputation for being both tough and caring — as well as always entertaining. The show, syndicated by Sony Pictures Television, premiered September 10 during daytime programming on television stations around the country.

"David Young is awesome to work with," says Tawya, who is billed by the show as Young's "vibrant and warm-hearted" bailiff. "We have such a wonderful chemistry."

Tawya Young's story is one of success against great odds. After first enrolling at Hunter in the late '80s, she was forced to drop out of school to help raise her younger sister after her mother became seriously ill. She worked in the advertising industry, then became a New York court

officer in 1996. She was promoted first to sergeant and later to lieutenant, becoming the first black female court officer to ever reach that rank in Brooklyn Civil Court.

After her mother died, she returned to Hunter in the late '90s to get her degree. "My initial professors there inspired me," she recalls now. "They opened my eyes to things I didn't even know about."

Although she lost credit for the courses she took before dropping out years earlier, she praised Hunter officials who helped her to return. "My mother had just died a month before. They understood my situation. Hunter gave me a chance when I really needed it."

That's why when she decided to go back and get a master's degree in social work, Hunter was her only choice. "Hunter has been good to me," she says.

Social work is a big part of what she wants to do in the future. While working as a court officer, she has already done much volunteer work on her own time — such as leading mentor seminars for young girls and women empowerment sessions for female court employees. In 2005, New York State Chief Justice Judith Kaye gave her a special award for her efforts.

Amazingly, she continues to work full time as a court officer while filming the TV show. "I do my job as a TV bailiff and listen to small claims cases," she laughs, "then come to the courthouse and do small claims here."

How do her friends and family and colleagues react to her sudden stardom? "They love it," she says. "They all tell me: 'Let me have your autograph now!'"

Making Music for 'Next Top Model'

Rachel Pastarnack just graduated from Hunter last May, but she has already hit it big as a songwriter for the hot TV show *America's Next Top Model*. Five songs, written and performed by the Hunter theater major, are being played this season on the show, which airs at 8 p.m. Wednesdays on the CW network.

Inspired by last season's finale, Pastarnack created the song "No More Baby Girl," which she sent to the show's producers. After seven months of persistence, the show told her they loved it and wanted to use it, along with four more of her songs. "I remember screaming for five minutes," says Pastarnack. "I called every single family member I have."

Her songs are played on air as contestants from the show compete for stardom in the modeling world. One of the songs, "Bad Enough," has lyrics which Pastarnack says reflect both the drive of people on the show to succeed as models and her own desire to make it as a musician, actress, and dancer.

"They really liked 'Bad Enough' because it's all about ambition and determination — about wanting something so bad that you have to have it," Pastarnack explains. "Those are the qualities I have, so I put them in my song. If the model is crying because she worked hard enough to make it, that's the song they'll play."

Pastarnack credits Hunter with helping her turn her dreams into reality. She said she began writing music in 2002 at the age of 17 after her mother died from breast cancer. "Music saved me," she says. "The arts saved me. I found myself again at Hunter



Rachel Pastarnack plays her favorite piano in the North Building.

because I was given that ability to express myself.

"My mother was the center of my universe. She took me to auditions in New York City every day. After she died, I felt very alone. But, when I came to Hunter, I found a family here. I felt so at home. I want to give back to Hunter what Hunter has given to me. I am Hunter's biggest cheerleader."

During her years at Hunter, she was an honors student in theater and the sole recipient of the Acting Award given out to the most outstanding theater student in the senior class. But, at the same time, she was practicing her music by playing piano in between theater classes.

"You could always find me at a piano on the fourth floor of the North Building," she laughs. "It's a beautiful

Steinway that I fell in love with. I have a picture of it on my cell phone. If anyone finds my cell phone, they all know it's Rachel's because it has a piano.

"I sort of made up my own major without telling anyone. I called it Pop101 with Rachel. I studied privately with a voice teacher at Hunter, Jan Douglas, from the Music Department. I worked non-stop and loved every minute of it."

When it came time to try to record her music, she raised money for the studio time by working as a greeter at Houston's restaurant on Third Avenue — while she was attending Hunter classes full-time. "I made sure my scholastic work came first and maintained fantastic relationships with my professors," she adds.

Her goal now is to continue pursuing an artistic career in both music and acting. She plans on going to Los Angeles soon to meet people from *America's Next Top Model* and also to audition as an actress for some pilots.

"You could always find me at a piano on the fourth floor of the North Building."

— Rachel Pastarnack

Pastarnack currently hones her musical skills by playing with her band, Rachel Lauren, which is entirely composed of Hunter students. "I am living my dream," she says.

'Saving Grace' Producer Found Inspiration at Hunter

Artie Mandelberg (BA '74) — who is executive producer of the popular new TV drama *Saving Grace* — credits Hunter College with getting him started on his road to success in Hollywood.

A communications major at Hunter, Mandelberg admits that he didn't have much of an idea of what he wanted to do with his life until he enrolled in a TV course here that wound up being a defining moment for him.

"I took communications because it sounded as good as anything else," he recalls. "I didn't really have a clear goal. I was driving a cab at night and went to school during the day. A lot of the film classes were taught at night, but the TV course was in the day. So I took that class, and it had a profound effect on me."

"The energy and the pace of it was an epiphany for me. They had a small studio in the building. I never saw that much energy. I found it intoxicating. It was great."

Today Mandelberg is the executive producer as well as the director of many episodes of *Saving Grace*, which stars Oscar-winning actress Holly Hunter as a dedicated but troubled police officer who needs salvation from an angel sent down by God. The show has been a ratings and critical hit on the TNT cable network, and has already been renewed for a second season. "Things are looking good," Mandelberg says.

Before that, Mandelberg worked as a producer and director on numerous TV shows, including *Moonlighting* with Bruce Willis and *Cybill* Shepherd in the '80s — where his career really took off for the first time. He has been nominated for many TV awards, but he says his favorite show was a Lifetime network production called *Any Day Now* with

Annie Potts. "It really was the first show to tackle the issue of race," he says. "It was on Lifetime so a lot of people didn't see it, but it's a show I'm incredibly proud of."

Mandelberg grew up in Brooklyn, the child of Holocaust survivors. His mother was from Czechoslovakia, his father from Poland — and they had survived 12 different concentration camps to come to America.

"I took a TV course at Hunter...it had a profound effect on me."

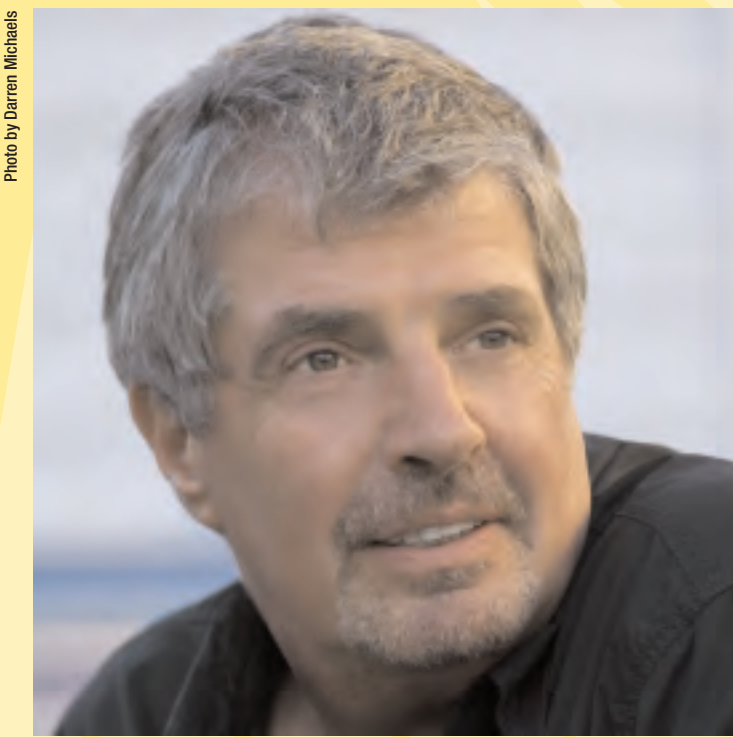
— Artie Mandelberg

At Hunter, Mandelberg concedes that at first he "wasn't a great student," but he was very active in athletics. "I played on the varsity baseball and basketball teams," he says. "I lived at home in the beginning and then moved into the city. I roomed there with another teammate on the baseball team, Bob Lettieri. We are friends to this day."

After graduating in January of '74, he got a job as a page at CBS in New York, then moved to California where he worked his way up the show business ladder.

He said he visited Hunter again recently and was amazed at how different everything was from the way he remembered. "The last time I was in New York about a year ago I took my 10-year-old daughter back to show her where I went to school," he laughs. "The size of the campus was enormous. Everything's changed."

He was reminded of his connection to Hunter again recently when he was interviewed by a writer for a feature



Artie Mandelberg

article in *Jewish Week* because of the enormous success of *Amazing Grace*. "Believe it or not, the writer of the article, Curt Schleier, turned out to be a Hunter graduate too," Mandelberg says. "As a matter of fact, he was the class president. Small world, huh?"

Does he have any advice for film and media students at Hunter who aspire to a career like his in television?

"It's a very tough business," Mandelberg said. "The best advice I can give anyone is to concentrate on material. If you can write, by all means write. If you can't write, then find great material and secure the rights to it. People are always waiting for someone to give them a break. If you can find the right material, you can really further your career."