

Leaders in State Regents Examinations Take Honors in Stride

By IVER PETERSON

The top winners in the annual Regents Scholarship examinations have been announced, and the state and city's high scorers are regarding their achievement with equanimity.

"It was fun," commented Anne Koenig of the Yeshiva of Flatbush—Joel Braverman High School—who tied with Michele Falkow of John Dewey High School, Brooklyn, for the highest girl's score in the city, with 272 of a possible 300.

"Like, I didn't really bother studying for it," she added, "and, I mean, being the top in the state of something doesn't really do anything but get your name in the paper."

Michele Falkow said. "I just never had much of a problem with standardized tests."

A Contest in 'Testmanship'

Jeffrey Shooker, an ebullient Bentley School senior who scored highest in New York City, with 282, said: "It was a contest in testmanship." But he seemed proud of himself.

Richard Schiefer of Schenectady, the top scorer statewide, with 287 right answers, reserved from his pride of first place the right to point out that the Regents examination was not child's play.

"Well," he said when he heard what some of the others were saying, "it wasn't all that easy. I had to guess at quite a few questions." He conceded, however, "I think the main reason that I came out first was luck."

Some 165,000 high school seniors across the state took the test this year for the 18,843 awards of \$250 that go to the winners, who are apportioned among the counties according to the number of high school graduates in each. The grants are good for use only in a college within New York State.

The examination is a day-long ordeal—"an endurance test," Jeffrey Shooker called it—of 300 true-false, fill-in-the-blanks, multiple-choice questions about history, mathematics, science, social studies and English.

The top winners in the city and the state seem to have in common a middle-class background of successful parents and a tra-

dition of scholarship. They take school seriously, but are not without outside interests.

Richard Schiefer, a sensible-sounding 17-year-old, is interested in journalism, creative writing and cave-exploring in the Helderberg Mountains, 20 miles south of his home in Schenectady. He is trying to start a literary journal at Niskayuna High School, but is not sure of its chances of seeing the light of day.

A Library Worker

After-school time that used to be spent playing soccer is now given over to working in the Schenectady Public Library. He works in the afternoons and evenings and gets a chance to "look at" books while putting them back on the shelves, but does not have much time to read them.

Laura Georgi, a senior at the Dryden Central School near Ithaca, got the highest

score for a girl in the state, with 284 correct answers. Her school principal describes Dryden as "a typical conservative upstate community," and Laura comes from a solidly academic family—a solidly Cornell University family, in fact.

Her father is a professor at the Veterinary College at Cornell, her older brother and sister are Cornell students.

Laura's tastes are varied: classics and biology. Asked if she did not think the subjects were fairly remote from each other, she replied simply, "The Greeks didn't think so."

As are about half of the other seniors at Dryden, Laura is headed for college next fall. Yes, she is going to Cornell.

Jeffrey Shooker might have been able to bring his top New York City score up another notch if he did not suspect one of the fill-in-the-

blank questions of ideological tendentiousness. "True ——— consists of giving others the right to make your own decision," he recalled the wording of the question. "I don't remember all of the possible answers, but two of them were 'democracy' and 'freedom,' I put down 'free-

dom' as a joke."

"The Regents exam wanted only single answers to the questions," he complained good-naturedly. "They asked you, 'What happened in 1786?' I'd much rather get one like that wrong than not

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know how to think about history."

Michele Falkow, the John Dewey High School senior, is interested in organic chemistry and she thinks that she is headed for a life of pure research. Past summers have already been spent in specialized biochemistry projects, but her idea is to have it all lead to work in broader fields.

"I'm just interested in everything," she said. "After all, all of the problems in the world have scientific aspects. But then, everything may be turned around when I get to college and maybe I'll major in something else."

Anne Koenig at the Yeshiva of Flatbush does not know about her career, and the Regents examinations already become confused in her mind with the College Boards she took for admission to either Princeton, Brandeis, Cornell or Barnard or maybe someplace else.

One sister is already at Yale. Her father is a certified public accountant with a law degree and her mother has two master's degrees, she said. The hardest parts about the Regents examination to Anne were the history and social studies sections—"I just guessed right through them."

"There was very little about understanding or anything like that in the test," Miss Koenig said. "It's mostly if you happen to know the answers to the ones that they ask that year, so there's a lot of chance involved. But that's what they're testing you on, and I don't really see how they can help it."

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Anne Koenig, left, and Michele Falkow, upper right, tied as top girl scorers in Regents exams in city. Jeffrey Shooker was high among boys here. Laura Georgi led state girls.

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