State and National Unrest Beyond Eric Garner

By Lourdes Carballo

Controversial decisions by state grand juries have sparked demonstrations around the nation relating to the deaths of unarmed black men. Movements in various cities including New York have expressed their distrust in the legal system and demand law enforcement to change the way it deals with minorities.

The first decision came on November 24, in St. Louis, Missouri. A grand jury decided not to formally charge Ferguson police officer, Darren Wilson of a crime.

Police officer, Darren Wilson of a crime.

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The first decision came on November 24, in St. Louis, Missouri. A grand jury decided not to formally charge Ferguson police officer, Darren Wilson of a crime.

Wilson shot 18-year-old Michael Brown, apparently unarmed, multiple times and killed him. This first decision set off protests in Ferguson and major cities around the nation demanding justice for Michael Brown. Signs such as “Black lives matter” and “We will not be silent” along with chants that rang, “Hands up, don’t shoot” united protestor of different ethnicities around the nation.

A similar outcome has hit close to home as a grand jury decided on December 3 not to prosecute officer Daniel Panteleo in Staten Island, New York. A video displays police officers questioning Garner about apparently selling untaxed cigarettes. Despite not showing aggression towards officers, excessive force was used to arrest him. Panteleo put 43-year-old Eric Garner, unarmed as well, in a chokehold which caused his death.

As if the tension between police and the community were not enough, protestors have another motive to continue to express continued on page 3

 Queensborough’s Living Legend

By Dominique Nicole Chaplin

It’s a rainy autumn day in New York City, and despite the lack of traffic on both the city streets and the Queensborough Community College campus grounds, the Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Resource Center and Archives is filled to the brim with students.

“They’re from Thomas Edison High School,” said Dr. Flug of the sea of students. “And came to visit because they are studying the Holocaust and human rights in class,” he explained, candidly watching as the students stare inquisitively at the exhibit, in awe of what one can imagine to be a mixture of its vibrant visuals and the museum’s mere existence on a college campus.

Dr. Arthur Flug has been the Executive Director of the Holocaust Resource Center on the Queensborough campus since the opening of its centralized building in 2007. According to him, the creation of the beautiful 9,000-square-foot building has as much a rich history as its contents.

“It went from an idea, to a closet, to filing cabinets, to a large space in the library basement,” said Dr. Flug, who’s involvement with the Resource Center began when he was asked by former Queensborough Community College President, Dr. Eduardo J. Marti, to aid in community outreach for the then-exhibit. At the time, Flug was 68 years old and had an exceptional occupational career preceding.

Graduating from Queens College in January of 1961, Arthur Flug wasted no time when he began teaching on the first day of the following month and continued as an educator in the New York City school system for 30 years. In his tenure, his role included not only that of a teacher, but both a building administrator and curriculum director.

After retiring from the school system, Dr. Flug worked as a District Administrator for a United States Congressman for ten years. Taking a year off, Flug later became Director of the American Jewish Congress, a civil rights group in Manhattan and ended his political career as Chief of Staff to New York City born Congressman Gary L. Ackerman.

Shortly thereafter, in doing what Flug calls “slowing down,” he took the lead in continued on page 6

A Girl for All Seasons- Volleyball Captain: Stephanie Ho

By Destiny Nagora

For those of you who haven’t heard, Queensborough has its very own All-Star volleyball player, Stephanie Ho. The CUNY Athletic Conference has named her with Scholar-Athlete for the month of October. Stephanie has been recognized for her outstanding ability to perform on court as well as off. She has helped guide her team through a successful season of 20-5, while earning a 3.9 in her studies. Stephanie has also been awarded with titles including All Region 1st team, Regions All-Tournament, Scholar-Athlete and All Conference. When asked about her accomplishments she said, “I was so really happy, shocked and overwhelmed. The awards recognized me as a good student and player.”

Stephanie is a very outstanding athlete. Her workouts consist of yoga, working out in the gym and playing sports all year round. She says, “It is mental and physical training.” Stephanie has performed in a variety of sports throughout her life. She has played basketball, softball and volleyball. She said that she didn’t start playing volleyball until her senior year of high school. It took one summer playing continued on page 17

Thanks for the Gift, I Think (p.10)
Impact of Construction: Conditions from the Inside

By Andy Poon

Construction on the Queensborough Community College (QCC) Science Building has been ongoing for over a year, which continues to affect many in the campus community. While the site and cacophony of noise are readily apparent to everyone, the underlying conditions are not. The experiences of those who frequently work near the epicenter paint a different picture.

Faculty members have been facing the effects of construction since it began over a year ago. Offices facing the courtyard have been windowless because it was removed and completely walled-off for the construction.

In the Math Department, there is a faculty member who requested to remain anonymous. During the interview, the sound of humming machinery emanated through the wall as the faculty member explained the conditions that some of them have experienced, and later provided a tour of a few impacted areas.

The noise from construction activities during the month of October was particularly out-of-hand. The excessive noise during that period finally subsided after faculty distributed a protocol and filed a torrent of complaints to Joe Cartolano, the Chief Administrative Superintendent of the Buildings and Grounds (B&G) Department.

The temporary walls were initially improperly insulated; resulting in dust from construction getting into some of the offices and in one case, “one month exposure to the cold,” before the contractor finally came to patch it up. Periodic electrical issues caused half the lights to go out, leaving limited light in the windowless office. The lights were eventually fixed.

In a faculty restroom, a pool of water was collecting on the abatement plastic in the open ceiling, which has since been resolved, said the anonymous faculty member.

“I find it very dreary in the office with the windows blocked,” explained Charles Neuman, a physics professor. “My colleague told me it looked like it was going to rain inside. Sometimes it has been noisy, but they assured us that it won’t happen anymore.”

“We have been dealing with deafening noise, dense dust, and the last few days with nauseating smell of paint,” said Dr. Rusinek, who works within the math department.

“There was very loud drilling while I was preparing equipment for faculty last month [October],” said a support staff, who requested to remain anonymous. “It was very disruptive for the class.”

Chapter Chair of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) and Professor of Health and Nutrition, Lana Zinger, confirmed the complaints received from faculty. “Our health and safety concerns, most of them, relate to the construction project.” Complaints are directed to the B&G Department, who “handle them one by one. If there is excessive noise, they go there to stop the drilling,” she said.

PSC Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Watchdog Officer, Professor Alicia Sinclair, said the contractors “seem to be learning as they go. This doesn’t inspire confidence. The problems happen and we have to hunt them down.” In regards to the October incident, “noise is temporarily ameliorated. I think that they’re doing the best that they can,” she said.

PSC EHS Watchdog member and math professor, Clara Wajngurt, provided a tour of the impacted offices. One of the health concerns is the particles and dust in the air from construction that people may be breathing in. While the noise has diminished, she continues to receive complaints from faculty.

Music Professor Jennifer Gliere commented that the closures have affected parking and errands to the Science Building. “It is a lot more congested; passages getting to the cafeteria are a lot narrower.”

The construction site and particularly the cafeteria, with all of its windows walled-off, offers little to the dim atmosphere of the campus.

“It looks dirty; an eyesore,” said Peter Miceli, a College Laboratory Technician from the Library Building. “Not a friendly place to go to. Feels like a cage.”

“I’m kind of happy that they walled it off because I used to freeze,” explained Jany Bac, a cashier in the Science Café. “The door was constantly open.”

An anonymous professor located in one of the walled-off offices was less critical.

“Conditions have been reasonably manageable. There’s been occasional noise and odors, but nothing that’s caused a sustained disruption of normal daily activities.”

There are many others around the campus that are less impacted because they do not frequent the Science Building.

An anonymous professor teaching at a building away from the construction is aware of some noise, but said: “I don’t have class in the building. It has not been a concern for me.”

Business Professor Julita Haber teaches at the Administration Building, two buildings away from the construction, also said she was unaffected by it.

It may seem as if numerous problems are occurring as a result of the construction project, but working on an occupied building with ongoing educational activities is not an easy feat.

“Because it is an active work site, we take extra measures to identify any potential environmental, health and safety issues,” said Facilities Planning Director Paul Tellers in an e-mail. “Equally important is our priority to maintain access to the building and provide a safe egress in the event of an emergency at all times.” The New York City Fire Department “continually monitors construction activities.”

According to Tellers, there was a plan to lift the 60-feet long steel trusses over the Science Building into the courtyard via a crane.

“This would have required the evacuation of the east wing during the lift,” Tellers said. “We pressed the construction team to come up with an alternative plan.”

The plan has been modified to rolling the trusses on a trolley into the courtyard during the weekend, avoiding the potentially massive disruption.

He explained a noise mitigation plan which requires “high noise level construction activities to be done in the early morning before classes, and on weekends or holidays.” Barriers are installed inside the rooms facing the courtyard to reduce the noise. Some noise is inevitable, but “every effort is being made to limit the amount of noise generated from the site,” he said.

“We have received a relatively small number of complaints. Each case is immediately investigated and addressed.”

In response to the October noise complaints, Tellers said, construction work that was supposed to be performed during nights and weekends took place during normal class times. “This unfortunate incident was immediately investigated and corrected. There have been no similar issues to date.”

“We understand the frustration that some faculty and staff in the Science Building must feel,” Tellers added. “We appreciate the patience of those who work in the midst of ongoing construction activities.”

“QCC’s student population has experienced an exponential growth in recent years,” said William Faulkner, Vice President for Finance and Administration. “Today, the college serves more than 16,000 students, plus 2,200 full and part-time employees. To successfully meet the changing needs of students, staff, and faculty, additional spaces must be established so that positive academic experiences, including learning, working and socializing may continue. It will offer an attractive, user-friendly, sustainable space that will serve the College community and enhance campus life for generations to come. The Office of Facilities and Planning is proud to be a vital partner in that process.”
As we move towards the end of the fall semester, winter break is right around the corner. What’s your plan for the break? As you know, the winter break is a time in between the fall and spring semester where students get to relax and prepare to move onto the next semester. Do you want to make the best of the winter break? The winter class sessions could be a great option for you.

The majority of universities and colleges offer summer and winter sessions. The sessions during the summer and winter are usually shorter than a regular semester but with longer class hours. I interviewed students about their overall experience with summer/winter classes. "I want to finish my Associate’s Degree faster that’s was why I took winter/summer classes." Says Cheyenne, a liberal art’s major currently attending Queensborough Community College (QCC). Cheyenne wants to finish her Associate’s Degree in three semesters, so she has been taking both summer and winter courses in order to achieve her goal. Cheyenne describes her experience taking summer/winter courses as positive. "I feel the classes are easier and I only take one class at a time so I can really focus on the course itself.” Cheyenne took three classes in summer and winter and she is expecting to graduate this fall and transfer to Queens College next spring.

Natasha is another student took a class in a winter session. She chose to take a class in the winter because she doesn’t want to take too many classes in a semester. Natasha also enjoyed her winter class experience. “It’s difficult to handle four or five classes at the same time. If I take a class in the winter, I can take fewer classes in a regular semester.” Natasha said.

Students should also pay attention to the cost of summer and winter session. Unfortunately, financial aid does not cover the cost of summer and winter sessions. Luckily, the Office of Academic Affairs located in the Administration Building; Room 503 offers two scholarships, the Queensborough Community College Milestone Scholarships and STEM Support Expansion Program that will help to cover the cost. The Queensborough Community College Milestone Scholarship is to help students with less than 30 credits to exceed their 30 credits of education by completing a course in the winter or summer. The Queensborough Community College STEM Support Expansion Program is a tuition waiver program that will waive the cost for students to take certain STEM courses in the summer or winter. Students should reach out to the Office of Academic Affairs to discuss further details of the two scholarships.

College students face obstacles in their academic lives which can cause them to fail or withdrawing from a class. If students want to keep up with the graduation plan or to graduate earlier, they should consider the option of taking a class or more during the summer or winter session. Based on the student interviews, students have positive feedback on their summer and winter course experience. The benefits of taking summer or winter courses are that you can finish a class in a shorter period of time with a better concentration to the course. There is no better time to make up some credits and enhance your education to the next level than the summer and the winter.

State and National Unrest Beyond Eric Garner

Continued from cover page

their discontent. These controversial decisions along with protests have dominated news headlines on the national and international level.

In New York, following the grand jury’s decision on the Eric Garner case, protests once again raised their voices. Chant such as “I can’t breathe” and “No justice, no peace” echoed from Foley Square in downtown, Manhattan. Protestors then made their way across the Brooklyn Bridge, carrying mock coffins. Others stranded drivers on Broadway and interfered with traffic near the Holland Tunnel, the Manhattan Bridge, and on the West Side Highway.

The Reverend Al Sharpton referred to the state level grand jury system as “broken” when it deals with police brutality cases. He has insisted that the federal government step in and deal with the Eric Garner case. Indeed, the Justice Department has decided to investigate the Eric Garner case.

Other protests have taken place in cities such as Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Washington and Oakland where protests have disrupted annual Christmas tree lighting ceremonies, train service and several Interstates.

In an aim to recover the community’s trust in the legal system, New York Mayor, Bill de Blasio and police commissioner, William J. Bratton have outlined a plan to improve the training officers receive. The goal is for officers to learn how to control their ego and communicate better with people of different backgrounds on the street.

A Substitute Plan for Winter Break

By Zhenqiang Wang

On October 31, millions of men across the country shave their face clean, and on the following day, the madness begins.

Many believe that No Shave November is meant to compete against October’s Breast Cancer phenomenon, while others think that it is just celebrated for fun and has no real meaning.

“No Shave November is when guys don’t shave for the month of November for fun,” said Chris Alvarez, a Queensborough student.

“Wait, there’s a real reason why guys don’t shave during November?” asked Britanni Paige. “I thought it was just a trend, and so that guys could be lazy and not shave.”

What many people don’t realize is that there is actually a legitimate reason as to why people observe “No Shave November” or “Movember.” In fact, “No Shave November” is when guys all over America decide to let their facial hair grow wild and free for the whole month to raise awareness for men’s cancer, primarily prostate cancer. “Movember” isn’t just a silly reason for guys to be lazy and not shave, but actually helps to raise awareness.

The goal of “No Shave November” is to raise awareness by appreciation of our hair, which many cancer victims lose. Letting it grow at will by embracing our inner lumberjack shows support for men facing prostate cancer, as well as will power. Yes, will power. It takes a lot for a guy to undergo the growing process and getting through the embarrassing awkward phase.

The tradition is also meant to include donating all the money we would normally spend on shaving for the whole month to funds to continue to raise awareness, and educate on cancer prevention. Whoever chooses to donate may do so by going to No-shave.org, or can check out the American Cancer Society and donate to them.

Though it may be seen as absurd to many, this month-long event can be compared to the month of October. That month has come to be known as Breast Cancer Awareness month, in which it is a popular trend across the United States for athletes and others to be decked out in pink to support the cause. This includes professional athletes on national television and thousands of organizations and businesses world-wide.

“Even if my girlfriend hates it and won’t kiss me until I shave, I will always celebrate Movember” said Queensborough Community College alumnus Jimmy Mckenzie. “It’s a way for a dude to get away from society’s standards and be a man.”

Apart from “No Shave November,” there has been a huge outbreak in beards in recent years, primarily in the Major League Baseball. Many players tend not to shave until they are eliminated from the playoffs. Some players believe that the beards help them to win, specifically inspired by San Francisco Giants closer Brian Wilson, who refused to shave until his team got eliminated. That season the Giants won the World Series.

Some teams in professional sports have strict dress codes that forbid players from wearing long hair or facial hair beyond a neat mustache. In 2006 when Johnny Damon signed with the New York Yankees, he was forced to cut his cave-man-like hair and beard.

The phrase “Fear The Beard” is very popular around many baseball stadiums.

Even on Queensborough’s campus, many people can be seen sporting fully developed beards year round.

When asked if he will participate next year after learning the true cause of “Movember,” QCC student Johan Tejeda replied with “Nah I’m good. I’ll give 10 bucks if anything, but I like to keep a clean face and stay professional.”

“I hate my boyfriend’s beard, it’s disgusting and patchy and it turns me off, literally,” said Sara Taylor. “I understand guys not shaving but at least keep it clean, like, ’cmon you like homeless.’

Now just because one chooses not to participate in the madness doesn’t make him a bad person. Some people have actual lives to live and need to keep a clean look for work or school or his own personal account. A donation works just as well.

Whether people approve of it or not, this trend looks like it is here to stay. There is even a website devoted to it. One can search for No-Shave.org to find out more information on how to support the cause or help raise awareness.

Embracing No Shave November

By Ruben Ojeda

The phrase “Fear The Beard” is very popular around many baseball stadiums. Some teams in professional sports have strict dress codes that forbid players from wearing long hair or facial hair beyond a neat mustache. In 2006 when Johnny Damon signed with the New York Yankees, he was forced to cut his cave-man-like hair and beard.

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Criminal Justice student at Queensborough Community College (QCC), Raul Santiago, believes that change won’t happen overnight.

“A reform of that magnitude has to start from the top positions. It’s not easy if you don’t have those in charge at the top setting an example.”

QCC business student, Camil Dachao believes police brutality against minorities will never fully vanish. “Unfortunately, it’s an ongoing problem that has its intense moments where it’s making the news everywhere. Then it just calms down.”

President Obama has also expressed the need of “making sure that people have confidence that police and law enforcement and prosecutors are serving everybody equally.”

Only time will tell whether justice will be served in the Eric Garner case, as protests continue to unfold days after the grand jury’s decision—and whether or not the law enforcement can recover the community’s trust once again.
The Hillel Club

By Joseph Wolkin

Being different is usually a good thing. With over 45 clubs and societies on campus, Queensborough Community College offers avenues for a range of interests of student life on campus. One of these groups that is instrumental in building a community within our larger college campus is the Hillel Club.

During club hours each Wednesday, the Queensborough Community College Hillel meets to discuss topics in the world of Judaism. But this isn’t just a time to get lectured on why to be Jewish; it is a period where Jewish students get a chance to meet each other and learn about the religion and culture.

“The purpose of Hillel is to promote Jewish culture and history on campus,” said Professor Ruevain Zahavy, who is the advisor of the college’s Hillel. “I have been with Hillel for 16 years now. I find it very rewarding. We have been successful in many types of events such as the model Seder in the spring time, and we build a Sukkah on campus, which is the hut that we build in the fall.”

With Zahavy’s help, the club is now partnered with Emet Outreach – a campus outreach program that travels to 10 institutions throughout New York City and Long Island. Founded in 2004 by Rabbi Mordechai Kraft and Rabbi Akiva Rutenberg, Emet has been a key to helping Jewish students find their comfort zone at their college campus.

With a mission to spread knowledge about the Torah to young students that are eager to learn, they have been able to teach approximately 2,000 young adults over the course of the decade. But what is different about Emet is how closely they have been working with the Hillel’s at each campus.

New Jersey-native Rabbi Reuven Kigel, a former stock trader, joined Emet a few years ago. Since joining the organization, he has made multiple YouTube videos to elaborate on multiple common questions about the religion. Moreover, his popular on-campus lectures have led him to become the Jewish chaplain at Baruch College.

“I want to service the Jewish students, give them the opportunity to ask questions about Judaism and meet with the Rabbi,” said Rabbi Kigel on being recognized at Baruch in addition to his campus work at Hunter College. “First I became observant myself and realized that there is someone running the world that is not me. I saw that the Torah was true and I wanted to give everyone else an opportunity to learn about it. When Emet gave me this opportunity seven years ago, it was the best job I ever had. I get to share Torah with people and bring smiles to people’s faces.”

As the club continues to grow, they hope to share their knowledge of Judaism with students across the campus. With multiple awards over the course of their existence, including club of the year last year, Hillel is looking for continued success as students are welcome to join their Wednesday programs.

MTA Fare Hike Affecting Millions of New Yorkers

By Kelly Rothwell

Over the past seven years, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has officially raised the fare three times. Each time the MTA increases the base fare, New Yorkers are left to struggle with tighter paychecks and feelings of helplessness. Certain proposals have been made to bump the price up for a fourth time, but instead of one flat rate, the fare will rise 2% each year during the next two years. Not only did the MTA propose to raise the fare, they are also debating whether or not to increase toll prices.

The proposals pertaining to new fares and tolls will have public hearings in December, which anyone can attend. Proposal one states the fares will be raised from $2.50 to $2.75. With the fare increase, passengers will also get an 11% bonus with a $5.50 purchase compared to the current 5% bonus. Proposal two does not increase the base MetroCard Fare, but eliminates the bonus entirely. Both proposals will increase the 30-Day MetroCard from $112 to $116.50 as well as 7-Day MetroCards from $30 to $31.

1.7 Billion people ride with the MTA annually so every change made effects a huge group of people. Over half of the students attending Queensborough Community College use the MTA to travel everyday. Daniela Cruz-Rivera, a QCC student attending for her 3rd semester, has been using the MTA her entire life. “The MTA fare hike is a real problem,” states the QCC nursing student. “MTA continues to raise prices and we aren’t even sure where the extra money is going. I want to see improvements finally.” The fare hike also troubled another student I spoke to, Daniel Roach. “I use their buses everyday to travel to school and work. I make minimum wage, so MetroCards are taking a chunk out of my paychecks. It seems every time the wage rises, MTA fare hikes higher and higher. They need to think about the people!”

What is your opinion on the matter? Want to share your thoughts? MTA board members are appearing to several public hearings where people can share their opinions. Below is a compiled list of all hearings within a 50-mile radius.

Monday, December 1, 2014:
Baruch College, Performing Arts Center, Mason Hall
17 Lexington Ave, New York, NY 10010
Registration period is open from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Hearing begins at 5 p.m.
Hostos Community College,
500 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10451
Registration period is open from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Hearing begins at 5 p.m.

Wednesday, December 3, 2014:
Hilton Long Island Huntington
598 Broad Hollow Road, Melville, NY 11747
Registration period is open from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Hearing begins at 5 p.m.
York College, The Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center at Main Stage Theater
94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd, Jamaica, NY 11451
Registration period is open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Hearing begins at 6 p.m.

Thursday, December 11, 2014:
Brooklyn College, Wilt Whitman Theater
2900 Campus Road, Brooklyn, NY 11210
Registration period is open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Hearing begins at 6 p.m.
Jury Duty: Is It Really That Dreadful?

By Christine Joseph

The jury chooses not to indict Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson for the shooting of Michael Brown. Why? Who are these jurors? Who picked them? You and everyone else in the country wants to know more about these selected people, their backgrounds, their lifestyle, and most importantly why in the world would they set this man free? Don’t you wish you can be part of the jury, where you can stand up for what you believe might be right? Instead we sit in front of the TV praying, hoping that maybe these jurors might make the right decision.

“This man is innocent.” The lawyer says to the jurors. We’re all familiar with scenes similar to this one from TV shows like Law and Order. But you as the audience have already seen the episode, you’ve gathered the clues and figured them out and know for a fact that that man is not innocent. So why does the jury rule him innocent? Well wouldn’t it be cool to be a part of a jury, to hear all these facts, arguments and evidence and then as a group make a decision based on the information provided, to express your opinion, your knowledge and your take on what that may be about and to help put a criminal behind bars or perhaps save an innocent man from being put behind bars. See, jurors are selected randomly from a pool, and if that pool is bigger, the stronger the jury selection will be.

Many people tend to moan and groan when they have been picked to serve as a juror. You have a say as a citizen, as being part of this nation, society, your opinion counts. Being a juror, you are actively making your community safer and smarter. They are many reasons you may not be qualified to serve as a juror. However, filling out the questionnaire doesn’t hurt, it just strengthens jury pool, to have a bigger, more diverse selection.

One of the biggest problems, is that many people in the Queens County are not filling out these surveys. This contributes to a weaker jury pool. In the interview with Audrey Pheffer, Queens County Clerk and Commissioner of Jurors, she states, “You have to determine qualifications. Being a full time student automatically excuses you from serving, unless you serve in the community, help your community and an opportunity to serve as a juror. However, filling out the questionnaire makes it more likely that more diverse it is, which is exactly what Ray Volel said. This is the kind of pool that contributes to a fairer trial because one of the most heartbreaking thing that could ever happen would be to indict an innocent person or set a guilty person free.

So of course my follow up question was, “Well, what is the jury duty process?” She then began to explain how jury duty starts with two questionnaires that are sent in the mail. These questionnaires are important because it is the starting point of whether or not you are qualified serve as a juror. In order to serve as juror, you must be over 18 years old, a U.S. citizen living in Queens County and have no criminal background. However, once you have filled out the questionnaire you are part of a pool with other potential jurors. These surveys are completely unbiased. Your financial situation, your lifestyle has no attribution when it comes to serving as a juror. You have a say as a citizen, as being part of this nation, society, your opinion counts. Being a juror, you are actively making your community safer and smarter. They are many reasons you may not be qualified to serve as a juror. However, filling out the questionnaire doesn’t hurt, it just strengthens jury pool, to have a bigger, more diverse selection.

According to the annual report also shows why the questionnaire is important for everyone to fill out. It seem that 9% of people who served as juror were between the ages of 18-24. The highest of 36% ranged from 25-44 years old and 29% ranged from 45-64 years old. The numbers show that the people who are more qualified or who actually complete the cards happen to be from 25-44 years old. These are people with perhaps a family, a career or a job. According to the report it seems as in the other counties the age group of 25-44 and 45-64 was also the highest or second highest with a close percentage.

During the interview, I asked the Hon. Audrey Pheffer, “Since it’s a problem to get these questionnaires filled out, what exactly is the Queens County doing about it?” Her response, “Well, we are going around the staff, going to community boards, religious institutions, and public television...to speak on how important it is.” She responded. These places and different sources of media are all very different, and what Audrey Pheffer and her team are trying to do is in potential jurors from all different ages, ethnicities, and gender. Because not only does it seem that the demographics of the jurors that served in 2013 seemed to be same in most New York State counties, Queens County is beyond diverse. This is the most stressful part. The amount of diversity is tremendous. This gives the Queens County courts a higher advantage to have more fair trials because the people that inhabit Queens come from all over the world. These are people with different minds, different lifestyles, different belief and this is exactly what a pool need.

According to the Poursuant to section 528 of the judiciary law annual report of 2013, 53,167 cards were completed and 54,760 jurors served in the Queens County. With this 51% of the jurors served were females and 43% were males. This shows that more females are not filling out the questionnaires, thus in the pool of jurors, there are more females than males which is unfair. It is unfair if more women, no matter what age, ethnicity, or background to serve on a jury than men, as it would be if it were the other way around, men together can relate more, same for men. If more men were to fill out these questionnaires, the pool would be a lot fairer.

The age demographic according to the report shows why the questionnaire is important for everyone to fill out. It seem that 9% of people who served as juror were between the ages of 18-24. The highest of 36% ranged from 25-44 years old and 29% ranged from 45-64 years old. The numbers show that the people who are more qualified or who actually complete the cards happen to be from 25-44 years old. These are people with perhaps a family, a career or a job. According to the report it seems as in the other counties the age group of 25-44 and 45-64 was also the highest or second highest with a close percentage.

As a student life specialist, I asked Ray Volel, why is jury duty, and filling out these surveys so important especially for young people? He responded, “Part of being a citizen is to serve-and when someone has to go to court-they deserve a fair trial.” Which is absolutely true. In his response, he also addresses that, “students are always the first to complain when there is a big case-and the jury made a poor decision-if you’re not part of the process, you can’t complain.” And with students who have more to say in today’s society, why not use their voice to better the community, to help the community or someone. Volel also states during the interview, “You want as many people to be involved-a bigger, for a more diverse pool.” We were always taught to never see things one way, that there is always more than one solution, perspective, idea, or vision. The bigger the pool, the more diverse it is, which is exactly what Ray Volel said. This is the kind of pool that contributes to a fairer trial because one of the most heartbreaking thing that could ever happen would be to indent an innocent person or set a guilty person free.

We are all emerging into adult hood and taking on more “real world” issues. It’s when you’re on your own, you’re paying your own bills, and going to school, work and life is just going faster than you. But so is that person being tried for larceny, theft or murder. Jury duty is not only a civic responsibility but it’s also part of being a citizen. It’s your government showing us that this is a democracy, that we have the power, the being a juror should not be burden, it should be an opportunity, an opportunity for you to help your community and an opportunity to help someone. It takes only a minute to fill out the questionnaire that is sent to your house. Once you send it back, it is added to a bigger, larger pool and the next steps are further interviews to see if you are indeed qualified to serve. It is a very long and precise process because a group of people holds the fate for one person. Picking jurors is more difficult that you believe. During the interview with Hon. Audrey Pheffer she states, “You have to go in with an open-mind.” You have to be completely unbiased, and this is why college students and young adults make the best juror. We come out of college with the intentions of starting life, our minds are open, new, and fresh.
The streets and subways of New York City are heavily populated places. So much so that locals go out to the parks and train stations to perform musical acts for the public in exchange for a small donation. What many New Yorkers don’t know is that the majority of these street performers have a permit given to them by the city of New York. This permit allows them to perform in public spaces whenever they please to. If not for this permit they would be stopped on good day forty dollars per hour in donations. Echo added when asked about her income the performer explained that on bad days she makes roughly twelve dollars per hour and you get noticed by important people so always be at your best. Another group of subway musicians, a couple Larry and Sonia Rivera, play music by hitting large cylinder containers with drum sticks said, “If you love doing what you do then keep trying, never give up”. Larry Rivera has been playing the drums since he was five years old and Sonia Rivera started playing four years ago. Together this couple has an incredible amount of talent and harmoniously complements each other’s style. They both agreed, “We love playing every day and entertaining people that get off of work feeling tired, we want to do this always”.

In order for someone to obtain this permit to perform in public a person must apply by sending a CD or DVD recording of them or their group playing an instrument or singing to a group of judges from the Music Under New York (MUNY) program. MUNY is a program provided to the public by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in order to be selected to receive a permit. Then you are picked to audition for a one day competition in front of judges, other competitors, and the public. Here, the judges decide (according to your performance and skill) whether you are eligible to possess a permit. According to licensed Manhattan street musician, Samantha Echo, “The competition is tough so you need to practice a lot to make sure you get a permit, There will be many talented people applying”. This young lady is easy on the eyes with her skinny figure, tremendous vocal skills and powerful voice she leaves the public in awe while performing. Samantha says she started singing at 6 years old then she later sang with a friend who was a licensed violin player in the train station 5 years ago; this friend told her about MUNY and helped her apply. Now you can find her around many Manhattan train stations such as the station in 42nd Street and Port Authority where she sings through a microphone while music from a radio plays. When asked what she liked most about performing in the street, Samantha had this to say, “It feels liberating and I feel the freedom of being able to sing whatever I want”. Many people may be wondering, how does the economical side to this endeavor work? Well when asked about her income the performer explained that on bad days she makes roughly twelve dollars per hour and on good day forty dollars per hour in donations. Echo added that this all depends where you go in the city and what you do to entertain. According to the MUNY website, “MUNY performers are not paid (except for special events), but are allowed to receive donations”. Samantha Echo gave some tips you should know while pursuing a career as a street musician. First, always provide cards and information about yourself. Second, while performing you should try new techniques to practice and better your skills. Third, these live performances will help

Queensborough’s Living Legend

intense fundraising to raise nearly six million dollars to build what is now known as the Holocaust Resource Center.

But Dr. Flug says there is much more to the center than its name implies.

“It goes beyond the Holocaust,” said Flug. “It is a demonstration of the story of the Holocaust and other genocides and wrongful acts against human rights. A gathering place for survivors who have suffered experiences of having their rights taken away by both physical and psychological brutalization.”

Nonetheless, in making note of the 3,500 Holocaust survivors living in the borough of Queens alone, Dr. Flug calls the resource center a place of recognition for those who survived it.

Every week, the center holds both scheduled and walk-in programs for Holocaust survivors such as “Hollywood and the Holocaust,” a film series where survivors watch movies and discuss their cultural relevance.

The resource center additionally holds internships focusing on other social justice issues such as that of the 1937 occupation of Japan by Korea in World War II and its great injustice to young Asian women. Many of which were kidnapped, raped, and identified as “Comfort Women,” to accompany soldiers.

“By the end of the war, half of the women were dead, in most cases by either disease or brutality,” said Dr. Flug. The Resource Center reached out to the surviving women, using Skype as the communication tool and subsequent platform for a student internship.

With roughly 150 nationalities represented and over 50 languages spoken on the Queensborough campus, it is no added surprise that Con Edison sponsors an internship through the Holocaust Resource Center, which focuses on the prevention of hate crimes.

When asked how it feels to have taken part in each and every program, exhibit and internship that the resource center currently has in place, Dr. Flug quickly shifts focus to the student body.

“My greatest lesson, without putting much thought into it, is learning that the wealth of social experience that our children bring to campus is a tremendous asset. It’s better than any textbook you’ve got, because it’s real.”

At the end of the interview and tour, Dr. Flug placed emphasis on the meaning behind many museums’ dedication to the souls of those affected by injustice, stating, “They always say, ‘don’t forget us’.”
The U.S. Drug War in Mexico

By Agustin Freeman

The U.S. drug war in Mexico has reached a tipping point. Mexicans are rising up against their government in response to a police attack against a group of leftist student-teachers from the Ayotzinapa Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural School. On Sept. 26, local police in Guerrero opened fire on the unarmed group wounding over 20 and killing six, including three student-teachers and three unrelated bystanders. 43 of those who survived the shooting were taken into police custody and have not been seen since. The “disappeared” youth range between 18 and 25 years old.

Ayotzinapa has a long rebellious tradition. It was the birthplace of a guerrilla war of resistance from 1967 until 1974, aiming to give land to peasants and improve their living conditions. The Rural School is designed to teach youth from peasant families to serve the needs of their oppressed and neglected communities. In the words of the students: “What the government wants is to create schools that are submissive. To make the Rural Schools disappear. That is where they teach us to think critically. We are stones in the boots of the government.”

After the attack, parents of the students reported that they were offered bribes by the government to keep quiet and abandon the search for their sons. The government likely hoped the case would be swept under the rug like so many other atrocities in Mexico, where 98 percent of murders go unsolved.

Instead, a rising national movement for justice forced law enforcement to make mass arrests, numbering over 70 so far, including police, gang members and various government officials. Arrested police officers confessed that they carried out the attack on orders of the mayor of Iguala, José Luis Abarca. He and his wife, with long histories of corruption and drug-ties, were recently arrested. The governor of Guerrero has stepped down from his position under the pressure of protesters.

The responsibility for this atrocity cannot be confined to a handful of local corrupt police and gangsters. Far beyond the local level, calls are growing by the day for President Enrique Peña Nieto of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to resign. The PRI itself has a history of blood on its hands, including an infamous wave of kidnappings during the 1960s and 1970s, which targeted leftist critics of the government. The president did not publicly comment on the Ayotzinapa case until 11 days after the attack, and did not meet with parents of the victims until 33 days later. The parents say they do not trust the government, claiming the authorities have shown a lack of commitment to punish those responsible.

Only a few months ago, Peña Nieto was receiving much praise from United States media for his supposed role in stabilizing Mexico and strengthening the economy. Forbes, The Economist and The Wall Street Journal have been hyped as “Mexico’s Moment” proved to be a tragic farce.

United States’ policy in Mexico has greatly contributed to the current state of affairs. From the foundation of the Mexican nation-state in 1821, its relation with America’s has been between the oppressed and the oppressor. The United States gained approximately one-third of Mexican territory during the “Mexican-American War” (1846-1848), taking California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. Today, the exploitation continues.

A recent example would be the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1993, which, much like Peña Nieto’s “reforms,” promised to lead Mexico’s economy into “first-world” status. Instead, NAFTA, along with other circumstances, has driven many Mexicans to poverty, unemployment and displacement, while American corporations have benefitted greatly.

Mexico’s desperate living conditions serve as fertile soil for the growth of a more profitable and violent drug trade, the seeds of which were also planted by America policies. The United States has exported great sums of money, weapons and military training to the Mexican government despite its record of extreme violence against political opposition and cooperation with drug gangs.

Since Felipe Calderón’s militarized drug war began in 2006, Mexico has seen an increase in American-sponsored training and arming of Mexican military forces. One of the most violent drug cartels, the Zetas, originated within an “elite” division of the Mexican military and was later trained directly by the US military. An estimated 25 percent of soldiers from these “elite” Mexican divisions will eventually join drug gangs. The US-imposed “War on Drugs” has empowered drug cartels and criminal organizations, rather than combatting them. Unsurprisingly, human rights complaints against the military rose sharply from 691 between 2003 and 2006, to 7,350 between 2007 and 2012, resulting in only 38 convictions.

The “War on Drugs” has not produced a lower demand or availability of illegal substances. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had to acknowledge that the “insatiable demand for drugs” in the United States “fuels the drug trade.” Drug production throughout Latin America is mostly oriented towards the American market, yet almost none of the “drug war” funds are directed towards reducing the drug demand in the United States through honest medical research, education and treatment.

Drug prohibition maintains a profitable black market that is, by definition, dominated by criminal elements. American officials, however, refuse to even consider the decriminalization and/or legalization of illegal drugs. The “anti-drug” warriors in American law enforcement and drug cartels around the world depend on each other to keep their influence and power over political structures.

Two months after the attack, the case of the 43 disappeared student-teachers has put the issue of Mexico’s corrupt narco-government on the world stage. After years of neglect by the United States mainstream media in favor of conflicts farther from “home,” the Mexican drug war has become too grave to ignore.

In the last decade, Mexican drug cartels have killed more than 100,000 people. 27,000 more have “disappeared.” This level of violence exceeds the atrocities of ISIS, yet it receives much less attention from United States media outlets.

The Ayotzinapa massacre is a tipping point; it is no longer possible to ignore the destruction created by US drug policies. In the words of a Mexican activist, “There has been a dirty war being played on Mexico, sponsored by U.S. dollars. The bullets that we may find in the students, that we find in our peasants, in our indigenous people, are labeled ‘U.S.-made.’”

Do you like to write? Do you want to share your writing with others?

Then write for the Communiqué.

The QCC Communiqué is looking for a few good writers for its Spring 2015 issues.

We are especially interested in micro-reviews (200-300 words) of new movies; editorials related to QCC, higher education, NYC, and the world; feature articles about college life; and book, theatre, and music reviews for our arts section.

Writing for the Communiqué is a great opportunity to share your ideas with other QCC students and contribute to the campus community. It’s also an excellent way to beef up your resume and your college applications.

Interested students should contact Communiqué Faculty Adviser Prof. Elisabeth Toohey at EToohey@qcc.cuny.edu

The COMMUNIQUÉ: It’s Your Paper!
Technology

Three Apps To Avoid

SketchFactor by Sketchfactor, LLC

SketchFactor, a fairly new app, has already accomplished the feat of earning a bad reputation. By using public data, combined with crowd sourcing, it allows people to rate and comment on a specific area that they consider dangerous. For example, a user posted: "Local public housing sounds like predators and muggers. One user posted: "Local public housing sounds like: ‘why am I awake this early?’ or ‘I wish an answer to my question’."

The app’s explicit goal is to help warn people of things, like predators and muggers. One user posted: "It’s the kind of area where you should be on your guard!"

How is this in any shape an immediate danger to anyone? How does this make that area sketchy when you have absolutely no clue as to the real reason the people mentioned are there?

Similarly, another user posted: "Thugs listening to rap music pretty loud. I was walking my three dogs and they were pretty freaked out. I’m not racist but I don’t want thugs around.”

I’m sorry but if you have to say, “I’m not racist,” it probably means you are, and listening to rap music doesn’t automatically classify you as a “thug.” These are just some examples of how this app is reinforcing racism and discrimination. We’ve all seen what can happen when black men are perceived as "thugs" for no good reason—anyone heard of Eric Garner or Michael Brown?

On Twitter, @sumofus tweeted: "SketchFactor is promoting racism, classism and paranoia between people from different backgrounds.”

Sadly, this is true because instead of having this app help the community feel safe, it’s making a mockery of predominantly lower income and minority based neighborhoods. In this day and age, it’s inexplicable how much discrimination and animosity there still is amongst Americans, but sadly it’s not unfathomable. This is certainly an app that I would recommend everyone not to download. It’s an interesting concept, but they went at it completely wrong.

Yik Yak by Yik Yak, LLC

With over four millions downloads, Yik Yak has become a phenomenon amongst college students across the United States. YiK Yak allows users to post anything and everything to a specific area at a time, only within a mile and a half radius. Once you get further away, your audience changes and you can’t see the yaks of your previous location.

Sounds like a good concept, right? Well, it was until high schoolers, online bullies and online trolls decided to make it not a good one.

Usually people will use this app to post benign things like: “why am I awake this early?” or “I wish an angel would appear and give me pizza,” but as with all things, there are those who ruin it for the rest of us.

Over the last couple of weeks, there has been a lot of controversy around the app. Arrests have even been made due to the fact that students have made bomb threats like “The school is going to go boom … enjoy a ** holes” and “another bomb will hit MHS.” This has caused many universities and high schools to consider the removal of the app from their campus.

Recently at Kenyon College women who lived and worked at Crozier House, the campus center for women, were targeted on Yik Yak. There were disgusting threats of sexual assault and rape posted on the app, such as “Gang bang at the Crozier house tonight” or “Bondage and whips involved.”

I’m a bit abashed to say that I actually used this app a few days to get a better understanding of the dynamics behind it. After the third day I was back on Google play uninstalling it. If you value your sanity the last app you want to download is Yik Yak.

Ask.fm by Ask.fm, I.L.C

If you ask a preteen, or teen if they know of Ask.fm 9 out of 10 of them will tell you they have their own account. With over 10 million downloads ask.fm is set up in a question and answer format. It’s a social networking website and app that allows users to post questions, and pictures where people can comment on, be it anonymous or not.

This app has recently received a lot of unwanted press attention because of the high number of suicides linked to it.

Since the app was launched in 2010 there have been seven known suicides linked to Bullying on Ask.fm. The app allows people to receive anonymous messages that aren’t monitored by the site. It allows people to send hateful messages like “go kill yourself”, “drank bleach”, “go get cancer”, and it also leads to people getting blackmailed.

You never realize how cruel the world can be till you give them the opportunity to do so anonymously.

Being a teenager is a vulnerable stage in everyone’s life, where approval from others becomes almost the focus of our everyday life. But for these seven teenagers whose ages ranged from twelve to seventeen it became unbearable when they were looking for this needed acceptance online. They were bullied about their looks and for struggling with depression and anxiety. Cowardly anonymous people who felt powerful behind this shield preyed on these weak children without a care in the world for their mental safety.

This app is the one that worried me the most. How can the creators allow this app to continue running when it’s causing so much harm? Yes, kids will be cruel no matter what, but this is a playground for cyber bullies to prey on the weak. How can they possibly wake up every morning and not feel remorseful that their app allowed this to happen?

As with the other apps it may have been a good concept, but it has been executed and used entirely wrongly. So keep your holiday season and life after sane and safe by staying far away from these apps – and making sure those you care about, particularly teenagers and adolescents, do as well!
Technology

Just Google It

By Jonathan Berzon

Close your eyes and imagine a world without Google. If you started feeling an onset of panic you don’t need to worry, Google is here to stay.

Since its inception in September 1998, Google has quickly become more than just a search engine.

“Google isn’t a website, it’s a lifeline,” said David Cho, a first year student at Queensborough Community College (QCC).

Nothing could better describe how we as students view and use Google in our day-to-day lives. We use Google for everything nowadays. Whether it’s researching for an upcoming paper, looking for directions or bus routes, or even finding what to make for dinner, Google has completely enveloped how we find information.

With such great power and knowledge never straying farther than our pocket, the question isn’t, “Why should we use it?” but instead “Why shouldn’t we?”.

I now don’t plan on doing something as crazy as persuading you away from Google. Instead, I would like to present another option which could benefit you in your academic career.

Libraries, the quiet older brother of search engines. The often overlooked and forgotten libraries have been part of society since 2600 BC. Now while we’ve progressed from writing on clay tablets, the same ideals still exist. What has changed, though, is us.

Many people are now questioning the importance of libraries.

“Why go to a place with 1,000 books when I can search online for millions?” said Lisa Ritley, a second year student at QCC.

While the question is valid, many people miss the important aspects that libraries can offer. Libraries are not just buildings of books. At the heart of every library is a librarian.

“Librarians can point you in the direction needed using years of research and experience. While Google is a great tool when information is needed in haste, the information given is based on algorithms instead of experience,” said Professor Neera Mohess, a librarian here at QCC.

This personalized process is one of the many things people can learn to take advantage of when searching for ideas. While Google may give you an answer to a specific question, a good librarian can show you the path and direction needed to find the question.

Libraries also have utilities similar to Google called databases. Even though they are similar in the idea that they are used to search for information, the uses and practicality are very different.

Using a library database can be comparable to finding a person in a town, unlike Google which is like finding a person in a country. While Google will give millions upon millions of hits on the topic you searched, a library database can narrow it down to a few hundred of pages which pertain specifically to your topic.

The other major difference is the quality of articles. Information on the internet should always be taken with a grain of salt. Library databases focus primarily on published works. These published works are given to you for the low cost of nothing. Google on the other hand can give you papers written by any stranger with a computer and some time. When you do search for scholarly or published papers, you might find that they have a small price tag attached to them.

Your wallet will not be the only thing that’s more comfortable if you choose a library. If you have trouble focusing on papers or find yourself easily distracted by outside stimuli, it might be a good idea to try out your college or public library.

“With my little brothers running around I needed to find a place where I could go to do my school work without being distracted,” said Ritika Kaur, a second year student at QCC.

The library is a great tool to have at your disposal, if you have the time and patience. The fact of the matter is; we live in a high paced society where papers and homework are given shorter and shorter deadlines, hence the appeal of Google, which gives you the flexibility to do your research anywhere at any time. In that sense, it is the ideal search engine for the common student who prays for more hours in the day.

As Albert Einstein once said “Information is not knowledge.”

We as students need to learn to use these two vast resources of information in the most intelligent way possible to turn them into knowledge.

Holidays

To Protest Or Not To Protest: How Did You Spend Your Black Friday?

By Lourdes Carballo and Sarah Khan

Black Friday has become a tradition for those who love to shop. As most of us know, Black Friday is the day after Thanksgiving when individuals splurge because of the endless amount of discounts throughout America and now some European nations. Shopping tends to get chaotic when it begins at midnight with huge discounts, crowds, and long lines.

This year, however, in addition to “Black Friday specials,” there was a different form of chaotic behavior, which included protests.

It all started with a heartbreaking event in Ferguson, Missouri, when a white police officer, Darren Wilson, shot an unarmed black man to death.

The victim, 18-year-old Michael Brown was shot at least six times.

Protests were triggered around the country due to the fact that Wilson had maintained his innocence and the grand jury decided not to charge him formally with any crime. Many people saw it best to protest Brown’s death outside retail stores and popular overcrowded shopping centers to disrupt Black Friday, and thus raise additional awareness of this case from Ferguson.

In Missouri, the St. Louis Galleria Mall was forced to temporarily shut down due to a flood of demonstrators who entered the mall and disrupted shopping. Demonstrators reportedly chanted, “hands up, don’t shoot”. They also stopped and laid on the floor of the Galleria Mall in a “die-in.”

The acts were relatively calm compared to the riots, burning buildings, and continuous nights of protests following Brown’s initial killing and the grand jury’s decision.

In New York, about 300 protestors gathered for a march outside the world famous Macy’s in Herald Square carrying signs that read, “We will not be silent” and “Ferguson is everywhere”. Police followed several protestors that entered the store while others continued their march towards Time Square.

Protests were not just happening in Ferguson and in New York, but throughout the country. As protestors marched through Wicker Park in Chicago, they symbolized the amount of time Brown’s body was on the street by spending more than four hours asking people not to shop. Elsewhere, about 20 people disrupted a station in West Oakland, California used by Black Friday shoppers by chaining themselves together the doors of a Bay Area Rapid Transit train (BART). The station was forced to temporarily close for about two hours and a total of 14 people were arrested.

Many of the protestors were encouraged to boycott Black Friday in order to draw relations between economic and racial inequality. Seeking better working conditions for low-wage employees, about 100 protestors outside a Wal-Mart in Chicago chanted, “Wal-Mart Wal-Mart, you’re no good! Treat your workers like you should!”

Due to this protest, the entrance of the mall had been blocked. Multiple people, who were trying to get their holiday shopping done, weren’t able to do so until the area had cleared out later that day. This was the case for certain malls in St. Louis and Seattle, as well.

The majority of New Yorkers are aware of the commotion that Black Friday brings throughout the day, but those who were trying to shop were not able to do so until the chaos had died down.
Thanks for the Gift, I Think.

By Rosean Joseph

It’s Christmas Day and the family is sitting around excited to open up their gifts. It is now your turn to open your gift. You are hoping it is a Play-station 4 or X-Box One, or maybe even a new laptop, or maybe it’s that new pair of shoes you’ve been hinting about to your parents the last few weeks.

You open up your gift and it’s… a popcorn maker. It’s the popcorn maker you’ve always wanted. Instead of buying popcorn at the store or just warming up popcorn in the microwave, now you can make popcorn anytime you want (or once in a while because you don’t eat popcorn that often anyway).

As college students, we have received gifts over the years that have been appreciated and useful. Gifts like a new laptop, or a tablet. Maybe it’s a new television, or a new phone, or the gift everyone loves, money.

Then, you have those gifts that really leave you puzzled. The gifts you open up on Christmas day in front of family and you put on a fake smile because you don’t want to seem ungrateful. Or those gifts you receive a few days after Christmas day and you open them up and say to yourself, “what am I supposed to do with this?”

There are good gifts and bad gifts to give to college students. Here are some student’s thoughts on what they consider to be both good and bad gifts to give:

Laptop (especially, a Macbook)

Who doesn’t need a laptop? This is probably the most requested item any college student asks for. It’s easy access for them to do their homework on, take notes in class, or even download eBooks to.

“The best gift you can give is a laptop, specifically a Macbook, because not only can it be used essential to school work but can be used in leisure time” says one former student at Queensborough Community College.

One parent of a college student agreed, “Every student, especially a college student can us a laptop computer to do their school work.”

Clearly, a student laptop is one of the better gifts to get, and around the holiday season there are some great deals on laptops. Places like Walmart, Best Buy and Amazon often have deals on laptops. You can get one for as low as $250. It doesn’t have to be an Apple Macbook, which usually goes for no less than $800, but just something simple that you can do your school work on, as well as use it for your own entertainment purposes.

More Money, No Problem

One gift that you can never go wrong with is good old fashioned cash, and when the question was raised of what you think is a good gift to a college student, almost everyone said money.

It doesn’t matter how you give it to the person, whether it is in a card, in an envelope or just giving it to the person straight in their hand, you can never go wrong with money. And the great thing about money as a gift is, any amount (the person being cheap aside) is a good amount.

Dorshelle Rose, a student at QCC gave her take on money as a gift.

“I think money is a good gift because the majority of college students struggle a lot finically.”

This is very accurate. Some students have to pay for their own way to get to school every day, whether it’s paying for a metro card or making sure they have gas for their car. That costs money and students don’t always have it.

Kaj Tobitt, another student at QCC shared his opinion, “The best gift to give a college student is money because most college students need a little something extra in their pockets.”

Another parent of a college student shared similar views on giving students money. “Money is one thing that they always need to help with school, especially those who live on a campus.”

Though QCC is not a residential campus, the need for money doesn’t change. Sometimes a student needs money for when be or she is stuck somewhere and needs to take a cab home, or maybe they don’t have a washing machine at home and are running low on underwear for the week. That extra $10 or $20 given to them could make all the difference.

Re-gifting

Now re-gifting can be very complicated and many people have different views on it. There are some students who don’t mind the idea of being re-gifted.

One student says “I don’t mind re-gifts, it’s the thought that counts.” Another expressed a similar opinion, explaining, “I probably wouldn’t even realize it was re-gifted. If it’s not noticeable then I’m cool with it.”

A third QCC student says he has done some re-gifting of his own. “Personally I don’t care about my gift being re-gifted, I’ve done it in the past.” Like many, he has no problem with the re-gifting process, whether giving or receiving, as long as there is a gift involved.

However, there are students who don’t like the idea of re-gifting.

“It would hurt my feelings to know that someone re-gifted something I gave them. I put thought into gifts” says one QCC student.

While some don’t mind the idea of being re-gifted, there is also the other side to it, the gift that is being re-gifted. No one wants to know that a gift they gave someone wasn’t useful to the person they gave it to. So although it sounds like a good idea, it can also hurt some feelings, which is something to think about.

Credit Card

Giving a student a credit card is a bad idea, let alone as a gift. Most students don’t know what credit is or how it works. They just know that there is a certain amount of money on a card they can spend and they will spend it, and that can lead to financial problems in the future.

“I wouldn’t give a college student a credit card. Most are too irresponsible and find themselves in financial problems” one student said.

Giving a gift around the holiday season is supposed to be one in which they can use as much as possible and enjoy. Even though students can use a credit card, especially around the holidays, if not handled correctly, it can lead to a lot of debt in the future. It can affect you possibly taking out loans, or owning a home, or even something as simple as buying a phone, and debt is one gift no student wants, no matter the season. It’s best to give a student a credit card after graduation when they have a steady job and can handle it.

Netlix

Students during the week probably don’t have a lot of time to watch television. So during those sometimes very few moments of free time they get, it would be nice to have a way to catch up on shows that they have missed.

A Netflix account can allow students to watch their shows on their laptop, or on their cellphone when they download the app, as well as on their video game system.

“It’s easily the most convenient way to consume media, and the price is affordable for what I’m getting,” said one QCC student. At only $8.99 per month, with the first month is free when you set up an account, it is very affordable indeed.

“I love the variety”, Steve from QCC said as he explain why he likes Netflix.

“I’m a huge fan of documentaries because it’s convenient and an interesting way to learn new stuff.”

Sometimes, depending on what class you are taking, a professor will mention a movie or documentary that will help you get a better understanding for the topic being discussed in the class, so it is very satisfying to know that all you have to do is just go on Netflix and search the movie or documentary and it’s there. It is not only good for one’s pleasure, but it can be used for school stuff as well. Who knew?

No Gift is a Bad Gift

Is there really such thing as a bad gift? Well according to some students, no gift is really a bad gift. Somehow, someway, they will find a use for the gift they received.

“A bad gift for a college student? There is no such thing.

Any gift can be used” says Dwayne, a student at QCC.

Any gift being useful is a great way to think. It makes the whole gift getting process a lot easier when the student is appreciative of anything he or she receives.

During this holiday season family and friends will probably think long and hard about to what to get a college student, and though there may be gifts that some may like more than others, the worst give one can give is the gift of nothing. There is always something a student needs, even if it does not seem useful at the time, even if it’s not a big elaborate gift that will make those around you when you open it say, “Wow!”

In the end, no matter how cliché it might sound, it truly is the thought that counts, and for most students, just the mere thought of someone thinking about them around the holidays, is the best gift they will receive.
**Holidays**

What to Do During The Holiday

**By Pimsiri Kanchanasakul**

Are you excited for the upcoming holidays? It’s been a long semester and you probably deserve a break. So how about celebrating it New York City? There’s plenty to do for everyone in the city that never sleeps.

**Shopping**

Some may say the holidays are all about shopping. Though this is not true, it may seem like it with all the seasonal sales. But if department stores are not your cup of peppermint hot chocolate, then check out some of these indoor/outdoor pop up markets.

Williamsburg Holiday Market in Brooklyn: Located on 70 N 7th, Brooklyn, this indoor flea market boasts more than 50 independent designers, vintage dealers, sellers, and artists. You can find handmade and hand craft items, and go home with a unique present.

Other holiday markets that can’t be missed include Columbus Circle, located on 1849 Broadway (Dec. 2 – 24, 2014) and Union Square located on 80 5th Ave, 31818, NY (Nov. 24 – Dec 24, 2014). Both locations serve up festive food and drinks. With so many vendor you’ll be leaving happy and full. Also, the fact that both places are historical landmarks is a bonus.

If department stores are your preference, then be sure to check out their holiday windows. Many decorate their displays for the holiday and some are simply astonishing. Macy’s and Bergdorf Goodman, Sak’s, Lord & Taylor, Barney’s, and Bloomingdale’s each of the holiday windows have a Christmas theme. Check the ones closest to 5th Ave since they are all located nearby and you can cover them in about two miles.

**Shows**

You haven’t fully taken in New York City, if you don’t catch a Broadway show. There are plenty of holiday live shows to choose from, so there’s bound to be something you like.

Here are some of the most popular: Radio City Christmas Spectacular (Radio City Hall), The Nutcracker (Lincoln Center), How The Grinch Stole Christmas (Madison Square Garden) and A Christmas Carol.

There are also concerts that will have you jingling and jangling. You can check out Mariah Carey perform renditions of classic holiday songs (Dec.15-21, 2014) and Fresh 102.7’s Holiday Jam featuring Train, Daughtry, Echosmith, Gavin Degraw, American Authors at the Beacon Theater. Z100 has their annual Jingle Ball featuring big artists like Taylor Swift, Iggy, Sam Smith, Jesse J, Maroon 5, Calvin Smith, One Republic, 5 Seconds of Summer and many more.

**Out and About**

Ice-skating in the winter is a favorite pastime for many and it’s an affordable activity. So if you can’t find something to do with your friends or that special someone, head over to Bryant Park, open every day from 8am to 10pm. Admission is free, though skate rentals cost $15 and it’s $9 for a locker.

The Bronx Zoo is also free on Wednesdays with suggested donations. The winter is a great time to go by the zoo because the animals are more active in the cooler weather and it’s less crowded.

For a more adult oriented activity, you can also participate in a SantaCon, which is a bar crawl in which participants dress up as Santa Claus or other Christmas characters. Or you can just watch it all go down on Dec.13 because they’ll be all over the city (starts at 10am).

And if you are looking to do some holiday arts and crafts, check out the Winter Solstice Celebration at Van Cortlandt Park (Broadway at 264th St). Admission is free and you can enjoy cider, stories, and candlelit walk Putnam trail through this historic park.

**Holiday Celebration**

Now let’s get to the exciting part – ways to celebrate the holiday season. A holiday train show at New York’s Botanical Garden (Now through Jan. 12) is great for the entire family. This 23-year tradition features more than 150 iconic buildings recreated with barks, leaves, and other natural materials. You will recognize the New York Brooklyn Bridge, Statue Liberty, Rockefeller Center and many more. Next, head to Rockefeller Plaza Center to see the massive Christmas tree. It is one of the most popular holiday attraction in the Big Apple. It will be there until January 7th, 2015. Also, if you go there on December 14th there will be an annual tuba Christmas show where hundreds of tenor and bass players will play their 41st annual show starting at 3:30pm.

And if you are looking for something to do at night, check out Holiday Under the Stars at the shops at Columbus Circle at Time Warner Center. The building features twelve 14-foot stars that hand from the ceiling of the 150-foot Great Room. There’s daily shows from 5pm till midnight.

Of course, the best way to end the holiday cheers is to finish off with the New Year Ball drop. Thousands of people will be lining up as early as 3pm so get there early!

**Volunteering**

Last but not least, this is the season of giving. So why not play Santa Clause and do some good deeds? www.newyorkcares.org provides lists of volunteering projects for the holidays. You can volunteer at soup kitchen, hospitals, shelters and this website is great because it lets you know how many spots are left. If you are looking for a more off beat volunteering, be sure to check out Grand Central Food Program: Coalition For The Homeless. Every night between 6:30 - 9:30pm, their mobile soup kitchen stops at 31 sites throughout Manhattan and Bronx to deliver food, clothing, and blankets.

**Arts**

And The Beat Goes On

**By Angela Medel**

The year is coming to end, which means another year filled with plenty of new music. However, people nowadays say things like, “There is no such thing as good music anymore” or “Music isn’t how it used to be,”—but they are wrong.

Music has changed from how it was twenty, thirty or even forty years ago, but that will happen over time. Ten years from now, music won’t be how it currently is but that doesn’t mean there is no good music anymore. Maybe you won’t find it on Top 40 radio, but that doesn’t mean good music is non-existent. It just takes a little bit of digging.

Just this year, we have been blessed with music from artists of genre such as Sam Smith, Karen O and many more. Here are five of the best records of 2014 (in no particular order).

1. **Sam Smith – “In the Lonely Hour”**

If any new artist deserves recognition, it’s Sam Smith. Straight out of London, Sam Smith has become a household name being featured in Disclosure’s widely popular song “Latch.” Later, he released his widely anticipated debut album, “In the Lonely Hour.” This record will take listeners on an emotional journey and enables them to get inside the mind of Smith.

The soul of his voice and the honesty of the lyrics are heard in each song, especially in “Leave Your Lover,” “I’m Not the Only One” and “Good Thing.” The album ranges from stripped down piano/ acoustic style to more upbeat radio friendly pop music. There are even added hints of R&B with a little bit of hip-hop to please the ears of those who appreciate a mix of different styles.

2. **Kitten- “Kitten”**

After releasing three very successful EP’s “Sunday School,” “Cut It Out,” and “Like A Stranger,” Los Angeles based rock band Kitten has finally released their first album including five new songs, a few songs from previous EP’s and even including two stripped down acoustic versions of their songs “Kill the Light” and “Apples and Cigarettes.”

Kitten hits the mark on providing us with a variety of sounds going from 80s synth-pop with songs like “Sensible,” “Devotion” and “Like a Stranger” to trap influenced songs like “Why I Wait,” and even power rock ballads like “Girl!”. Chloe Curidie sings her heart out in every song and puts every ounce of her into the lyrics providing us with honest, incredible music. I predict Kitten will rise to stardom and become a force to reckon with.

3. **Girlpool- “Girlpool EP”**

Another band straight out of Los Angeles, the female duo Girlpool proves that you don’t need a five-member band to make some kick ass rock music. Simple yet powerful are the words one would use to describe Girlpool’s recent self-titled EP. Girlpool have managed to make an intense, raw, personal punk rock album with beautiful harmonies and crazy, catchy guitar riffs.

One track off of the EP “Jane” tells the story of a girl named Jane who punches a boy named Tommy in the mouth; although the reason is unclear, it could be because he spoke “too fast”. It’s a two minute song that sounds like a murder ballad with an overall empowering message that you shouldn’t be afraid to stand up for yourself. But if you are just looking for some fun angry girl rock music to jam out to, listen to songs like “Blah Blah Blah”, and “American Beauty” that make you want to head bang and start a mosh pit in your own bedroom.

4. **Flying Lotus- “You’re Dead!”**

Music producer representing the west coast, Flying Lotus knows how to combine genres like jazz, electronic and hip-hop to make trippy, atmospheric music for people’s ears, unlike any other artist. Flying Lotus music mostly consists of instrumental beats and sounds usually featuring very little vocals; however, on this album, rappers like Kendrick Lamar and Snoop Dogg both made special appearances on the songs “Never Catch Me” and “Dead Man’s Tetris”.

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And The Beat Goes On

“Never Catch Me,” the album’s lead single, provides us with a collision of in your face rap lyrics and experimental beats. This song introduces Flying Lotus fans to Kendrick Lamar but Kendrick Lamar fans also get introduced to Flying Lotus, if they had never heard of him before of course. It is a win-win for both artists.

Besides the hip-hop sounding beats of the record, there are also plenty of other genres included in songs like “Cold Dead” where there is an explosion of jazz rock with the added distorted guitars mixed with keyboards and saxophones that will get your heart racing.

5. Karen O– “Crush Songs”

If you haven’t listened to the “Yeah Yeah Yeahs,” there may be something wrong with you because you are missing out on the infectious, powerful vocals of their front woman, Karen O. But this isn’t about the “Yeah Yeah Yeahs,” this is about Karen O releasing a solo album “Crush Songs.” She has contributed to the soundtracks for Where the Wild Things Are and Her with the opportunity to perform “The Moon Song,” which was on the Her soundtrack, at the Oscars.

“Crush Songs” is the more stripped down, acoustic and a little folkly side of Karen O. Although many of the songs on the record are very short, they are sweet and to the point. It’s almost like listening to Karen O’s diary entries with the added soothing and quirkiness of her voice. Besides, who wouldn’t want to read the diary of a badass rocker chick like Karen O. She expresses her sadness through her voice which is especially heard in songs “Ooo,” “NYC baby” and “Rapt.” Since the saxophone is too thin to work with. In high school in Taiwan, we started to use oil color because oil paints are stronger.

5. Karen O – “Crush Songs”

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Q.C.C. Artist Profile: Lisa Baw

An Inspiration

By Lea Passione

Queensborough Community College (QCC) is a melting pot of students when it comes to the population. We may not know it but some students are working up the ranks and earning credit for work they have created with their talents. Some are successful despite difficult challenges they faced.

One of those remarkable successes is Lisa Baw. Baw was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the US in 2006. Baw was born with severe cerebral palsy, a disorder in movement, muscle tone or posture, which is caused by damage to the brain before or after birth. Doctors had feared she would never walk or talk. She took up painting with her mother’s encouragement as a way of therapy, communication and practicing hand-eye coordination. Cerebral palsy was not the only problem Baw faced. At 16, Baw received a liver transplant after being poisoned from a high intake of herbal medicine. She is well known in Taiwan as a writer and a painter who has even published books, including a collection of her paintings and poems that is popular among children. Her paintings have been used for IBM Taiwan’s calendar and Thanksgiving cards. Another of Baw’s accomplishments was obtaining a Special Olympics gold medal for swimming in New York City and Taiwan. Baw has received the United Nations Millennium Dreamer Award and was named one of the Top Ten Outstanding Women in Taiwan.

She has held exhibits for her oil paintings in both Taiwan and New York after her move to the United States in 2006 when she was 20. At the Asian Art exhibit at the QCC Art Gallery, Baw was the only QCC student to have her work in the exhibit alongside other well-known artists.

In addition, Baw also created the Wish Dreamer Foundation, a not-for-profit organization that helps people with mental and physical disabilities to achieve their dreams, funded in part by the sale of Baw’s paintings.

Baw is currently working towards getting a college degree. One of the influential people she looks up to is Helen Keller who was deaf and blind and yet is symbolic of how successful one can become despite a disability. In a similar way, Baw also wants to move beyond her disability of how successful one can become despite a disability. In a similar way, Baw also wants to move beyond her disability. Helen Keller who was deaf and blind and yet is symbolic of how successful one can become despite a disability.

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Q.C.C. Artist Profile: Lisa Baw
An Inspiration

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chairperson and he ended up choosing the one that is in the art gallery.

LP: How does it feel to be the only Q.C.C. student to be represented in this gallery?

LB: It makes me happy and very proud. They never accept student’s work but they made an exception for me. I hope everyone can understand my painting.

LP: Are there any artists you look up to?

LB: I really like Vincent van Gogh and Claude Monet.

LP: Is painting something you want to continue doing in your future? If so how?

LB: Yes because painting is my life. A painting can influence your mood and I hope my paintings will bring a smile to people’s faces.

LP: One thing that I have noticed from what I have been reading about you is that you never let a disability define you. Also, I agree to people having an art form as therapy for those with disabilities. You never know what inspiration that can come from an art therapy. I know this because I can relate to it, as many others will when read about you and hear your story. Would you consider yourself a success that could inspire others?

LB: Yes, because I think others will be inspired. Cerebral palsy has affected my sight so I only see in one eye but I write left handed. Nobody notices that I’m part blind.

“Eyes Up Guardian”

By Ron Gross

Do you ever wonder what the future holds in store for us? If our dreams of a Star Wars-like galaxy with high-speed star ships and colonized planets is possible? Well, the wait is over.

Activision, the people behind the billion dollar Call of Duty video game franchise, along with Bungie, the people behind the legendary Master Chief from their Halo series, have teamed up to bring you the hottest new futuristic game on the market.

With the essence of countless great video games all rolled into one, Destiny is must have for any kind of gamer. Destiny takes place at the end of a Golden Age of prosperity, where human life span tripled, technological advancements took off, and places like the Moon, Mercury, Venus, and Mars, were terraformed (transformed to resemble the Earth so it can support human life) and colonized. All of this was brought about when a giant floating sphere called the Traveller was discovered on the first manned mission to Mars in the year 2015.

Centuries after the arrival of the Traveller and all its wonders came the Collapse. The Traveller’s archenemy, an evil force known as the Darkness, had finally caught up with it, and began the end of everything.

After what remains of the human race returned to Earth to make a final stand against the Darkness, the Traveller used what strength it had left, to shelter the only remaining human city and to bring about the Ghosts.

Using an iconic voice by Emmy Award winning actor Peter Dinklage (known best for his role of Tyrion Lannister in HBO’s series, “Game of Thrones”), the Ghosts are small, cube shaped, AI (Artificial Intelligence) robots, sent out to resurrect fallen individuals with the light of the Traveller to create the Guardians.

Whether you choose to be an Exo (a robotic race created during the Golden Age of the Traveller), an Awoken (a human-like race born into the Collapse), or to take pride in your own species and be a human being, the Ghost—or rather your Ghost—will call upon you to become a Guardian, a protector of what remains of humanity.

With the help of your little geometric friends, it’s your job to push back the Darkness and to defeat the evil alien races that accompany it.

Through a variety of gameplay styles and more DLCs (Downloadable Content) that have yet to be released, Destiny provides hours of entertainment for all kinds of gamers.

In the making for more than four years, $500 million in production costs, nearly 500 employees tasked with its creation including people like voice actors Peter Dinklage, Lance Reddick from “Fringe”; and famed musician Paul McCartney, Destiny made its mark this September, when it raked in over half a billion dollars in just the first day available.

With the game available for SONY PS3 and PS4 and Microsoft XBOX 360 and XBOX 1 for $59.99 a piece, there’s every reason to get yourself a copy this holiday season. That is unless you intend to spend your free time doing something other than saving what’s left of humanity—you know, like homework.
Transgender is the new black and my gender questioning summer

By David Vail

Gender is portrayed in our everyday lives. We have preconceived notions of what it means to be a male or a female. However, there are people who don’t conform to their gender and they break the norms that are embedded into our culture. The media has covered gay rights for the past decade and it seems that gay people are slowly becoming more accepted by our society. LGBTQ rights are, in some form, the new civil rights. But, what does the acronym ‘LGBTQ stand for?’ For those of you that may not know, it stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. They are all gender and sexual identities that people associate with. A lot of us know about gay, lesbian and bisexual people, whether it’s because we know someone who identifies as such or we hear about these people on T.V.

The transgender identity is a relatively new subject. Transgender is a term that refers to individuals that express their gender through their behavior and don’t conform to their assigned sex at birth. Transgender people have been around for hundreds of years but the topic is slowly becoming prominent. We have seen more coverage on transgender issues; famous celebrities like Laverne Cox, Chaz Bono, Janet Mock and many more are speaking out and sharing their stories.

In order to understand trans people one has to learn how to distinguish sex and gender. Sex is the biological difference between a male and a female. Gender, on the other hand, is the socially constructed distinction between a male and a female. Our cultural idea of what roles males and females take on is gender being socially portrayed.

I decided to ask Arnold Castro, a Queensborough student, who identifies as gay and transgender, what gender meant to them. The reason why I am using the ‘they’ pronoun is because Arnold identifies as a two-spirited individual. “They” is a neutral pronoun.

“Gender is a way to express myself. To be who I really am without hiding myself. When it comes to my gender I don’t care about what people say about me. I consider myself gay and I also enjoy being considered a woman. When people use the pronoun ‘her’ or ‘she’ to refer to me I feel comfortable.”

Trans people see past their assigned sex at birth and construct their own gender. Transgender people are able to transition and acquire the appearance they want through gender reassignment surgery and the intake of hormones. A transgender man is a transgender person that identifies as a man and a transgender woman is a transgender person that identifies as a woman. However, transitioning isn’t the most important part of a transgendered person’s journey. Oliver Estrella is a transgender man attending Queens College and he is in the process of transitioning. He will undergo surgery in the following weeks. “I came out as trans via facebook message. I sent a mass text to my friends and family and I got immediate responses. Via this medium, I decided to ask Arnold Castro, a Queensborough student, who identifies as gay and transgender and question their gender identity.

Arnold and Oliver shared some of their dreams for the future: “My biggest dream for the future is to become an activist and change people’s mind. I want to inspire kids to freely express themselves and guide them to coming out,” says Arnold. “I think that we need to address trans issues. Although some change is taking place there is still a lot to do. Addressing the situations and accepting the things for what they are is important. We need to have conversations about these issues because they affect everyone, not just trans people,” mentions Oliver.

The more people become informed about transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, the more change will happen. American culture has to undergo a transition.

Health: Why Weight Training

By Margaret Chin Quee

When we think of weight training, most of us entertain images of beefy, muscular-bound men lifting barbells and bench-pressing, such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, or men flexing their bulky muscles on Mr. Universe Body Building contest shows. However, weight training has more to do with strengthening and toning body muscles, the skeletal muscles, than bulking and building up. Simply, through the principle of working and pushing the skeletal muscles past their own resistance, we experience more pronounced physical and mental health benefits almost immediately. This process impacts positively upon our daily lives and further enhances our longevity.

Weight or resistance training (also known as strength training) targets specific muscle groups through controlled movements using weighted bars, dumbbells, kettlebells, and weight stacks to improve the size of skeletal muscles and their strength. With increased muscle strength comes more power and endurance to do everyday tasks such as lifting, carrying and walking upstairs with greater ease. And, to start reaping maximum results, most professional trainers recommend a 15-to-20 minute workout session at least three times a week for at least 3-6 months. Its positive effects are measurably experienced on our musculoskeletal system by preventing osteoporosis, lower back pain, and sarcopenia (loss of body mass). In addition, weight training has proven to reduce the risk of joint and muscle injury often associated with other physical activity such as jogging or aerobic exercise. When done sensibly and consistently in combination with aerobic exercise, resistance training offers essentially an overall fitness routine which is durable for not only athletes, but also for anyone with any body type.

If you are invested in weight training to improve the quality of your physical health and to possess a fit and great-looking body, then low resistance training as opposed to heavier resistance that promotes bulky muscular physiques is recommended. According to the “Benefits of Strength Training!” article posted on the Bodybuilding.com website, our physiological health greatly improves in the following ways: lowers risk of cardiovascular disease, lowers high blood pressure, lowers risk of breast cancer – reduces high estrogen levels linked to the disease, reduces risk of diabetes and insulin needs, decrease colds and illness, and lessens stress and anxiety. These benefits are also corroborated in another article, “Why Strength Training?” on the Centers for Disease & Control website. This article also states “studies have shown that lifting weights two or three times a week increases strength by building muscle mass and bone density,” along with the added bonus of slowing down “the physiological aging clock.”

“No pain, no gain” is very true, especially of weight training, and I am proof of that truth. Since enrolling in a physical education weight training course at QCC this fall, I experienced body ache and very sore muscles the first couple of weeks. After each class, I walked like my legs were made of rubber; my arms hung like lead weights, and my body felt like someone else’s – a much older and rubbery person in the picture and when they realized that I was a boy they shut down and continued walking. They didn’t want to communicate or make eye contact with me at all.”

Oliver has his fair share with discrimination. He was once at a bike shop and was asked to show his ID to make a payment. At that time he hadn’t made any legal changes to his identity. The employees at that bike shop didn’t believe he was the person in the picture and when they realized that he was a trans man they whispered remarks to each other while smirking. “I felt so uncomfortable and I just wanted to rush out of the bike shop,” recalls Oliver.

I decided to write an article on transgender and gender non-conforming people because I went through a summer of gender questioning myself. During the summer I was trying to find out what kind of person I am. I took two summer courses at Queensborough and there were a lot of things going on at home. The gender questioning started because I felt like there was something wrong with me. I am a feminine gay male that enjoys cross-dressing at times but not everyone seems to understand that.

People asked me questions like “Do you want to be a girl?” or “I have gay friends and they don’t cross-dress, why do you do it?” I know that there were no bad intentions behind those questions. People were just curious as to what I identified as. But that got me thinking in relation to my gender identity.

It felt like people were policing my gender simply because I was trying to express myself. There was a part of me that relates to trans people but at the same time I didn’t mind my physical appearance. After months of questioning, I decided to simply identify as ‘queer’. Queer is an umbrella term for LGBT people. The term is ambiguous and it doesn’t limit a person to a specific gender or sexual orientation. I don’t have to decide whether I want to be a man or a woman right now, I just have to be myself.

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The more people become informed about transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, the more change will happen. American culture has to undergo a transition.
Did you know that cigarettes contain 7000 chemicals and 69 of them are proven to cause cancer? In New York City alone 80% of smokers start well before the age of 21. The city council passed a law to be in effect by May 18, 2014 prohibiting the sale of cigarettes or any smoking item to anyone under twenty-one. Tobacco use remains the single preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Smoking related illness in the United States costs more than $289 billion every year.

With knowing all of this you would think our smoking population would be little to none. Not exactly.

Many public places do not permit smoking such as in parks and restaurants. Queensborough Community College has taken a stand to keep tobacco use off of campus grounds. But once you walk out of the gates tons of people are right there puffing away at your nearest exit. You have no other choice but to walk right through the clouds of smoke. At almost any other exit you use, there are other students and staff getting in a quick smoke before their next class.

“I usually smoke about half a pack a day [12 cigarettes], give or take how stressful or simple my day is. I tend to have more when I’m with a lot of my friends who smoke also” said Konrad a smoker for five years now.

An estimated 88 million non smoking Americans are exposed to secondhand smoke and run a higher risk of developing cancer than the person who is smoking.

“It has become a bad habit. I don’t remember why I started at fifteen but now I wish it was that simple to just stop. I don’t smoke in my house or around my family or girlfriend because I know how bad second hand smoke is. Why don’t I stop? I try to, but it’s really hard,” Konrad explained.

Studies have found that people with little schooling who fall into the poverty level, as well as those who are between the ages of 22-45, make up the majority of our smoking population. Most people start smoking as a teenager to either fit in or try something new.

More than half continue to smoke into their adulthood, but the purpose for smoking changes. It becomes a coping device for many, and for others it’s a daily necessity like brushing your teeth every morning. Many adults smoke to ease the stress of life, whether it is because of bills, kids or a job.

Melissa, a Queensborough student, explains, “That one cigarette eases my nerves and levels me out whenever I need it. I don’t always have enough time between my classes or work but there would be a moment where I would itch for one. I would only have enough time for two or three pulls and then I toss it, but those few helped satisfy my crave.”

People argue that if it is known to harm more when I’m with a lot of my friends who smoke also.” And the answer to that question is a big dollar sign. The government advertises the effects of smoking cigarettes everywhere. But at the same time, they allow businesses to happily sell them to those who still choose to smoke. Why not raise the purchasing age from 18 to 21? The national minimum drinking age act of 1984 made 21 the age for purchasing any alcoholic beverage. Teenagers still simply find ways to get their hands on alcohol which means if they want cigarettes they will find a way to get them too.

“I’ve smoked since maybe 15 years old and now that I’m seven years in, I know I need to stop. It is a big waste of money, roughly $12 a pack and about four packs a week. And if I can save myself from health risks I definitely have to stop smoking” explained Melissa.

According to the Center for Disease Control in 1965, 42% of our population smoked. Now an estimated 14% of Americans smoke, which means 44,240,000 people out of 316 million, which is still a lot. 7.6 million people die from cancer worldwide every year. 53,800 non-smokers die every year due to second hand smoke.

To make matters worse studies have found that third-hand smoke is just as dangerous to people around you. Toxins from the smoke stick to your body, your car your house and basically to everything. This is most dangerous to infants and children whose lungs are not completely developed.

If we stopped smoking we can save not only our lives but also the lives of our family and loved ones as well as everyone around us.

Ebola Virus: Misconceptions & Hysteria

By Negina Sedigzadah

Often times in this day of age, people tend to misunderstand certain things due to social media clouding our judgment. When you hear the word term “Ebola,” what comes to mind? Is it the thousands of social media posts making jokes about a deadly disease being spread? Or is it panic on the newspapers, television stations, internet? What about your friends and family bringing your attention to it?

What if I told you half the information you hear on this disease is a misconception? Sure, it is a disease to be aware of, along with many other diseases, but if we are going to be aware, we must know that the information we have is accurate.

Ebola is a disease of humans and primates that began in West Africa. You contract the virus by having bodily fluid contact with an infected human or animal. Infection of the virus may also occur when touching a recently contaminated item.

Many people exaggerate when characterizing symptoms of the virus. There are several obnoxious misconceptions to be said about the virus, and they have even gone viral on social media to the point where people start to believe it.

To clear up any misconceptions, some of the symptoms of the Ebola virus are a sudden flu-like stage, where you feel tired, contract a fever, headaches and pain in your muscle joints. This is usually followed by vomiting and severe abdominal pain. Chest pain and shortness of breath follow, and a skin rash begins to develop. Five to seven days in, death, if it occurs, usually follows six to 15 days after the symptoms occur, and this is due to low blood pressure from loss of fluid.

It’s no surprise that social media brings false attention to this virus. Its like the game “telephone,” when you say one thing, and as it is passed down from person-to-person, it is changed up a bit and comes out at the end to be a totally different statement from the beginning.

Ebola is a perfect example of this metaphor. You can search for hashtags on twitter or Instagram of Ebola and see all the different things being said about it. One of the things people tend to do the most is create a joke out of the virus. An example of this occurred in one class when a girl sneezed a few times, and a guy shouted from the back yelling “she has Ebola!” Some people laughed, but the girl actually ended up crying. Joking about something as serious as this disease ends up being more hurtful then we believe.

In a more extreme example, one student at Queens College said, “I was on Instagram one day and read about how people with Ebola come back as zombies if they die.”

Recently, a doctor from New York went on a trip to West Africa to help those suffering from the Ebola virus. Upon his return, he discovered he had contracted the disease and he immediately took the necessary precautions and went to the hospital for immediate care. He did not want to risk spreading the virus to anyone here in NYC. Although he took precautions, social media stated otherwise. Millions tweeted and updated their statuses to some version of “Ebola Virus Reached NYC.” These are the ones who are uninformed and tend to spread panic and misinformation.

The whole hysteria behind the Ebola controversy has been going on for months now and continues to this day. A lot of people fail to realize that this is a serious disease, and not a joke. People don’t make jokes about cancer or HIV because they know the background information on the diseases, while with Ebola, people tend to just listen to the media and any false beliefs going on about the virus, when in reality, we all should really read the facts and true information on the Ebola disease.
Back-to-Back Champions: Mens Soccer at QCC

BY Michael Perez

“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, and most of all, loving what you are doing or learning to do,” said Pele, who is one of the great soccer players of all time.

The Queensborough Community College men’s soccer club has found a formula for success the past few seasons. The Tigers are now six-time CUNY Tournament champions, which is second most all-time, and have won it all three out of the last four years.

The Tigers, led by manager Zef Kabashi, came into the 2014 season as the defending regular season champions and CUNY tournament victors. There were only three players left from the team last season. They were now an inexperienced club with a target on their back.

“We all knew that every other teams in the Conference wanted to beat us, so we trained as hard as we could to prepare,” said team captain Matthew Aman.

As for freshman striker Abdul Rahim Mujtabah, joining a defending champion was “Difficult for all the freshmen because we had to replicate the same success but with the experience of the coach and hard work and dedication of the team, we were able to.”

The Tigers kicked off the season with a loss. According to Aman, “that helped us realize we had a lot of work to do and as the season progressed.”

It was a tough season for the club. Not only were they trying to get better as a team, but they also were dealing with the tragic passing of their former teammate Ricardo Marin. He helped last season’s team capture the title, and was the CUNYAC Rookie of the Year. In memory of his life, the Men’s Soccer Alumni Game is now renamed the Ricardo Marin Classic, and the team also dedicated the season in his honor.

“He was a key part to our team last year. It took a huge toll on our team after his passing,” Aman continued.

“All my teammates and I lost concentration which cost us a couple games. As captain, I felt a little more pressure to keep pushing the team forward no matter what.”

With dealing with the issues off the pitch and trying to gain a rhythm on it, the Tigers wouldn’t win the regular season title, finishing second. But they would still make an impact in the tournament and reach the finals against Borough of Manhattan Community College. In the championship game, QCC prevailed and won by a score of 3-1, and were crowned back-to-back champions.

Winning in general feels great but winning a championship is seeing everything you’ve worked for come together,” said Aman.

QCC Lady Tigers Show Potential for a Great Season After Comeback Victory

BY Sayris Pallares-Cameron

The Queensborough Community College (QCC) Lady Tigers won the CUNY championship last year. QCC’s Lady Tigers were 15-6 overall last season, and had an impressive record of 7-1 against their CUNY opponents. They won the championship game against the Bronx Broncos 89-39.

This season, the Lady Tigers team consists of ten new players, and only four players returning from the championship crew. The team prepared for the season by practicing two hours every day, and continues to do so. With hopes of winning back-to-back titles, the Lady Tigers started off the season facing graduates of QCC in the Alumni game. The Lady Tigers lost by four points in the midst of the RFK gym on Nov. 17. The squad has motivation to strive for the best following their loss as they understand what they need to improve on moving forward.

The season-opener had QCC playing LaGuardia Community College’s Lady Red Hawks. The Lady Red Hawks point guard Kailyn Richburg was a tight defender against the Lady Tigers, which gave them an advantage on the defensive end. Eventually, the two teams tied as the match grew more intense. Center Khadija Carroll used her height as an advantage to block multiple shots against QCC, but the team led by Head Coach David Chambers had momentum heading into the second half.

Entering the second quarter, the Lady Tigers held a 32-25 lead, albeit they struggled on defense. Carroll continued to look out for her fellow teammates, and tightly defended the Lady Red Hawks point guard Kailyn. Throughout the match, the team kept the same energy they had when the game began. Sabria Grayson guard gets put into the game and starts to shoot three-pointers with no hesitation. With constant scoring, the Lady Tigers energy aroused late into the game compared to the Lady Red Hawks, as they showed signs of fatigue. Evidently, the Lady Tigers took the win with a score of 61-53. As they move forward, the women’s basketball team is looking to gain momentum following a loss to Sullivan Community College with a stretch of four home games in five matches spanning Dec. 11 to Jan. 8.

Letter to the Editor

ASAP

My staff and I were thrilled to see the article about ASAP in the November issue of the Communique.

There is an error on the last line that I would like to have corrected in the next issue. The last part of the last paragraph would read better as follows:

To be considered for ASAP, you have to be admitted to Queensborough Community College, take the CUNY Assessment tests and score within the acceptable ranges, and file a FAFSA form. (If you are an undocumented student and meet all the other criteria, you may be eligible to be in the ASAP program, and receive all benefits other than tuition assistance.) You may be a new freshman or have up to 15 earned credits with a minimum GPA of 2.0

To find out more, please visit the ASAP website at www.qcc.cuny.edu/asp. Recruitment for the fall 2015 semester will begin in February, 2015 and you are encouraged to apply.

Thank you and best wishes for a beautiful holiday~

Bobbi Brauer
Director, ASAP Program
A Girl for All Seasons-Volleyball Captain: Stephanie Ho

continued from cover page

From The Mountain Top to Rock Bottom: The Brandon Roy Story

By Justin Devon King

Some people called him “The Natural” because of the way he calmly sank in a jumper, or effortlessly drove to the basket and drew fouls. Some people called him “Daggers” because he was so dangerous in crunch time. And on multiple occasions, you heard “B-Roy” from a Portland Trailblazer announcer, when he debuted in his first game in the year 2006.

It’s no question that Trailblazers guard Brandon Roy had a lot of talent. He was destined to be a star and always was ready to make an impact; not only for the Portland Trailblazers basketball team, but also for the NBA.

Heading over to the University of Washington in college, Roy began to make a name for himself. Due to his freshman status, he started off shaky. His senior year was phenomenal, averaging 20 points, over five rebounds and four assists per game, which helped lead his team to multiple appearances in the Sweet Sixteen. He was named Pac 10 Player of the Year, receiving All-American honors as he became the 31st Washington player to score 1,000 points in his collegiate career.

“I loved his scoring ability,” says Justin Case, a former shooting guard for Queensborough Community College (QCC) who currently still attends the school. “I also liked his decision making in the pick and roll and being able to score off of it. The mental toughness he had was very strong when facing top ten players in college and even in the NBA.”

“His jump-shot was always impressive in my eyes,” said Josh Lee, a current member of QCC’s basketball team. “He was also cool, calm and collective when under pressure.”

There was no question that Roy was going enter the NBA Draft. In 2006, he entered, making a great impression for his coaches and staff. While making that impression, he was Western Conference Player of the Month in January, February and March, including winning Rookie of the Year that season. He only played 57 of 82 games; becoming the third Trailblazer to win the award since Sidney Wicks and Geoff Petrie of 1971.

During that season, Roy added several miles to his career, averaging 19 points a game, over five rebounds and over four assists a game, which helped lead the team to a 13-game winning streak. He soon realized his hard work was paying off and was selected into the 2008 all star game. Within his All-Star game debut in 2008, he scored 18 points as he shot 80 percent from the field, along with grabbing nine rebounds.

Injuries played a crucial part in Roy’s career. In the 2008-09 season, he underwent a medical procedure in his hometown of Seattle to remove an irritating cartilage in his left knee. But that didn’t slow the natural down.

He made a comeback, hitting a clutch 30-foot jumper to seal a tight game against Yao Ming and the high powered Houston Rockets, scoring 52 points against the Phoenix Suns and effortlessly scoring the game winning point in a tight match against the New York Knicks. Despite the injury, he won Western Conference Player of the Week and was ninth in votes for MVP.

In the 2009-2010 season, Roy was offered a four-year maximum contract with a fifth year option. He was at the peak of his career, but once again, injuries were a catalyst. In the midst of the season, Roy once again was sidelined due to a hamstring injury and soon hurting his other knee in April. Team officials were worried about keeping him because of the toll his injuries took on his body.

The injuries continued in 2010-2011, where doctors conducted arthroscopic in both his knees. Wondering if he’ll ever play again, he tried one last time returning Feb. 25, entering the playoffs in the second round against the Dallas Mavericks. He played an emotional game, scoring 18 points off the bench, and winning the game to put away the Mavericks, coming from trailing by 25 markers. That same year, Roy had to retire from the Blazers. He came back in 2012-2013, but played a mere five games, and officially called it quits after being waved.

“He was sad because he had supreme will,” Case said. “To him, being an all-star to superstardom in the league and his future was too bright, had he not had so many injuries...”

He went on to say it affected the league because the young players wanted to be taught in terms of keeping the game simple and Roy was a mentor for current players like Damian Lillard and LaMarcus Aldridge.

“He was accomplishing things that a lot of players took a long time to do,” Lee continued. “It was just so unfortunate.”

Roy will be remembered for his contributions to the game in clutch situations, albeit he only played one injury-free season. He was silky smooth, and scored effortlessly against the top players. No. 7 in red and black is gone, but “The Natural” himself will be remembered and most importantly missed from the game of basketball.

Health: Why Weight Training

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the resistance training course that I reluctantly registered for this fall semester. The course offers three levels of training (toning, muscle building and muscle defining) all designed toward improving muscle strength and cardiovascular efficiency. You select a level based on your physical needs and level of fitness, and work toward accomplishing it within the semester. I selected the toning program and have seen the overall marked improvement with my body performance, and I feel less tired. I met with Professor Peter Marchitello, a Health and Physical Education professor of 17 years at QCC, to discuss weight training and its merits. As he conducted his volleyball class, he emphasized the resistance factor of working the body muscles through a full range of motion by lifting weights. Since it is the important key, it did not matter whether the weights ranged from 5 to 100lbs. He added, “resistance training is not a cardio workout, but a muscle workout,” and that it becomes more effective when combined with aerobic exercise. Since muscle is an active tissue, “it burns more calories,” he said. This activity increases our bodies’ metabolic rates, resoundingly helpful for weight loss and maintenance of weight control. He also pointed out that it reduces stress, and increases flexibility and balance which lower the risk of muscle injuries and back pain. Although this was a very brief and hurried interview, Dr. Marchitello advocates that weight training does the body good in more ways than one, and highly recommends it to anyone, at any age and body type. As he sprinkled back to his volleyball class, he said, “weight training is the most popular course that we offer here year round at QCC.”

“A body in motion stays in motion,” so says Newton’s Laws of Physics. In the same way, our physical health and fitness is not only determined by what we eat, or influenced by our genetic disposition, but by the amount of physical exercise that we apply to maintain it. Therefore, with dedicated commitment, weight training is that force which will keep our physical health and our lives in a perpetual state of optimal wellness and strength.
Opinion

All Lives Matter

By Jay Lucero

As I came out of my political science class I started to think about the material I learned this semester. I realized the importance of political awareness and how an informed person can make a difference. On Monday November 24th the grand jury announced the verdict of the Michael Brown case. Darren Wilson was found not guilty for the killing of Michael Brown. Brown was shot dead after he allegedly attacked Darren Wilson. As soon as the verdict was announced on late Monday, people began protesting in Ferguson. Outrage broke loose and people set cars, businesses and homes on fire. Not everyone protested in this manner. There were people marching and demanding justice through the city’s streets. People quickly shared their opinions on the verdict via social media.

George Stephanopoulos interviewed Wilson for an ABC news exclusive, Wilson justified his actions by saying that his life was at risk. When Stephanopoulos asks Wilson if there was something he could have done differently, Wilson answers with a persistent “NO.”

It’s heart breaking to think that Wilson will face no charges whatsoever. He showed no remorse during the ABC interview. Some of the words Wilson used to describe Brown also gave a feeling that he was dehumanizing Brown, comparing him to a ‘demon.’

On Wednesday December 3rd, the Eric Garner verdict was also announced. Eric Garner died after Daniel Pantaleo, a NYPD officer, put him in a chokehold while he repeatedly yelled out “I can’t breathe.” ‘I can’t breathe’ became Garner’s final words. The grand jury did not indict Daniel Pantaleo for causing the death of Garner.

Protests are taking place in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Don’t call her “Ma”

By Nicolas Sully

The late great Hip-Hop musician Tupac Shakur once said in his song Keep Ya Head Up: “Since we all came from a woman, got our name from a woman and our game from a woman, I wonder why we take from our women, why we rape our women? Do we hate our women?”

Misogyny is a serious issue around the world. We’ve all seen the video made by an organization called Hollaback! of a woman walking through New York City and getting cat-called and hit on multiple times. Why do men feel like its okay to call a woman out of her name and do such disrespectful things to women? And how do women feel about this?

“I am not an animal. You shouldn’t talk to me like I am one,” said Shauna, a Queensborough Community College student. Shauna added, “If you want to talk to me, be a man and come up to me like a gentleman; cat-calling is for little boys and it’s childish.”

A lot of QCC female students can relate to that uncomfortable feeling of being followed by a guy they just ignored. When a guy catcalls a woman on the streets, she tends to not know how to respond.

“When you follow me, it makes me uncomfortable, I have no idea what you’re about to do,” said many girls who have been street harassed.

“When I don’t answer you, don’t turn around and curse me out just because I ignored you—it’s disrespectful,” said Olivia.

“I hate when they say ‘I didn’t want you anyway,’” added Julia, another QCC student.

As men, we need to understand that rejection is a common reality. Most females tend to ignore your ignorance, fellow. When they ignore you, don’t follow them, they aren’t going to let up and give you their numbers because you think you’re being persistent. Then men usually curse out women when they ignore their advances. If you don’t want her anyway then you should’ve never even said anything to her. Just let her walk peacefully to her destination.

“Some guys do it because of the lack of maturity...it’s an obnoxious thing,” one male QCC student commented.

When we see a beautiful woman walking in the streets, there’s no need to try and use pick-up lines to get her attention. “Pick-up lines don’t work anymore, conversations do,” said Anthony, another Queensborough student.

Some men believe that if a woman disrespects herself, they all know what to tolerate from men.

“Guys need to be more respectful towards women. Those are things you do when you want your dog to come here boy!” Women are not our pets. They’re human beings that deserve the utmost respect. We all have to cherish the women of the world because without them, we would be lost.

At a BET Award show, MC Lyte stated in her speech “Men, we are depending on you. We need you to protect us when no one else will. So stop cursing us out all the time.”

MC Lyte was referring to male rappers who objectify women in their music. In this day and age it seems that most rap stars feel the need to belittle women to make their record sales. Whatever happened to the hip-hop music that uplifted women? Songs like “Keep ya head up” by Tupac is a song every man should live by. The song talks about this very subject in this article—why men need to be more respectful towards women.

“I love that song because when you listen to it, it kind of sounds like a woman wrote it but it’s coming from a man,” said Felicia. “Guys need to be more like Tupac,” she added.

The best way to show respect to women is by practicing chivalry. No matter her looks, ethnicity, whatever, you should always be chivalrous to women. Hold open the door for the ladies, all the time. Open the car door for your girlfriend when you guys are about to head somewhere. Just be respectful and treat ALL women the same way you would want another man to treat your mother and/or sister, also, most importantly, your future daughters.
Opinion

Where Have We Gone Wrong: Where Did The Holidays Go?

By Kadeem Fletcher

What has happened to the holidays? It hurts to say this but people have finally hit a low where the holidays primarily mean Black Friday deals, Christmas presents and lots of food. The cheer people feel at the end of October when decorations begin to appear in stores is long gone. That makes me ask you this question: Where have we gone wrong?

Growing up in Trinidad, holidays were one of the most important times of the year. Whether it was Easter or Christmas, we cherished these moments as well as the people we spent it with. Since moving from Trinidad to New York and leaving a large percentage of my family members there, the essence of the holidays has diminished slightly. I won’t blame my relocation for all of it but the overall culture of Americans in my eyes has also contributed to it. I’ve encountered and paid much attention to

individuals who seem to be focused on the things that don’t make holidays what they are. Though I’ve tried to maintain the holiday spirit throughout the years since moving here, it’s hard not to notice the things that happen in your environment. It’s hard not to recognize when someone is taking a holiday for granted. It’s hard not to feel the divide between how the holidays are treated in the Caribbean and how they are treated in the USA.

Material things are given too much importance such as gifts for Christmas. Everyone seems to be solely infatuated with the benefits of specific holidays rather than appreciating these days for what they are; celebrations of people, culture, and times. People now ask themselves, “What deals are on for Black Friday? Where can I buy the cheapest TV? Who can get the biggest turkey?” Not once do they ask about seeing their cousins who they haven’t seen in a long time or just simply sitting around a table enjoying these holidays with the people you love. Is it really worth dealing with the madness that these holiday sales bring instead of appreciating the peace at home?

What happened to the holidays? Has the spirit of the holidays evaded you exponentially throughout the years? What do they mean to you at this point in your life? They were originally based around the idea of experiencing the most celebrated days of the year with the most important people in your life. Holidays have also lost their essence to certain extents since lots of people now only look forward to holidays for the wrong reasons. People are so obsessed with the expectations of holidays that they neglect what the holidays were truly made for.

What’s the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Christmas? Is it gifts? Is it food? Is it overtime? If you answered yes to one of these three questions then there’s a part of you that’s lacking the true spirit of the holidays. And that’s a general issue of society. Enjoy your Thanksgiving dinner but make sure to give thanks for all the blessings you have, the people you have and the life you’ve been given. When Christmas comes around, leave the cookies and cup of milk out for Santa and enjoy opening your gifts in the morning but remember Christmas really represents the birth of Jesus Christ and what he means to religion. Hopefully then you’ll realize once again what the holidays are meant to be.

Make it your mission to bring the holidays back this year.

Death with Dignity or no Death at All

By Danielle Thorakos

We all know that death is inevitable. However, have you ever thought what it would be like to actually choose the time, place and how you will pass on? Has it ever crossed your mind that maybe just maybe, you can have some control over the final stages of life? As human beings we all want to live long and productive lives. Most people go about their day not even thinking about when their life could be taken from them, but there are many people who we tend to look over who have to wake up every morning knowing they physically could die at any moment due to a terminal illness.

People are afraid of death for the same reason as being afraid of the dark, because you have no way of knowing what’s there. The things that always scare people the most are the unknown. There is a percentage of people out there who instead of waiting for death to come naturally take on death even before the inevitable will happen.

The Death with Dignity Act first made headlines in October of 1997 in Oregon. “Assisted Suicide” describes a terminally ill patient’s choice to shorten a dying process that the patient finds unbearable. Medical health policy of health professions recognized the term “assisted suicide” is not accurate and biased in context. This caused these organizations to adopt more of a neutral term which is “aid in dying” to refer to a terminally ill persons choice.

Most of all terminally ill patients do not want to die but are facing an expected death, which are mostly after efforts to cure their illness, but with no positive results. Even though are medications for people who are sick to maintain a neutral well being, some people that the dying process is unbearable and people are seeking a less painful death and more peaceful. This act was put together extremely carefully so each patient was certain on the decision that was being made. In order for A terminally ill patient to be prescribed the medication that will end their life the person must be over the age of eighteen.

The patient must be in a legal state where the medication is legal. The patient must be terminally ill with no more than six months to live, which must be agreed by two different physicians. Verbal and written wishes to receive death with dignity must be stated. The terminally ill patient must receive alternative options like hospice care in the time of making the decision. Also a fifteen-day waiting period must be held between the oral and written request. Also the terminally ill patient’s request must be independently witnessed, by two people.

Lastly the patient must self administer the medication themselves and is allowed to change their mind at any time. These guidelines to follow while applying for the prescription are extremely helpful for the terminally ill and their families for that of which a person can be sure on the decision they are making.

Speculations about the act recently surfaced when a young woman, Britttnay Maynard, who was diagnosed with stage four Glioblastoma, decided to take her own life by taking a lethal prescription drug that was given to her by her doctor. Maynard’s story made news worldwide from New York One news to Facebook, and later to YouTube videos.

Since the story broke of this young woman’s terminal illness and her decision to take her own life, people started to question whether or not the Death with Dignity Act is allowing more people to commit suicide or is this act something millions of families and sick patients have been hoping for to end suffering and pain. Due to clear evidence that is said about the instructions to be prescribed this lethal medication, it is certainly not an act of suicide that anyone who is not terminally ill can use. This Act was set up in a way where it can not be taken advantage of by anyone who is not terminally ill. The Death With Dignity Act does not showcase suicide. This act showcases aid in dying for those who need in most.

Everyone should have the choice to say when enough is enough. Terminally ill people should not have to wait until they are too sick and in excruciating pain to die. People do not deserve to have such a painful and cruel death. Self aid suicide is not an easy way out; it is the only way out.

The Death with Dignity Act will allow people and their families to enjoy time together before the terminally ill begin to suffer tremendously. There is no government or no one person who should tell a dying person they cannot end their life early. Everyone who suffers from a terminal illness will all end up getting. At the end of the day a person should be in charge of their own body, whether they choose to be on life support or they choose not to receive treatment or if they choose to take a lethal medication to kill themselves the choice should be completely up to them. Remember “pain is inevitable and suffering optional”.

Queensborough Communiqué, December 2014
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By Bert V. Royal | Directed By Liisa Yonker

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