Save Darfur Now: Voices to Stop Genocide

By Anna Winwood

On the bright and sunny Sunday afternoon of September 17th, twenty-thousand New Yorkers gathered in Central Park’s East Meadow to demand the end of genocide that has reportedly claimed 400,000 lives and left 2.5 million displaced in an African country few Americans can find on a map.

The Central Park event was sponsored and coordinated by the “Save Darfur Coalition.” Based in Washington, D.C., it is an alliance of more than 170 faith based, humanitarian and human rights organizations.

The genocide taking place in Sudan is in a region called Darfur. Sudan is located directly south of Egypt, and northwest of Ethiopia. It is approximately the size of Texas. That so many New Yorkers came out to demand the end to the suffering in Darfur speaks volumes about the seriousness of the situation. The United Nations has declared it the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world today.

The violence began roughly three years ago when the non-Arab or African tribal groups looked for freedom revolted against the Sudanese government. In return, the ruling Islamic government gave orders to destroy all of the native people of Darfur. This mass slaughtering targeted men, women and children. The orders of the Sudanese government have been carried out by the Janjaweed militia, a primarily Islamic militia made up of African Arabs.

The rally in New York City was one of many that occurred globally on September 17th. Declared a worldwide day of action, there were 53 events in 37 countries. One of the rally themes was a call for U.N. intervention: participants were wearing blue hats to symbolize the need for U.N. peacekeepers to be on the ground in Darfur to stem the violence.

Those in attendance shared Central Park’s East Meadow with guest speakers, politicians and musical groups. Noteworthy among the politicians were Madeleine Albright, the former Secretary of State under President Bill Clinton.

Secretary Albright, the United States’ first female secretary of state, had some choice comments for the crowd. Citing America’s apparent reluctance to get involved in the internal politics of the Sudanese, she stated, “George Bush is not focusing on the rest of the world just on Iraq!” She also made it very clear that if there was oil in Darfur, she believes our president would be there. As Secretary Albright exited the stage she held her head high, energetically chanting with the crowd, “Save Darfur! The Time Is Now!”

United States 2006 Olympic gold medalist speed skater, Joey Cheek was also one of the speakers at the rally. He asked the crowd if it would be willing to spare 21,000 U.N. troops, the approximate number it would take to possibly put a stop to the genocide. In comparison, he noted that there are more than 140,000 American troops currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Cheek believes the fight to stop the genocide in Darfur is not just an American responsibility; it must be an international one. “It is apparent that the Sudanese government can not stop what is happening. Therefore, the rest of the world must step in,” he said.

One of the more emotional points of the day occurred during Academy Award winning actress Mira Sorvino’s speech. It was with tearful eyes that she spoke of drinking wells intentionally poisoned with dead bodies. Speaking of those in power in Sudan she explained, “The government should be like a family. It’s supposed to take care of their people and keep them safe. It is not supposed to kill and torture them.” In her closing, Ms. Sorvino begged, “Let the women of Darfur be mothers and the children be children.” Others who spoke at the rally were not as recognizable as Albright or Sorvino, but their message was just as important. Simon Deng, a former slave of the Sudanese government preached to the crowd “It is time to walk the walk, not talk the talk.” Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY), Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and David Rubenstein of the Save Darfur Coalition also took turns speaking to the crowd.

Musical performers included O.A.R., platinum duo Big & Rich, and the musical phenomenon O.A.R.

I had the opportunity to interview Jeff Kovick, a spokesperson for the Save Darfur Coalition. Stressing the importance of college students being actively involved, he explained, “College students have historically been active in progressive causes like this. It is very important that they recognize this as one of the most important issues of their day.”

While it was suggested that students can and should call their elected representatives in the Congress, there are two websites for people who are interested in taking part in stopping the genocide: the Save Darfur Coalition at www.savedarfur.org, and the STAND (Students Taking Action Now; Darfur) website at www.standnow.org.
Queensborough Communiqué, October 2006

EDITORIALS

These editorials represent the opinion of the Editorial Board of Communiqué, which is solely responsible for its contents. These are not necessarily the views of the Queensborough Community College administration and staff. Communiqué welcomes any letters or editorials for the population of QCC. Submit work to Communiqué, H-428. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit letters for spatial needs and grammatical accuracy.

To Be or Not to Be Present in Class?

BY TRISHA RAMDHIAL

A question that I would like to pose to the students, faculty and staff of QCC for debate is whether or not it is important to be present in class? Now, I wouldn’t recommend missing half a semester’s worth of classes, but why is it that we are limited to approximately four absences per class and why is it that teachers have the authority to fail or love students based upon attendance? Shouldn’t the grades received for one’s work in class determine the final course grade one receives rather than one’s attendance record?

There are many sides to this argument. One side can argue that grades are more important than attendance. With certain classes, teachers are explaining to students’ things they may already know and understand. Oftentimes, the class is intended merely as prep time for tests. If you are doing very well on all of your tests, participating in class when present, and understanding the work, why do you have to come to every class session? When the teacher is explaining work you already know, why do you have to use your time waiting for the rest of the students to catch up?

Another side of the debate is the argument that requiring attendance teaches students how to apply this behavior to the workplace, and to act responsibly in the so-called real world. There’s also the risk that without an attendance requirement the percentage of students failing classes would increase, and that absences are highly disruptive to other students who do attend classes on a regular basis. By being present in class, you can practice the work which increases your abilities and understanding in the subject. The crux of this argument is that college students are responsible for their own actions. Attending college is an option and if a student wants to do well she will commit herself. If you don’t understand a subject, you should take the responsibility upon yourself to attend class and learn it. Students have to experience the consequences for their actions, whether positive or negative. However, students should not be failed because of their attendance record.

The CUNY guidelines for academic institutions are similarly applied to all CUNY colleges. One of the CUNY schools, City College of New York, published its reasons for an attendance policy. The primary reason why attendance is given such high priority is because the college is committed to maintaining an institution of the highest academic integrity. In order to keep that integrity, it depends in part upon the student’s full participation in all aspects of the curriculum:

Your time in class is valuable and irreplaceable. It is your only chance to interact with your instructor and your fellow students. It is your only chance to be involved in learning activities that cannot be replicated out of class… You are allowed two weeks of absence because it is understood that unanticipated things occasionally happen such as illness or family emergencies. It is unfortunate to miss even that number of classes, but we understand that such unanticipated realities of life are not usually under your control. Lateness also cuts into valuable class time, and most instructors will count late arrival, late return from breaks and early departures as partial absences.

The above statement represents City University’s reasoning for its attendance policy; however, is it one that is justified? Should there be a mandated attendance policy for college students or should the decision to be or not to be in class be left to the student’s discretion? Should students be allowed more absences without penalties?

Approaching QCC students on campus about the above questions, a majority of the 25 students interviewed answered that they would prefer to not have an attendance policy, but if one must be instated it should allow more absences. The students shared their thoughts on the topic and had a lot of questions about how class grades would be determined without an attendance policy. The most popular questions follow, with answers representing my personal perspective on this issue:

What happened if a majority of students don’t show up?

It’s all up to the students. If the students are doing well on exams and homework and prove it during the sessions they do attend, then I don’t see a problem with them not coming to class. If the students make the wrong decisions and are doing poorly in class, and as understanding the work was their responsibility but they didn’t make it a high priority, then they have decided to fail. College is optional. If a student decides to attend college, they should be able to decide whether or not they need to attend class sessions.

How will students know when to come to class for exams?

It’s not hard for students to be informed of important dates. We have Tigermail, a syllabus, and office hours for professors. If there’s a change in the syllabus, the teachers might inform students of the change.

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

BY MICHAEL VILLACRES

Liars, lies, deceivers, deceit, manipulators, and manipulation. From the mid-1990s to the present, critics of journalism and journalists themselves have called into question the practice, if any, of ethics in journalism. Whether it is the press, broadcast or internet journalism, critics have called for a return to higher standards only made possible by following journalism’s professional code of ethics. How can reporters, as messengers of the good and the bad, as story tellers, be trusted if they do not report the truth? If they fail. College is optional. If a student decides to attend college, they should be able to decide whether or not they need to attend class sessions.

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Interracial Relationships

By Danielle Morganstern

Interracial relationships, since the late 60’s, have gained popularity in our generation, opening our minds and hearts to new, exciting, and different ways that we socialize with each other. The point of having a different perspective, from two different backgrounds, has brought a new sense of awareness, giving us such phrases as “Love is Colorblind,” and “Love Knows No Bias.” No matter which way you look at it, interracial relationships have become an almost acceptable, tolerated, and sometimes welcomed part of American society, perhaps especially in New York City. No matter what borough you may come from, or the neighborhood that you reside in, romantic unions of mixed races are celebrated the two ways.

For me, being in an interracial relationship has opened my eyes to the matter of race, and how my family, friends, and I have felt about it. Before meeting my boyfriend, I had primarily dated “white guys,” and had never considered dating outside of my race. However, once I met Gabriel, my opinions changed drastically. Being in an interracial relationship has helped end the stereotype about different races that had over the years slowly taken root in my mind. I realize now, that the biggest mistake that we, as human beings make, is judging people based upon perceived differences.

When I met Gabriel, way back in 2004, when I was sixteen, and he was eighteen. I never expected to fall in love with someone of Hispanic heritage. He comes from a beautiful Puerto Rican family in the Bronx, whereas I come from a lovely family of German descent from Queens. The divergence’s in our family’s lives that we have experienced are overshadowed by the strong love that continuously grows between us: How can I possibly run away from him, or anyone, by the language that he speaks, the music that his family plays, or the food that is served in his home? Although his culture may be different than mine, everything that I learn from him builds up my own identity.

Gabriel, who attends Queensborough Community College with me, says that, “I have an opportunity about it from a good friend who told me to check it out. And I have friends that are MySpace crazy; a family barbecue this past summer a friend was on MySpace from 10pm to 5am. I asked what he could have possibly been doing for that long and he told me, “I’m addicted to MySpace. I have change my profile everyday so I can get more friends.” Janelle Wong interviewed Rada Ivanov from San Francisco who said, “You start to get addicted, and it’s almost like voyeurism. You want to see what everyone is doing, what kind of new pictures they have put up and you just can’t stop.”

There are some people who feel MySpace isn’t addictive at all, a friend of mine says, “I’m not addicted to MySpace. I just go on to keep in touch with people I grew up with and also to check my mail.” I call that the “daily routine.” I have asked numerous people who have a MySpace profile, “Is MySpace addictive?”

There has been comments have ranged from “At first,” or “No, it’s just something new to do, sort of a fad for the moment kind of thing.” Still, I have observed friends arguing: “Why didn’t you leave me a comment?”

Here are five ways to ascertain if you are a MySpace addict:
1) You go on MySpace two or more times a day.
2) You change your background page and pictures every week.

MySpace: A Daily Routine or Pure Addiction

BY MICHAEL EDWARDS

With an ABC7 news article of November 2005, “Online Social Network An Undisputed Giant,” reporter Janelle Wong filed one of the first mainstream news reports on the phenomenon known as MySpace: “MySpace is a free website where members sign on to see and be seen. Users create their own elaborate pages called profiles with as much intimate detail as they want to share. All you have to do is click on their picture to learn about their life.” MySpace is a network created for people to visit with friends, find romantic relationships, and also to meet and chat with new people. By now, many of you have heard of MySpace and possibly have your own MySpace account. If you are a teen or in your twenties MySpace is the place to be. If you didn’t think MySpace was popular, Ms. Wong reported last November that it got more views a day than Google or America Online. Today, MySpace is also about revenue streams. For example, a new cell phone called the “Helio” offers MySpace Mobile where you can sign on to MySpace direct from your cell phone. The Helio/MySpace package (with 1000 minutes, and free nights and weekends) will cost you around $800.

Wong has reported MySpace celebrated its second anniversary in 2005 with a sold out concert in Los Angeles. The bands that played had good reason to be as more than 500,000 bands and performers are now using MySpace to promote themselves. I also have a MySpace account; I heard comics part of American society, perhaps especially in New York City houses one of the world’s biggest proverbial melting pots. Everywhere you look, on campus, on the street, in your neighborhood there is a diverse mixture of the peoples of the world. We have to know how other people of my generation felt about interracial relationships, whether they were in one or not, and their opinion as to whether or not society has become more open to mixed couples. I spoke to Giselle Castro, 18, who attends St. John’s University. She is of Peruvian and Colombian descent, and feels very open to interracial relationships. "I’m fine with it. As long as the guy and I are compatible, I have no problems with him looking different from me."

While on St. John’s University campus, I noticed an interracial couple, Frankie Grima, 23, who is Maltese, and his girlfriend, Stephanie Poonar, 20, who is Guyanese. I asked them what their lives are like being in an interracial relationship. “It’s something different. It’s a new perspective, and it can be even more diverse between couples of different races. However, it’s hard to say that much has changed since that date in 1967. Many people still base their judgment of people on skin color, class, culture, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation and not on the content of an individual’s character.

Maya Pearson-Faust, 21, who currently attends Queens College, is African American, and her fiancé is Italian. I asked her if she thinks society is more accepting of mixed relationships. "I don’t think so. Because we still get dirty looks when we are together, walking around. [They] look at us in a club, of if I go to a restaurant where I’m the only black person there. People stare, but it doesn’t bother me. People need to understand it’s 2006.” Mike, 23, a senior at St. John’s University, is half African American, and half Caucasian. His girlfriend’s race is African American. He is passionate in arguing against the biases people hold regarding those who date outside of their race. “They think that people should stick to their own kind. They don’t want to be ‘contaminated’ by another race.” He felt that despite race, “Loving and caring for the other person” is his biggest reward in his relationship.

However, sometimes it’s not bigotry that affect’s people’s opinions on interracial relationships. Angelisa Persaud, 18, who also attends St. John’s University, cannot date outside of her ethnic nicity of Indo-Caribbean due to her parent’s strict views of tradition. “They wouldn’t accept it at all. Although I do find my race and other races attractive, I have to tell myself to stop because our traditions are too strict. Besides, he would have a very hard time adjusting to my culture and Hindu religion.” Josephine Tsang, 18, who attends Queens College, is Chinese. He brought up the issue of a language barrier. “My dad would prefer someone Chinese because he doesn’t speak English. I also find more in common with someone of my own race.”

As does everything in life, an interracial relationship has its ups and downs. But regardless of

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Queensborough Community College Music Society

Come Join Us!!! Wednesdays Humanities Building Room 10-110 1pm – 3pm

Musicians _ Photographers _ Dee Jays _ Promoters _ Designers _ Recording Engineers _ Writers _ You

3) You add friends to compete with friends to see who has the most friends.
4) You shake your head in disgust when someone says, “I don’t have a MySpace.”
5) You take pictures in a mirror to put on your MySpace profile.

So tell me, are you addicted to MySpace?
Steroids: Uses other than Performance Enhancement

By RAYMOND DENLA

Have you ever known a person who has gained massive muscle mass within two months or less? This person is most likely on steroids.

Everybody knows about steroids and if you follow sports, you know who is taking steroids in a specific professional sport. Barry Bonds from the San Francisco Giants and Floyd Landis the professional bicyclist who recently won the Tour De France have both been publicly identified as abusers of steroids.

Sports players and bodybuilders, however, aren’t the only ones to use steroids; young people who have no athletic aspirations are beginning to take steroids, not because they are in a competitive field but to improve upon their physical appearance.

Everybody wants a good appearance; if anyone disagrees with that idea they’re most likely lying or unhappy with their own appearance. Many people take the natural path of a high protein diet and daily exercise to achieve a good looking appearance. Others use steroids and cheat their way to a better look. Androgenic Anabolic Steroids, for example, give you a muscular look.

Dr. Anna-M. Wroblewska, in an article published in 2004 by Roberta K. Glassner, Esq., two young girls tried to sue McDonald’s for their rapid weight gain and health related problems. One of the plaintiffs, Jazlyn, who was 19 years old, weighed 270 pounds at 5’6. Her diet consisted of eating McDonald’s twice a day. She ate an Egg McMuffin for breakfast and a Big Mac. Super Sized fries and an apple pie for dinner. The other girl, Ashley, was 14 years old who was 4’10 and weighed 170 pounds. She ate McDonald’s happy meals every chance she could get. Together they charged McDonald’s for “misleading advertising”, “deceptive advertising”, and “not providing nutritional and fat information”. Samuel Hirsh represented Jazlyn and Ashley in their case against McDonald’s; he stated that McDonald’s produced advertisement that forced children into over eating fast food through peer pressure.

McDonald’s attorney Anne G. Kimball countered with “People don’t go to sleep thin, and wake up obese”. In the end, the judge ruled in favor of McDonald’s because Judge Sweet decided Jazlyn and Ashley did not provide enough information to connect Mc Donald’s to their recent weight gain.

A number of people also criticize McDonald’s for their targeted advertisement. According to a recent 2006 MSNbc.com article, efforts to help obese children are floundering: “One in five children are predicted to be obese by the end of the decade.” McDonald’s targets children in their advertisements, luring them to the nearest Mc Donald’s. In 2001 McDonald’s had spent a total of 1.4 billion dollars on their advertisement, spent directly on media advertising.

A survey of American school children also found that 96% could identify Ronald McDonald; “The only fictional character with a higher degree of recognition was Santa Claus,” states Eric Schlosser author of Fast Food Nation.

Delving into the obesity problem, Super Size Me was a documentary that showed the dangers of eating McDonald’s. Morgan Spurlock was the man that took the challenge, eating McDonald’s for 30 days straight to see the impact McDonald’s food would have on you. Interestingly, while on this project he found that many Americans ate McDonald’s more than twice a week. Spurlock’s began his project at 185 pounds with 11% body fat; at the end of his thirty day McDonald’s splurge he weighed 210 pounds with 18% body fat. When eating this food he felt that it was addictive, without it he would often get headaches and felt his craving increasing everyday.

Blaming McDonald’s for being overweight is a decision that you would have to make for yourself. The facts are there, but there is a health risk that follows. Don’t blame a corporation for the weight gain that one could have avoided. Blame the individual that goes to McDonald’s.

By TIFFANY SEARBOOK

Eating at fast food restaurants has been an integral part of American’s lifestyle for decades. Fast food restaurants are everywhere, and are convenient when you want something to eat right then and there, but there is a health risk that attends a fast-food diet. McDonald’s, for example, is a worldwide corporation known for its Big Macs, Happy meals, fries and shakes. In New York City alone, there are over 80 conveniently located McDonald’s. Many Americans who have gained weight eating McDonald’s hamburgers and fries have blamed the corporation for their weight gain, but, they are not the only ones to blame! Is McDonald’s along with other fast-food chains, responsible for America’s obesity problem, or is it the individual consumer that should be held accountable?

The McDonald’s corporation spends a vast fortune on media advertising. Advertisement is important to McDonald’s because it’s what convinces people to come in and try out the different variety of meals. In addition, it seems impossible to walk around the city without running into a McDonald’s, many of which are open 24 hours. But just how responsible is McDonald’s for the growing epidemic of obesity sweeping the nation? When entering a Mc Donald’s, for example, you are confronted with a nutritional fact sheet with information on all the food items being served, and you also can obtain information on what ingredients are in the meals. Not even McDonald’s hides the fact that its food is not the healthiest thing to eat, so why blame it for the individual’s bad eating habits?

Americans today tend to blame others for their actions, rather than looking within themselves. Many just have no will power and feel that their actions, rather than looking within themselves, are to blame for their obesity. Many just have no will power and feel that their actions, rather than looking within themselves, are to blame for their obesity.

For the people that go to the gym, they will come away from it feeling that easy. A person suddenly discontinuing steroids and decide to quit right now, it won’t be that easy. A person suddenly discontinuing steroids will lose their mass that they have gained in rapid time. Skin does not stick to the muscles anymore, and it will come away from the muscles quickly, so a person discontinuing steroids will have sagging skin. The side effects are very scary, but even scarier when you are younger because the younger you are, the more it will affect you.

They say that they will take a little, but they never do that because they get addicted. Being young and taking steroids is a big risk, especially for a cosmetic look. Dr. Anna-M. Wroblewska states that there are downsides of taking steroids that affect you physically and mentally. When you take steroids, only the muscle is affected for growth. The tendons and bones can be badly damaged due to an overload to the musculoskeletal systems. Also when someone takes steroids, this person tends to be more violent and aggressive.

Many use the term “roid rage” to describe this. Other bad side affects are hallucinations and depression. If you’re reading this and taking steroids and decide to quit right now, it won’t be that easy. A person suddenly discontinuing steroids will lose their mass that they have gained in rapid time. Skin does not stick to the muscles anymore, and it will come away from the muscles quickly, so a person discontinuing steroids will have sagging skin. The side effects are very scary, but even scarier when you are younger because the younger you are, the more it will affect you.

There are more and more steroid users every year, plenty of them being teenagers. By taking this risk of using steroids they would be sacrificing well-being for muscular looks. This is a problem that probably won’t go away because steroids are banned in the United States and you cannot buy a product or substance even more than it is. If you want a better appearance, do it the hard way because it will pay off in the end. Steroids have bad side effects when being used long term.
What Exactly is Ramadan?

BY IREFAN FARMAN

When Holidays are thought of most people think of Christmas, Easter, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, and even Kwanzaa, which is a holiday one hears more about than Ramadan. Ramadan is the most “obscure” holiday in America, the mysterious holiday you have heard of but don’t know any details about. It is an unknown perhaps “forgotten” holiday many people in America are completely ignorant of; however, as more Muslims become further integrated into the fabric of American society, it becomes more important to understand what Ramadan is.

Growing up as a Muslim child in the United States the time of the year that seemed most confusing and alienating could be the Christmas holiday season. The time of sharing gifts, drinking eggnog, surrounded by children’s joy and laughter, and getting together with the family, not to mention Santa Claus, was something I could not revel in, being Muslim. I remember all my friends in school bragging about what they were getting for Christmas, while I kept quiet and was grateful to be receiving a vacation for a holiday I didn’t celebrate. Something I failed to realize as a child was that as a Muslim I had my own holiday, Ramadan.

Though it is not a holiday in the sense of Christmas, or Easter, the holy month of Ramadan is a time of intense prayer and serious self-reflection. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, which uses a lunar calendar that marks the new month with the sighting of a new moon. Because a lunar calendar is about 10 to 11 days shorter than a solar calendar, Ramadan shifts to different months and days every year, so unlike Christmas, there is no fixed day Ramadan begins. The word “Ramadan” is a derivative of an Arabic word ramuda or ar-ramad, which means scorching heat and dryness. Celebrated by over a billion people all over the world, and some 8 to 10 million people in the United States, Ramadan is definitely a holiday observed by more than a handful of people. It is a holiday, or I should say a month of serious prayer and religious contemplation, that practices and embraces prayer, fasting, and charity, and unlike its Jewish and Christian counterparts, it is a holiday that is yet to be compromised by the commerciality of holidays in the present, and retains its faith and submission to God. Not to take anything away from any other religion or holiday, it’s just that you are not likely to find Ramadan hats, plates, or cards in a Hallmark store. It is believed by Muslims that in 610 A.D., in the month of Ramadan, God revealed the first passages of the Qur’an to the prophet Muhammad. Muhammad had been wandering the desert pondering his faith when in Mecca, which is located in Saudi Arabia, the voice of the angel Gabriel spoke to him, revealing that God had chosen him to receive his word. Within days of his revelation, Muhammad found himself reciting several verses of the Qur’an.

Perhaps the most significant thing about Ramadan is the fast that Muslims keep, also known as Sawm, which is Arabic for “fast”. No eating, drinking, smoking, or sexual activity is permitted during the fast between dawn and sunset, and any feelings or thoughts of violence, lust, greed, anger, gossip, or envy is to be refrained from. To be able to fast you need to be 12 years old and older, partly why as a kid I knew next to nothing about Ramadan. Before sunrise Muslims are allowed to eat something when they get together for Suhoor, which is a meal eaten before sunrise, and they are able to break that fast with Iftar, which is the meal that is eaten after sunset. The breaking of the fast at sunset is usually broken with fresh fruits, sweet drinks, and most notably sugar dates. The sugar date was what the Prophet Muhammad broke his first fast with, and ever since then Muslims everywhere have been breaking their fasts with dates. The end of Ramadan is marked with Eid ul-fitr, the word fitr means to break in Arabic, and signifies not only the breaking of the fast, but is symbolic as it is also the breaking of all evil habits and deeds. In the morning Muslim families attend special morning prayers in large gatherings, areas such as mosques, stadiums, arenas, or any open areas. A special prayer is said in the mosques, which is the Takbir. These prayers, along with the Eid holiday are all dependent on the sighting of the moon on the eve of the last day of Ramadan. Usually after morning prayers families visit friends and relatives, have dinner together, and even exchange gifts. The very first Eid was celebrated by the Prophet Muhammad, his relatives, followers, and companions in 624 CE after the Battle of Badr.

Fasting is both important and necessary for Muslims, it is one of the five pillars of Islam, the continued on page 6
Have you noticed how expensive college textbooks are this semester? I am pretty sure that most students have asked this question every semester. While it is difficult to understand the exorbitant cost of textbooks it is important to understand why costs have risen, and if possible to find ways to make them more affordable.

Studies of the high cost of college textbooks by the State Public Interest Research Group, the National Association of College Stores, and We-Publish.com, among other institutions, have pinpointed a number of factors that contribute to the rise in cost. One of the most important factors is the spiraling pattern of inflation that we have been living with the past several years. Another major factor is that many small publishing companies are buying or merging with others. The monopoly that some big companies have has decreased the overall competition in the textbook market. In economics we know that if there is a consumer there will always be a demand. The larger companies take full advantage of their market share, extracting from their consumer base as much profit as possible. One more explanation for the increase in prices of the textbooks is that most of the books have to be updated on a regular basis, with new editions being marketed even when some new versions of old textbooks have only a few paragraph changes or minor variations from one chapter to another. Any one of the above reasons can raise the price of a textbook, and when all factors are at play at the same time the rise in prices really begins to hurt.

The first thing that one needs to know is that many of the books available through the campus bookstore are overpriced. For example, if News Reporting and Writing is priced at $73.35 in the campus store, why not shop at Amazon.com where the same book could be purchased for $45.25 – a significant saving.

Textbooks are available on the internet through several different websites, as well as from traditional bookstores like The Strand in New York City, which sells every book in the store (all 18 miles of them) at discounted and sale prices. In addition, many textbooks are used again and again every semester. Students are better off talking with friends that have already taken a course and either borrowing or buying used textbooks from another one. One of my classmates, Lorena, acquired her Italian class textbook in that way. It is also a very good idea to find out prior to the start of the semester what books your classmates, Lorena, acquired her Italian class textbook in that way. It is also a very good idea to find out prior to the start of the semester what books you are going to need. In this way you can purchase them in advance, and save yourself time and money.

Textbooks are not the only things that are becoming increasingly expensive; tuition and the price of books are part of the rising cost. It is important to spend wisely so that you can have your textbooks when you need them, and not after assignments have already been handed out. What every student knows is that textbooks will be required every semester, and sometimes only a third of the required texts are used in class! When it comes to purchasing college textbooks it doesn’t pay to be penny-wise and pound foolish. Do your research – you might save enough to afford a nice night out on the town!

Looking for Parking at QCC

By Nasratullah Mir

The day I came to register at Queensborough Community College, I couldn’t find any place to park my car on the near-by streets. At that time I thought that maybe next time I could park my car on campus, but I soon realized that this would be impossible. From the day that I enrolled on January 6, 2005 up to the present, October 2006, I have found it to be nearly impossible to find convenient parking at QCC. On more than one occasion, I have had to park my car one mile from the campus, which is why I am sometimes late to class. I have noticed that nearly every student has a similar problem with parking. And when there is bad weather it is almost impossible to make it to class on time. To further exacerbate the problem, many streets in the surrounding neighborhood also have limited parking times and much of the available parking space is in front of garages. According to the campus security officers, most of the parking space on campus is reserved for faculty and staff members only, which means there are few parking spots for students inside the campus.

I have interviewed a professor, and a student in regard to the issue of student parking at QCC. Professor Laura Freedgood said, “The parking situation for some students on this campus is woefully inadequate. There are clearly not enough parking spaces for the number of students who need them. I say this because 1) I see cars lined up outside of parking lots, waiting for what seems to be a long time to get in, and 2) students often come to my classes late because they were waiting to find parking”. A QCC student, Nhora Beltran, says that, “I always have problems looking for parking. I have to park my car 7 or 8 blocks away from the college.” Nhora believes that the college must pay further attention to and solve this matter so that prospective students, who do not rely on public transportation, are not discouraged from attending QCC.

Ellen F. Hartigan, Vice President for Student Affairs, has been sympathetic to student concerns regarding parking and likes the idea that QCC consider construction of a parking garage. However, the Vice President explained the extremely long process necessary for Queensborough Community College to seek approval and funding for such a project.

As we know, each year the number of new students entering CUNY increases and the available parking space decreases accordingly. Most college parking areas express spaces. QCC is a very respectable college and it is close to many other schools and institutions. These institutions, however, also take up public parking spaces. What I suggest is that QCC build underground parking lots or a parking building. The college should charge a small fee for parking which would increase the school’s revenue. In response to my proposal, Dr. Freedgood states that, “Certainly building a garage exclusively for students would alleviate this problem.” Developing further space for student parking would help pay for the expenses of the school and it would help the students immensely.

Ramadan

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others being prayer 5 times a day (Salat), declaration of faith (Shahada), charity (Zakat), and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). It also creates a feeling of empathy towards those without food or drink, and reinforces the suffering and plight of the poor, while at the same time gives praise, glory, and total submission to God. Ramadan is more than a holiday; it is a time that Muslims everywhere begin to understand why we must seek approval and funding for such a project.

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The Youth Vote

Out of the nearly 300 million people in the US, 15% of all eligible voters are between the ages of 18 and 25. That’s almost 30 million votes! Yet less than half those numbers are registered to vote, and even less cast a ballot every year — creating a vacuum that may decisively influence legislation to cut tuition costs. Now ask yourself this: would you vote if doing so could eventually save you thousands of dollars?

College costs have soared over the last decade, with state governments cutting college budgets and student aid, forcing tuitions to rise and families to take out larger loans; as a result, student debt has nearly doubled over the same period. Will you be one of the nearly 40% of college graduates that find themselves with a big federal loan to pay back after they graduate?

And it’s not getting any better: this past July, Congress approved yet another interest rate increase, raising almost two points from 4.75% to 6.54%, a change certainly better suited for banks than college students. So why are we, the would-be educated, the college age population, being shoved into a corner? It’s simple: political analysts, the ones who tell politicians where to spend their time and money campaigning, often overlook or just outright ignore the youth population — because year after year, election after election, not enough of us vote.

Take a look at the senior citizens for a moment: every year they come out to vote in droves, maybe because they don’t have much else to do, but because they yourself politicians dare not mess with Medicare or Medicaid. By comparison, the 18-25 age group is woefully underrepresented.

But not all hope is lost: in the 2004 Presidential Election, the youth had the biggest turnout since we first earned the right to vote in 1971; and it’s particularly important for us to continue the trend this year, as the result of the upcoming election can affect many of us directly.

One of the important issues being debated is HR 5319, a.k.a. the “Deleting Online Predators Act of 2006.” This Act, if passed, would effectively ban all chat and social networking websites (MySpace, Friendster, Facebook, AIM, etc.) in public schools and libraries. Students are bound to have differing opinions regarding this, so let your voice be heard, because as of this writing Congress has yet to hear testimony from anyone under the age of 30 regarding a law designed to protect the youth!

And another, more financially important piece of legislation is HR 5150, the “Reverse the Raid on Student Aid Act of 2006.” If passed, interest rates on student loans would be cut in half — the typical student borrower, $17,500 in debt, would instantly save over $5,000 in interest!

Finally, as you read these words the gubernatorial election is fast approaching, with all three candidates bringing different ideas about taxes and school budget reform that will affect college students directly. Democrat Spitzer promises to invest more in SUNY/CUNY and to lower tuition; Republican Gosar wants to simplify the school funding formula and raise educator quality; Libertarian John Clifton wants to eliminate taxes: income, sales, and everything else, completely. As you can see each of these candidates stand by very different ideals, and it is crucial for us to get out and vote for those who support the most.

If you still haven’t found your reason to vote, then I must urge you again, because every vote counts! The fiasco in Florida during the 2000 Presidential Election (where Bush beat Gore by less than 600 votes) demonstrates just how important each vote is. Remember that because college-aged people don’t vote, they don’t get the benefits they deserve. Remember that it is people your age risking their necks in Iraq — yet most of us don’t even bother casting the vote that might bring them home. Even if you’re interested in politics, even if you don’t care about the world around you, cast your vote for the good of others; after all, it is a right our forefathers earned in blood.

As Kahlil Gibran once said, “Safeguarding the rights of others is the most noble and beautiful end of a human being.” In this case, the only end you have to be concerned about is the line in front of a voting machine.

Journalistic Ethics

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Tracey for possibly crossing the “ethical line that keeps reporters independent from the government.” “To the extent he is acting as a journalist, he should abide by the ethical norms guiding that profession,” said Erik Ugland, an assistant professor at Marquette University and head of the Media Ethics Division for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, in an article available at CNIEWS.CANOE.CA.

Professor Tracey is not the only member of the journalist community to come under fire for appearing to cross the line between watching events and getting involved in them. The host of Dateline NBC has also been criticized for the shows latest series about catching pedophiles. Basically, the show’s host and producers meet the pedophiles in online chat rooms, once they are sure of the person’s intentions they give the address to a cameraladen house where the host waits for them to show. Once they enter the house he confronts the pedophile about his intentions, then the police make their arrest. But, from the standpoint of journalism’s professional code of ethics, did Dateline, and the host, go too far by placing themselves in the story? Why didn’t they just observe the police making the arrest, such as on the infamous show COPS? Have they crossed from being observers to enablers / players on the show? I’ve heard of the fashion police but is Dateline acting like the press police or is it the police press?

Most of us think that newspapers print whatever the writers want. According to an article in the British Medical Journal, editors are the ones who pick and choose what goes into print. “We wanted to publish...” is what the editor wrote in regard to a new medical study involving blood veins. The editor goes on to say that they wanted to publish an editorial by an independent expert. Only that the opinion was too independent to publish so they moved the expert’s piece to the Education section instead. To keep journalists true to the code of ethics newspapers use editors to enforce the ethical principles of both the profession and the particular media outlet. “Editors try to think ethically,” bold words from the editor of BMJ.

Is it as hard to find an ethical reporter as it is to find Mr. Right? Trust is earned, and then given after that. All doctors, service providers, and policemen women take an oath that they live by a code of conduct. The President of the United States of America has to take an oath when he or she takes the public office. If a journalist tells the public that the tooth fairy is on strike, should we believe her, just because she said so?

Resources:
www.electclifton.org/eco Tell your representative what you think about HR 5319
http://tomallen.house.gov/article.asp?id=714 Interesting facts about HR 5150
www.mobilize.org/sos Tell your representative what you think about HR 5319
Resources:
Republican Faso wants to simplify the school funding formula and raise education quality; Libertarian John Clifton wants to eliminate taxes: income, sales, and everything else, completely. As you can see each of these candidates stand by very different ideals, and it is crucial for us to get out and vote for those who support the most.

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May 24th, 2006. A seemingly regular Wednesday until the sun gets low and people nationwide get ready for the SHOW. American Idol. The season finale, Taylor Hicks vs. Katharine McPhee, not a Tuesday Night Fights boxing match with two competitors going toe to toe, sending bruising blows to each others head and body, but “real” people who get the nation’s spotlight. Taylor Hicks won the honor of being named Season 5’s American Idol after having the majority of a 63 million vote tally that Wednesday night. Of course, that number excludes votes that were lost or texts that could not make it in time considering the huge voter response for this spectacular event. Fortunately, America was able to go to sleep knowing who their new American Idol was for the year 2006.

Reality television is a phenomenon that has been around since the late 1940s. Candid Camera, a show that has made several reappearances decades after its original conception, is considered by many to be the first “reality” TV show. More recently, such shows as Cops, Real World, Survivor and Road Rules made reality TV a successful investment for the television industry. So, what is the real attraction of reality TV? One theory is that people like connecting to something “real” when they watch television and not something “fake”. Another theory is that people enjoy the experience of voyeurism, seeking of sexual stimulation by watching others, which reality television provides. These are both very debatable arguments but there is no questioning the popularity of reality shows and the growing trend of new shows being produced due to the consistent success of this TV genre.

As of late, however, people have started to grow disinterested in reality TV shows due to the predictability of the characters and outcome of certain shows. Older reality TV shows like Survivor have needed to come up with new ideas in order to keep audiences. This year Survivor has a new format with 20 contestants divided into four teams: the African-American, Asian, Caucasian and Hispanic tribes. Some critics fearing that television itself is a potentially negative influence on our society are concerned that this new format risks furthering racial and ethnic stereotypes, and that to see a certain teams win or lose may reiterate the idea that one race is better than another. Another thing that’s disturbing to the critics of the new Survivor show is that the public overall has not reacted negatively to the show’s new format. On the contrary, many fans of the show agree that it should have as many ethnicities represented. American Idol has been around for just five seasons so far but events like the Oscars and the Super Bowl have been on for decades. Also, during the regular season, American Idol usually charges about $500,000 to $700,000 for 30 second commercial airings during their shows. Now, the Winter Olympics this year competed with American Idol for ad time, and lost badly. American Idol had 63% more viewer ratings during the nights they aired when the Olympics played during their time slots. All of this would not be possible without such a strong fan base as the one American Idol surely has now being not only one the top reality TV shows but being rated as two of the most popular shows, their Tuesday and Wednesday shows count separately, held the first and second spot for the 2005-2006 season with a combined viewer rating of over 60 million. So, has American Idol been just as reciprocating to their loyal viewers?

There is an on going debate on whether or not television itself is a potentially satisfying to see these “real” guys and girls going out meeting the love of their life while you are at home on your couch? When did it become so satisfying to watch other people do the things you should have more enjoyment doing for yourself? Television allows for people to see the world and the things going on in it. When did the world lose its substance and the only world people want to see is Reality TV?

And What a B’day it is!

By Jillian Guests

Is anything impossible for the R&B artist Beyonce? The former Destiny’s Child member took the world by storm with the release of her solo debut album in 2003, Dangerously in Love. The album sold over 6 million copies worldwide, launching Beyonce’s solo career. She also hit the big screen costarring in the hit movies Dreamgirls and Goldmember (2002) and The Pink Panther (2006). Her next film which is set to hit the movie theatres in G, Beyonce released (2002) and S. C. as the show might portray it to be.

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Queensborough Communique, October 2006
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Samuel L. Jackson Gets Snaked

BY BRAD COLOMBI


This summer a bunch of snakes slithered into theaters, with hype up the whazoo. Snakes on a Plane, the TV and bus shelter trailer that was receiving the royalty treatment most mega-hyped movies get, and seemed all set to be the summer’s memorable blockbuster. But it takes a little more than a bunch of potential belts and handbags with venomous fangs piloted into a plane to get a place in the hallowed halls of movie goodness.

This horror/thriller/comedy is about one thing: snakes on a plane. If you’ve read the title, you’ve probably seen it. But you’re also missing out on some of the fun this movie has to offer, and plenty of the bad.

Snakes starts off with a simple plot in mind: Some no-brain motocross hooligan, named Sean Combs, played by no-name new comer Nathan Phillips, witnesses a Yakusa mob hit and soon meets up with FBI detective Neville Flynn, who offers to take him to Los Angeles to testify in court against one of the crime syndicate’s bosses in a murder case.

After agreeing to go to court, Jackson and the motocross moron board a plane to their destination, but the baddies are one step ahead of them. They plant deadly snakes in the cargo hold and program an explosion device to explode 2-hours into the flight and unleash the snakes from their prisons upon the unsuspecting passengers. But here’s an interesting twist: the snakes have been exposed to pheromones, which were sprayed on the flowers given to the passengers, leading them to believe its mating season, and these snakes are not just vicious, but they’re sex-driven insane snakes! And all this is done to eliminate one man, the witness, mind you.

These big, bad Asian mobsters were able to smuggle a small, minimally powerful explosive device aboard the plane, that would only blow up the containers that held the snakes. So why not just have an explosion device that could just blow up the whole plane, and forget about the snakes? This reminds me of those overly devised and quite theatrical diabolical plans that only a villain in a cape could concoct.

Like tying somebody to the railroad tracks. Just shoot the guy and be done with it. It’s predictable in that the plan is so far-fetched, it’s almost done for. And if I find it a bit funny that such large cargo wouldn’t be inspected. How the heck can you miss a dozen containers containing a bunch of hissing reptiles? Is this director Robert Ellis’ thoughts on airport security? Snakes is going to stir up much controversy as Pearl Harbor and Day Dream Afternoon!

This movie never lets you breathe for a minute, like a box constrictor that has the squeeze on its prey, which, by the way, is featured among the quite large cast of reptilian stowaways. Snakes moves along at a pace that is pretty exhausting, and that’s not a good thing. It’s one outrageous event after another. Snakes are biting passengers left and right. People are running for their lives. Sickenking and disturbing images are placed before the audience’s eyes at every twist and turn. It’s all too much, and after a while I started to dread the nonstop fun (one of the cross-out moments really grossed me out, a bit too much). I’m not going to spoil any film for you you, but let’s just say that there are some places a snake should not be.

Clearly, this slice of snake insatiety is not a high-concept film, and it’s off in its own world as far as structure is concerned. Famous director, Martin Scorsese would cringe at the sight of this blashpemous picture, as it defiles everything that makes a good movie, from enthraling character development to keen scene placement. Snakes becomes the victim of its own layout, as it loses itself in the crowd of snakes and ultimately dooms itself with its own pulse-pounding brand of entertainment.

It’s a fun 1-time ride, that lets your brain go on holiday for an hour and a half, but you’re not going to want to return to this one afterwards, because all the shock-value is sucked dry after one viewing. Which is the case with most forays into the horror and thriller genres.

Speaking of being sucked dry, Ellis must be a very unimaginative man. As he has outright admitted to taking suggestions from message boards users on various Snakes on a Plane fan sites. It’s admirable Ellis wanted to make a movie where the fans had a say, but he didn’t even credit any of them in the film, so it’s pretty much creative theft. And if you really need to consult those outside the film industry for scene ideas, you probably shouldn’t be in a director’s chair, as it borders on desperation.

In the performances realm, Jackson steals the show, as expected, playing his usual cool and level headed character, who’s not afraid to get his feet dirty and get everybody out of a jam. The funny thing about the performances is nearly everybody, except Jackson, portrays a character lacking in intelligence. Ellis most likely followed the idea that has been used by most directors in recent horror flicks: the audience wants to see morons killed. Movies like the remake of House of Wax and Freddy vs. Jason, best support this idea. As viewers can’t wait until whiny, worthless characters, like Paris Hilton in Wax, are nixed. Concluding that the snakes are seemingly smarter than the majority of the passengers, it’s understandable who got the upper hand. Survival of the fittest, right?

The movie wants to get a rise out you, and it goes to silly extremes to get you to react, whether it is through fear, laughter or shock. This movie will certainly lose its impact when watched on DVD, since seeing it with a crowd of others, in a theater, with boom, hisses and laughter is the most satisfying way to enjoy this piece of candy.

Rating *1/2

Rating system

**** Brilliant, perfect or near-perfect film
*** Very good
** Above average
* Middle of the road
Not so good
* Bad

1/2 Terrible, how does this stuff even get released?
No stars: Horrid, despicable film that has no regard for humanity.

Why We Fight: A Documentary Film that’s Worth Mentioning

BY KO WEI CHEN

Why do we fight? Why has America been involved in almost every major conflict of the past century? Why We Fight, by Eugene Jarecki, is a documentary film that dissected America’s reasons for engaging in a half century of military conflict around the globe, from World War II to the present day war in Iraq. This film was the winner of the Grand Jury Award at the Sundance Film Festival in 2005 and was recently released on DVD.

The title, Why We Fight, was derived from the 1940s documentary series by director Frank Capra on America’s reasons for entering World War II. Capra’s films were shown throughout the European/Mediterranean and Pacific theaters of WWII wherever U.S soldiers were stationed. His films were used to be the “educational, inspirational, and recreational” and later distributed to America’s public theaters to serve as a propaganda tool to boost the morale in the war front and at home.

In Jarecki’s Why We Fight, the director does an excellent job questioning many politicians and government officials on the huge military spending and build up that took place following World War II. The filmmaker interviewed many Washington insiders, and evaluates public opinion on why America engages in war. One of the researchers in the film explains the process of military spending and how it has spread to influence congressmen, and why Congress members tolerate shady deals in their home states. While our elected representatives should be leading the movement to reduce Army spend, the buildup of military contractors, and the balances of power are being tipped by the military-industrial complex was a close and code named relationship between a nation’s armed forces, its arms industry, and associated political and commercial interests of United States. In this system, the military is dependent on industry to supply materiel and other support, while the
On September 11, 2001 New York City faced an unspeakable act of terrorism which left thousands of people wounded, dead or with serious illnesses. For the duration of time following the attack rescue workers, volunteers, N.Y.C. Police officers and Firefighters unconcern for their well-being of dirt, sand and dust trying to find any survivors. On September 18, 2001 The Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) press release stated, “The air is safe enough to breathe”. After weeks of working at what is now called Ground Zero employees started to develop headaches, asthma, excessive coughs and problems in the lungs among other health associated troubles. Nearly 15,000 fire fighters, police officers and workers endure health problems and many of them would continue with the problems for the rest of their lives.

The New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health has been a supporter for the first response rescue workers without health insurance. A report from N.Y.C Department of Health discussed a host of possibilities to help with the 9/11 health crisis. Months after September 11th the E.P.A. offered a complimentary program cleaning up occupants' apartments in close proximity to the former towers in downtown Manhattan hoping to remove a large volume of damaging chemicals. Unfortunately the program was unsuccessful, similar programs five years later have yet to be created. The U.S. Government granted fifty-two million dollars to help with the treatments for the persons with health issues directly related to Sept. 11, 2001. In addition, millions of dollars contributed by the Red Cross have helped thousands of people get medical attention and treatment. Mayor Bloomberg has announced The Bellevue Hospital World Trade Center Treatment Program, along with providing extra cash to help tenants in Brooklyn and Manhattan who were vulnerable to the elements near the Ground Zero site. The Outreach Program offers information to those living close to the fallen towers and sets up a line of communication between them and New York City officials. The program has agreed to work with other organizations in order to enlighten the public about obtaining services and resources. In addition, a bill was signed by Governor Pataki to guarantee responders be given the Line-of-Duty death benefit, which states if any responder’s death resulted from particular ailments, cancer or lung disease due to contamination or exposure at Ground Zero their families obtain the benefits. Also, the New York City Department of Mental Health provides counseling, outreach and instruction services to persons effected by the 9/11 tragedy.

Despite the help from New York City officials many people will not receive benefits or any medical assistance, leaving them to think they failed them in their time of need. There are a range of paramedics, firefighters, rescue workers and police officers who served at Ground Zero and attained respiratory problems. The passing of former N.Y.P.D. detective James Zadroga has been associated to lung disease acquired from the toxins at Ground Zero, validated by an autopsy. Numerous city employees have pursued legal action against N.Y.C. and the service providers employed by the city stating that they ignored the workers health in the rescue and recovery operations. N.Y.C. officials declared a call for delay intervention is the requirement proof relating the pollutants to precise indications and illnesses developed by the workers. Many children who have lost a parent on September 11, 2001 will take delivery of health benefits, counseling and other sources of support until their 18th birthday, but the scars from that day may never completely heal.

Many community hospitals in or near downtown Manhattan offers aid to federal workers, volunteers and city employees involved in 9/11 recovery, clean-up or rescue that complain of any health problems acquired after Sept.11, 2001. The following are some important programs and agencies to contact regarding post-9/11 health issues and assistance and concerns. The World Trade Center Medical Monitoring program at Mount Sinai Medical Center provides confidential and free medical exams, information on programs and benefits along with a hot line with a smaller number of students in the classroom? I believe it’s a good thing. Isn’t there always a conflict concerning classes that are overpopulated and students not receiving the personal attention they need? Without attendance requirements, teachers will have fewer students to work with. If the students that are behind in their coursework attend classes, they will be able to receive the extra personal attention they need. Consequently, students who do understand won’t have to wait in class feeling bored because the teacher is taking extra time to elucidate further.

How are students going to know what’s going on in class if enrolling the class will be for students who need extra help? How will we know what topic we are on?

There could be specific days when the teachers will make it important, but not mandatory for students to attend. On these days, the professor will explain a topic, hand out a syllabus for that week, and go over what the class will be studying, and then that should be my decision to make. On the other hand, if I am doing poorly I have to make it my responsibility to attend to get extra help.

Introducing the new NYPIRG Project Coordinator at QCC

This year the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) has a new face. You may recognize him as the voter registration guy, or the person trying to keep you informed about important social issues. Jason Chin-Fatt, the new Project Coordinator, has taken the helm at the NYPIRG office in Queensborough Community College. He has come to our campus with a certain swagger, to reinstate the NYPIRG mission in Building Student Power.

With the new direction at the NYPIRG office this year, we can expect a few changes. This year, the NYPIRG is having running events that will inform you to the students, to bolster the sense of community that we have here. Even though this is a two-year school, there should be a sense of camaraderie that we can experience while going around together.

We are all here to learn and get ahead in life, but we are also here to make friends, have fun, and most importantly strive for change.

NYPIRG is a non-profit organization that is also non-partisan. Whether you are republican or democrat, liberal or conservative, NYPIRG will fight for what we believe is right on a specific issue. NYPIRG has a reputation for being lean and aggressive. We are pluralistic, difficult to pigeon-hole, and it is for these reasons that we continue to be successful at what we do. Our commitment to you the student is to put our resources into public education, organizing, agency interventions and advocacy. Most other groups emphasize on one or two of these, and don’t use the others at all. Through all of our projects, events, and campaigns, one factor that remains a constant to our mission – NYPIRG is committed to educating students.

The concept of the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) grew out of two important social developments in the 1960’s – the student movement and the consumer movement. From these movements emerged a growing awareness from student bodies. These student bodies felt that they had a special role to play on important issues concerning students. Students across the nation soon followed suit after seeing the positive impact that these student groups could have on a range of social problems to which they were invested. For this reason, PIRG’s new exist in over 20 states across the nation. The New York Public Interest Research Group was founded in 1973 and has been unquestionably the leading PIRG in the nation since 1976.

In 1978, Queensborough Community College became the first two-year institution with a NYPIRG chapter. It was founded on the principle that young people could have a real impact on society if provided with the resources and skills to organize and take action. It is through the students that NYPIRG has been able to make a difference on this campus specifically. As in the past, NYPIRG worked with students on the campus to help get the Q72 bus routes to stop on campus. Also in the past we have organized students from our campus to go to a lobby day in Albany to help prevent an increase in CUNY Tuition and cuts to financial aid that were proposed by the Governor of New York.

This year the NYPIRG office at QCC hopes to continue our success in fighting for social justice, advocacy, and the environment in our local community as well as across the state. There are many levels in which you the student can get involved and NYPIRG will be there. NYPIRG fights for internships, positions for volunteer work, and programming that will provide students with the tools they need to succeed on any path that their life might take them.

The NYPIRG office is located in the Student Union Building on the Lower Level, directly next to the arcade room. All students are welcome to come and find out more information about our organization, internships, events, and campaigns. We hope that you all will support our aim this year to restate a sense of community here at QCC as well as Building Student Power on our campus.
ATTENTION
POETS & FANS !!!!!

THE NEXT
INTERCOLLEGIATE POETRY
SLAM

AT THE BOWERY POETRY CLUB WILL BE
Saturday October 14th
FROM 6P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.
(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO READ, YOU SHOULD GET THERE AT 5:30)

The Bowery Poetry Club
308 Bowery, New York, NY 10012
212.614.0505
WWW.BOWERYPOETRY.COM

foot of First Street, between Houston & Bleecker
across the street from CBGBs
F train to Second Ave, or 6 train to Bleecker

If you’re interested in coming to the slams and/or would like to participate but
want more information, please contact
Professors Joel Kuszai at jkuszai@qcc.cuny.edu or
Joan Dupre at jdupre@qcc.cuny.edu
Faculty Advisors to the QCC Slam Team

From the FDR Drive
• Take the FDR to Houston Street exit, go west on
  Houston (it’s only direction you can go)
• After passing the Bowery, the next “major” street is
  Lafayette
• Turn right (north) onto Lafayette and go one short
  block to Bleecker
• Turn right onto Bleecker, and a few short blocks later
  make a right onto the Bowery
• The club is a few doors down on the right side of
  Bowery

From Broadway/7th Avenue
• Go south until you hit Bleecker Street (start watching
  for it after 14th Street)
• Turn east onto Bleecker Street. Bleecker dead-ends on
  the Bowery &
• The club is a few doors down.

From Canal Street
• Take Canal to Lafayette and turn north; (that will be a
  left if you’re coming from the west side, a right if
  you’re coming from the east side)
• Just past Houston Street, turn right onto Bleecker
• A few short blocks later make a right onto the Bowery
• The club is a few doors down Bowery

From Williamsburg Bridge/Delancey St.
• Continue West on Delancey St. until you hit the
  Bowery
• Turn right (north) on Bowery
• You’ll see the club on your left shortly after crossing
  Houston Street

Parking
Since the surrounding blocks are quite short, you might
want to start looking for parking before you actually get
to the club. The area is pretty safe for parking on the
street. If you can find a space, that is.

Food @ this club?
Sandwiches, soup, salads -- fresh, homemade. Delicious
pastry and desserts. Truly excellent coffee! Unusual
soft drinks. Juice, beer, wine, booze at the bar. Plenty of
upscale restaurants nearby, if your heart desires more.

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
7th BI-ANNUAL MULTI-LINGUAL
OPEN MIC READING

Wednesday, Oct. 18
1:00 - 3:00 PM
Humanities Quad

read your work or share another’s

TO SIGN UP IN ADVANCE, CONTACT PROF. JOAN DUPRE
J Dupre@Qcc.Cuny.Edu A SIGNUP SHEET WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE
ON THE QUAD ON THE DAY OF THE READING

THERE IS A 5 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER READER
SO EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE

On Sunday, September Tenth in East Rutherford, New Jersey, brothers Eli and Peyton Manning played the opening football game of the NFL season against each other. The “Manning Bowl,” as it became called, gained a lot of media attention and hype. Eli played for the New York Giants as quarterback rivaling his own brother, Peyton, who also grabbed the quarterback position for the Indianapolis Colts. This season opener made history with a bang. For the first time in NFL history two brothers who faced off against one another. Peyton and Eli Manning both played their hearts out and both had outstanding numbers. Eli completed 20 out of 34 passes to New York Giants receivers and had a total of 247 passing yards, two touchdown passes, one interception, and one fumble. On the other team we had arguably the best quarterback in the league today, Peyton Manning. Peyton completed 25 out of 41 of his passes to Indianapolis Colts receivers and had a total of 276 passing yards throwing one touchdown and one interception. The game was a huge success in ratings. This game had higher ratings than the 9/11 documentary on CBS, or the new 9/11 mini-series according to ESPN.com. Two huge fans of both brothers were Peyton and Eli’s parents. Their parents were very proud of their sons but were obviously torn and refused to take sides. Eli and Peyton are not the first in their family to join the NFL. Their father Archie Manning was an outstanding quarterback for the New Orleans Saints. It seems that excellent quarterback skills run in the family. The outcome of the game was as expected. The Colts and future “hall of famer” Peyton Manning beat his little brother Eli Manning. The final score was 26 to 21. At the end of the game Peyton walked up to his younger brother and is reported to have said in his ear, “I love you.”

Why oh WI
BY ODIN UPSIN

So I just found out, I’m in this writing-intensive (WI) course, in electrical engineering (ET). However, I didn’t even know I was in a writing-intensive course. In fact, I didn’t really know what writing-intensive meant, that there are a certain number of pages of writing I have to do as part of the course, and as it turns out I need to take two of these writing-intensive courses somewhere during my time at QC in order to graduate. So ok, I guess it all works out. But I certainly didn’t mean to do it. I mean, I’m in ET. I like math and electronics, because it seems to make sense. There’s a problem, you solve it, it works, I like fixing and building things, with my hands, you know? If I wanted to take a writing course, I would have just registered for one.

But you know what I realized? Yeah, it’s writing–not math—but that’s not what it’s really about. It’s about more than just writing. It’s about critical thinking, and literacy, and it’s not just in college, it’s everywhere. Take my brother, Kyle, who’s 11 and just started middle school. He makes math and science and for both of them he keeps a daily log, and his teachers tell him that it’s very important that he be able to write and talk about what he knows, and that it’s not enough to just get an answer right but he has to be able to discuss how he solves problems.

I told him, get out! That’s pretty much what I’m doing, and I’m in my third semester in college! For me, I think of it as something I can use when I start looking for jobs. I keep hearing that the two things employers really look for in new hires is their ability to problem-solve and to work well in groups. I guess what that means is that the critical thinking and literacy ideas behind these WI classes is something we all need to prepare for.

And you know what else I found out? There’s actually a lot of these WI classes throughout all the different majors. Someone told me that there were about 140 being taught this semester alone! I figure, if there’s 25 students in every class, that means that about 3,500 of us are taking these courses right now. Do you even know if you are in one of these courses? I know there’s a new QCC testing center, which is supposed to help with your writing-intensive course, and I wanted help with the writing assignments. I was immediately directed to Joe, who turns it out is the Tutor Coordinator for the QCC Writing Center. The first thing he told me to do was to go to the Writing Center when I don’t understand information from the course, and then I can get help from writing tutors when I need to explain on paper what I do understand.

I’m thinking, I bet writing about it and maybe even explaining it a little to the writing tutor will help me see what I need to study a little bit more.

So if you are in writing-intensive courses this semester, or even the next, and you want help with your writing assignments, the place you should go to is the Writing Center, in the Library, first floor.

Oh, and one more thing: I was talking about my WI experience with the writing tutor who was helping me with my writing-intensive course, and she mentioned that maybe it would make an interesting article for the Communiqué. In fact, she’s the person who helped me to organize my thoughts so I could get them down on paper! Thanks!

Interracial Relationships
continued from page 3

how such couples are viewed, there seems to be nothing more rewarding than loving someone, regardless of perceived initial differences, and experiencing something wonderfully new. It should be the discovery of common interests, the basis of character, and the individual’s own actions that speak for a particular person, and never cultural stereotyping that determines an individual’s actions. It goes to us that people with biases against interracial relationships “are afraid of exploring new territory and possibly losing their own identity if they experience change . . . if they date someone of a different background.”

Despite negative views on interracial couples by some members of society, interracial relationships are on the rise. Since 1990, they’ve grown 5%, and currently, according to an article on Buzzle.com, almost half of all North American college students were willing to enter an interracial relationship, while one quarter of college students have already been involved in one. Being on the Queensborough Community College campus, we’re exposed to a tremendous group of people, of all different cultures. College life provides an increase in the daily exposure and interaction between diverse cultural and racial groups. Alexander Lee, 18, who attends Queensborough Community College, is half African American and half Chinese, and his girlfriend is Caucasian. When I asked him about how society views interracial relationships, he replied, “Society needs to understand that, when it comes down to it, we are all humans that just differ on account of something called pigment.” Hopefully, as American society continues to progress and New York City continues to grow, we can learn to accept people’s differences and embrace them with acceptance and love.