European Immigration Crisis (p.5)

SUICIDE & COUNSELING CENTERS IN COLLEGES
By Katerina Theophanous

According to Suicide.org, suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students. In the US news week an article “How College Students Flunk Mental Health” a private attorney who specializes in disability cases in higher education Karen Bower says, “Schools should encourage students to seek treatment. But a lot of policies I see involve excessive use of discipline and involuntary leaves of absence, and they discourage students from asking for the help they need.” On average, 1,100 students across college campuses nationally commit suicide, according to Active Minds.

In an article written by Michael Kerr titled “Depression in College Students” on Healthline.com, students themselves are often reluctant to seek help due to social stigmas related to depression. A mental health evaluation that encompasses a student’s developmental and family history, school performance, and any self-injurious behaviors should be performed to evaluate at-risk students before a treatment plan is made.

There are many articles online on why students in college don’t go to the counseling center for their suicidal thoughts. This is mostly because of the shame they feel and how people might look at them differently when they leave school to get the help they may need. In an article on the Inside Higher Ed website at Wisconsin HOPE Lab 4,000 students at 10 community colleges across 7 states were surveyed on having a current or recent mental health. The results were very shocking, 36% of respondents suffered from depression, and continued on page 10

Free Community College?
By Asia Salley

The expense to educate yourself is considered to be very high. Some cannot even receive a higher education due to the fact that they are unable to afford the high rates of college tuition. Jobs today are paying very low and people struggle to make ends meet at home. But when they apply for financial aid, they are considered to be financially stable. High school students receive acceptance letters almost every day and their main concern becomes how they are going to be able to pay for their tuition. It is proven that community colleges are not only cheap but they are considered to be an appropriate place to begin higher education for those graduating high school and even those who are going back to school. Unfortunately, some feel that they might as well settle for a city job instead of pursuing a degree because after spending thousands of dollars on tuition, they will not be guaranteed a career.

Since college tuition is at an all-time high, President Obama announced at a State of the Union address that he would try his best to offer two years of community college at no cost. “Providing two years of community college at no cost for every responsible student is one of the best ways to do that, and I’m going to keep fighting to get that started this year.” Many feel it would be great if students were able to attend school at no cost.

Also some feel community college tuition should include textbooks. It should be free of charge only if you are willing to be a responsible student and more importantly be dedicated to your studies and willing to apply yourself. Because some students are unable to receive aid, their parents have to pay out of pocket with; some suggesting FASFA is to blame. Now that they’re paying out of pocket, they are also forced to buy textbooks that are hardly used by professors. continued on page 3

The Great Age of Internet Piracy and Its Many Consequences
By Christopher Beccarelli

It takes only a few minutes. With a few clicks of your mouse and the right programs you can have virtually any movie, song or TV show in front of you in minutes free of charge. It isn’t magic, or some insane technological knowhow; it’s called piracy, and it’s so easy that almost anyone can do it. Piracy is another term for bootlegging and stealing, harkening back to the days of old when ships were hijacked and goods were commandeered; and while the several million denizens of the world downloading illegally aren’t wearing eye patches or peg legs, they certainly are doing just that, taking something that doesn’t belong to them free of charge. The legality of this kind of piracy, however, isn’t as cut and dry as the days of buccaneering were. Split into several camps, the way people respond to internet piracy often has to do with how they view intellectual property and its worth. On one hand people are staunchly against it, exclaiming that it’s not only harmful to the sales and worth of the property, but harmful to the men and women involved that need the profit from their work to continue working. The second continued on page 12

Inside the Communique
Campus, page 2
Nat./International, page 4
City, page 7
Technology, page 9
Lifestyles, 11
Arts, page 12
Sports, page13
Opinion, page 15
Faculty Spotlight- Dr. Philip Pecorino
By Noman Iqbal

I sat down with Professor Philip Pecorino to find out more about his background, his teaching, matters of pedagogy, and the use of technology in education.

Where did you go to college? Briefly describe your experiences.

I did my undergraduate at Boston College, then I did graduate work at Fordham University. When I finished my PhD I went on to NYU in Educational Psychology.

When I was an undergraduate at Boston College I discovered that the thing I was interested in was Philosophy. I didn’t have much experience with that in elementary school or in high school but I had all these questions. I had discovered there was the whole field of study, a discipline, a tradition of thought. So I double majored in mathematics and philosophy at Boston College. Did a heck a lot reading in Philosophy and world religion, then I said to myself, “Gee I like doing this and I’m gonna keep doing this.” I went on with it without any of thought of how I would make a living or any thought at all. So that was enlightening experience during my undergraduate days at Boston.

When I was at Fordham doing my graduate work, you were expected to help out professors. At one point I was given a class to teach and the class happened to be on “Philosophy of Education”. I learned a great deal about Philosophy and Education. From that point on I was going to be a “Philosophy Instructor”.

I started looking for a job and was fortunate to land one at Queensborough. I am in my 44th year. I could still say I’m fortunate to land one at Queensborough.

I learned a great deal about Philosophy and to be on “Philosophy of Education”. I out professors. At one point I was given graduate work, you were expected to help out professors. At one point I was given a class to teach and the class happened to be on “Philosophy of Education”. I learned a great deal about Philosophy and world religion, then I said to myself, “Gee I like doing this and I’m gonna keep doing this.” I went on with it without any of thought of how I would make a living or any thought at all. So that was enlightening experience during my undergraduate days at Boston.

As a student, what strategies or habits made you successful?

I always worked hard in school. I liked reading and I liked learning from the time I was very young. I liked books. But there weren’t any books in my house. I would go to the library and borrow as many books as I could, read them, stay up late reading them, and then I’d return them for more. I used my money on books.

I read, I read, and I read way more than the minimum. I learned to organize my time, set up schedules, and meet deadlines. I particularly enjoyed reading about people’s ideas, culture, and history.

So my strategy to be successful: pay attention, figure out what’s expected, set up a schedule to meet it, and then work hard.

How did you get interested in matters of pedagogy?

My first job was...I think I was 12 years old, maybe only 11, delivering newspapers. Then it was selling newspapers. I then worked at a stationary store taking care of the bottles that were returned and stacked up sections of the Sunday paper. After that I moved behind the counter. Once in college I worked at the post office during holiday breaks and summers. I then worked as a graduate assistant when I was at Fordham. And finally, teaching.

How did you get interested in matters of pedagogy?

After teaching for a while you want to teach better. At least some people do. Thinking about what you’re doing and what you’re thinking that’s part of what Philosophy reflective thought. So reflective thinking on your teaching and wanting to do it better that gets you involved in pedagogy. The people who I teach, the learners, I can identify with, I get them to do the hardworking of to go deeper into the nature of the questions and try to find the best possible positions.

Did your parents have different expectations of you?

They didn’t expect that I would go anywhere after high school. My father did not want me to keep going on and studying, he thought I would become a “Professional Student.” When he said that, I guess it was meant to be criticism, I thought it was a compliment. I like learning, so I guess I’m a “Lifetime Student”.

How do you go about teaching a class like “Perspectives on Death and Dying”?

I developed that course my second year here. I taught that class for 27 years. And I liked teaching that course. But the University changed the degree requirements and kicked out the humanities elective, so it’s not offered anymore. People seemed to get a lot out of it for their lives, so that made it worthwhile teaching it. It turned out most people took it not for just the credits.

What do you think of the use of technology in education? Does it improve anything?

Okay, that’s a good question. I have used technology a great deal. I’ve taught web-assisted classes, where you go into the classroom just like you did before. But now you use the material on the Internet in relation to what you are doing. I’ve taught hybrid courses, where you’re in the classroom not as often but there are activities organized outside the classroom, off the campus, on the Internet. And I’ve taught courses that are fully online where I never meet the students, I never see them, and I’ve learned that all three methods work.

It depends on the students. Students have different learning styles. Some of them are more suited than others to learning online, either partially or fully. Some students need to be in the room and see the teachers and interact. Some students like to work on their own end, at their own pace, at their own time, and working online is really good for them.

By using the technology you could probably reach more people then you can if you go in and just teach to the middle. You could reach a wider range of learners with different learning styles.

One day we can use what we learned from Educational Psychology, Behavioral Psychology, and Game Theory to put together instructional designs and then hopefully match the students learning...

Continued on page 4

Forgiveness Through Poetry
By Kimberly Holmes

The Common Read at Queensborough Community College encompasses a series of phenomenal events available to all students. This semester, the theme of the Common Read is forgiveness. The theme is centered on the book Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption, written by Jennifer Thompson-Cannino and Ronald Cotton with Erin Tornee. The book made The New York Times bestseller list. The book is about a white woman who was raped in her own bedroom in North Carolina in July 1984, and through an unfortunate series of events, she mistakenly chose Ronald Cotton, as the perpetrator. Subsequently, Ronald Cotton spent over 10 years in prison until he was exonerated through DNA. Ronald Cotton forgave his accuser long before his release. Shouldn’t we all be this forgiving? Or at least learn to be?

There is a variety of worthwhile events anyone can attend on campus, that all revolve around the book and theme chosen for this semester. They are held at all times of the day and even during club hours. Some events are movie showings, readings, and events where you can speak your mind. On March 9th, 2016, an event titled “Self, World, and Poems that Ask Forgiveness: An Interactive Event” proved to an enjoyable, emotional, and inspirational event.

Professor Tayson, along with Profo. Ben Miller and his Creative Writing Club students, and Prof. Danielle Izzo-Buckner presented information about the four stages of forgiveness. The first stage being the “telling of the story” second is “ Naming the Hurt,” the third “granting forgiveness,” and lastly, “renewing or releasing”. As human beings, not by fault, we can all easily become products of hate and violence. He believes that “we should all put our different thoughts together”. Who can’t agree with that? Especially when we attend a college with extreme diversity, where we should focus more on “communal exchange and communal experiences on campus” as per Professor Tayson.

This event was beyond inspirational, and the inspiration became contagious. Students were instructed to free write and if you had the courage, to get up and share your thoughts. Nobody was getting a grade, which is always a nice thing to hear. But, we all got past that, because suddenly everyone had something to say, and it was all sincere and from the heart. It is a rare occasion when you are allowed or permitted to say how you feel without judgment, or a grade. Professor Tayson reminded me and everyone else who attended this event that, “We all need to listen and pay attention to each other, and poetry fights isolation.” “We should celebrate our differences.” One thing that Professor Tayson said that will stay with me forever was, “Be done with the dust, and be done with the dust that covers us all.”
The Common Read is a “High Impact Practice” for which faculty volunteer to participate so they can build a specific text into their courses across disciplines. It creates an atmosphere of learning and social and political awareness based on the chosen book for the semester. As a way to help create the desired community feeling, the program hosts book club meetings to discuss the semester’s suggested reading. The Common Read Initiative also hosts events throughout the semester. These events are composed of a multitude of presentations. Some of the presentations are movies that have to do with the book topic, others include lectures given by professors and authors. The presentations can also include guest speakers who have been through similar experiences to the people in the reading for that semester. These events and presentations are all related to the theme of the book, and are meant as a way to help people fully understand the purpose of the suggested reading program is trying to achieve.

The Common Read 2015-2016 featured text is Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption by Jennifer Thompson-Cannino and Ronald Cotton with Erin Torneo. This extremely emotional and thought-provoking book is about a rape victim, Jennifer Thompson’s, emotional and thought-provoking book is about a rape victim, Jennifer Thompson’s, American experience, as is the case with many books that come out in the fall. This is the first semester that the Common Read program has used the eyes of student and faculty alike to social, political and worldly issues. Some of these books include alike to social, political and worldly issues.

While interviewing students on campus about the Common Read program, I asked the question, “How well known do you think the program is on campus and before speaking with me what did you think the initiative was?” While many people said they knew what the program was many said they only knew what it was about in light of this I asked what people thought the common read program could do to better advertise and engage the student body. A student named Robyn answered my question by saying, “I’ve definitely seen it around campus but never really thought about what it was.” Unfortunately, to their grant application was rejected but the Office of Academic Affairs supported the idea so they were able to purchase 300 copies of Cynthia Ozick’s The Shawl. That first semester they may only had three events compared to the 35 events they are having this semester. Also compared to that first semester the program now has over 45 faculty members involved in the program. The next question I asked her was “Who decides what the suggested reading is going to be for that semester and how do they decide?” She told me that there is a Common Read Committee that meets several times over the semester to discuss the recommendations, the connections the book would make across the curriculum, the themes of the book and their implications. Ms. Madera went on to tell me how our Common Read program is different than similar types of programs in other schools and jokingly called our program the Uncommon Read. She told me how with these types of programs at other schools the reading is usually required for incoming freshmen and highly recommended for the rest of the campus where they then have one event where they may only have the author of the books to come in and give a presentation. Ms. Madera believes that the way we do it at Queensborough is much more effective to students and having multiple events causes the themes of the books to really resonate with the students. One thing is for sure, the Common Read program is growing, moving onwards and upwards.

Many students complain that long class hours are to blame for not having enough time to make a good income. There is a solution to this problem; get a job on campus! Current students working at Queensborough Community College (QCC) confirm that working on campus has made their life much more manageable when it comes to balancing their schoolwork, finances, transportation and academic performance.

Students who work on campus recommend getting a job at QCC. They describe working on campus as a great place to get mentally and physically prepared for their future career. Students also commented that for a college job the payment is fair. In comparison to a job outside of QCC the salary is similar.

One of the requirements to work on campus is to be eligible for Work Study - a program that provides jobs to undergraduates students with financial aid issues. This program also offers jobs outside of campus if the student needs it. Also, this program is not only available at QCC but also at any other college or university.

When applying for a job, QCC requires students to be eligible for financial aid, be a matriculated student in a degree program at QCC, be enrolled for at least six credits and students must not owe the school any type of money.

There are a variety of job opportunities on campus. According to Ben McCormary, a coach, trainer and staff member for the past seven years at QCC, “We have different areas where students can develop their working skills on campus such as the cafeteria, library, bookstore, gym, weight room, lifeguard, and maintenance.” These jobs on campus are offered to students every semester. He continues to say, “You are all welcome to the team. You are all welcome to work with us.”

The Common Read book for this spring. Credit: qcc.cuny.edu

By Vincent Cacchione

The Common Read Initiative

Job Opportunities Available on Campus

By Erika Oroso

Many students complain that long class hours are to blame for not having enough time to make a good income. There is a solution to this problem; get a job on campus! Current students working at Queensborough Community College (QCC) confirm that working on campus has made their life much more manageable when it comes to balancing their schoolwork, finances, transportation and academic performance.

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Free Community College?

continued from cover page

Nyema Meadows, a student studying nursing suggests that, “college and textbooks should just be one package with no cost as long as you’re dedicated and passionate about your studies. I’m here paying out of pocket and also paying for textbooks that my professors hardly even use! This is so overwhelming; hopefully President Obama can pull something together and get this free!” According to CNN, statistics show that eighty percent of students are chipping in for their own tuition. Students are working either full or part time jobs to help pay for their education, which isn’t fair because they aren’t able to be fully dedicated to their studies.

College is very expensive and isn’t considered to be “worth it” to some. Many feel that it is worth it because you are furthering your education. But some feel that it isn’t worth it because it poses as an inconvenience financially. Community colleges should be free; this would ultimately ease and even eliminate the burden of debts and loans. Owen Daniel- Sanchez, a student studying business feels, that “college should be free to those who plan to do well in school. I see many students who receive full financial aid and don’t do well, which isn’t fair to those who don’t receive any aid.” Allowing community colleges to be free will open new doors and opportunities for students.
So does technology improve anything? So now the students find out “I’m an X type learner”. For example, we or they need repetition of material in more than one medium, whatever it is, we have the interactive assessment and they would find out they’re visual learners or auditory learners styles to the instructional designs. Students would go on take some kind of self-monitored,

Faculty Spotlight- Dr. Philip Pecorino

The Flint Water Crisis seems like an alternate universe. How could something so devastating be allowed to happen under the watchful eyes of the U.S government? It would seem that if an event does not affect us directly involving our friends and families that we are desensitized to the misfortunes of others. The water crisis in Flint has shed a whole new light on the bureaucracy involved in these serious environmental issues. Why such a slow response to the residents of Flint over concerns that the water was making them sick? According to an article titled “Our Mouths Were Ajar: Doctor’s Fight to Expose Flint’s Water Crisis” on CNN.com, The public was first made aware of the severely contaminated water from the Flint River with high levels of lead and other heavy metals by Doctor Hanna-Attisha and Virginia tech professor Marc Edwards. Dr Hannah was seeing the increasing levels of lead in the children coming into her practice and the hospital were she works as a pediatrician, some blood levels were double or even triple the amount as seen before the city changed its water supply from Detroit to the Flint River. Dr. Hannah–Attisha and her team conducted research the findings conclude that there was an exact correlation to the increased lead levels in the children’s bodies and the change in the water supply. After these finding were made public Dr. Hanna-Attisha claims government official accused her of causing wide scale panic and hysteria. Her findings were discredited as government official said these finding were not conclusive with their reports. It was later proven that the Dr. Hanna-Attisha and her team findings were indeed correct, this was due to the city of Flint’s lack of corruption control.

The governor of Michigan, Rick Snyder appointed an emergency manager who made the decision to cut costs by changing the cities water supply from Detroit to the Flint River. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) there is no safe level for exposure to lead for children. Lead exposure in adults and children can have adverse and long-term effects on the exposed individuals quality of life. The CDC states on its website that, “In children, acute exposure to high levels of lead may produce encephalopathy and other accompanying signs of ataxia, coma, convulsion, death, and hyperirritability stupor.” These are serious illnesses and without the proper medical intervention to the families exposed to this “toxic waste” these could be some of the side effects these children will have to live with. Lead is said to alter one’s DNA and may manifest in future generations. It is important to add that it is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that all children should be screened for lead poisoning especially if a high percentage of children in their neighborhood tested positive for lead in their blood. Children are tested frequently up until the age of six years old. Lead is a neurotoxin which affects mental development in those affected. According to the CDC, “Even without encephalopathy symptoms, these levels are associated with increased incidence of lasting neurological and behavioral damages (ATSDR 2005).” Lead exposure especially high levels leads to a mirage of illnesses such as; lost of some cognitive functions, drop in IQ, rashes on the skin, liver failure kidney failure and in some cases death which affects both adults and children . It is reported by the center for disease control in there data that children suffer more severely from lead poisoning regardless of their blood lead levels (blil). With regard to adults they show less severe symptoms to lead exposure and need higher levels of blood lead levels(blil). According to data collected the CDC, “childhood ADHD, may persist into adulthood lead-expose adults may also experience may neurological symptoms experienced by children although the threshold for adults tend to be higher .precursors of encephalopathy such as dullness, irritability, poor attention span, muscular tremor, loss of memory may occur at lower blils.”. The long term effects of lead exposure is well documented, the issue now is determining the scope of educational, financial and social support needed by these residents, and finding funding to support these communities in ensuring their needs are being met at the highest level possible.

On the news and on television we see the faces of Flint, Michigan, protesting but a closer look reveals the residents of Flint whose voices are not being heard. One would think that with all the media coverage and governmental intervention all the residents of Flint would be aware that the water is contaminated with lead and other heavy metals but that is not the case according to npr.org. In their article published January 28,2016, “some undocumented immigrants in Flint, Michigan are just finding out that the water from the taps is contaminated with lead. Fear of being deported keeps some from picking up free water and filters.” This is due in part by the lack of communication in Spanish so some of these individuals could be informed of the dangers of the water, there is a language barrier as well as the fear of being deported that keeping some individuals from seeking the help they need.

The Water Crisis in Flint, Michigan is causing a huge exodus of its residents in search of a safer environment for themselves and their families. According to Melissa Mays, a Flint resident who spoke with CNN, “You can’t sell your home legally if you have a known copper and lead problem, and that’s all of us, unless you replace your own service line, interior plumbing your hot water heater anything that’s contaminated were stuck.” Some residents have filed lawsuits against the governor Rick Snyder, in order to receive damages to themselves and property. Most of these residents are living below the poverty line civil suits and lawsuits are expensive. Leaving some residents with little choice but to abandon the city. Miss Mays goes on to say,”...most people are just leaving their gonna deal with bankruptucy, just to get out to get safe water.”

Fresh clean drinking water is a basic human need. Cities and states providing this commodity to its residents should be a non-issue especially in a state such as Michigan which is surround by so many sources of fresh drinking water. But unfortunately it is in a bid to secure cheaper water for the city of flint government officials has cause irreversible damage to a generation that would become this cities future, the federal hearing is to decide who is at fault and how stringently they should be punished but one thing remains constant these children need help in putting back the pieces of their life’s together and its up to us as a society to help in anyway we can.
European Immigration Crisis

From their troubles in Asia and Africa they came, escaping bombs, guns, torture, famine and poverty. Braving the harsh journey by land and sea, through summer’s heat and winters freeze they continued and descended on the western world. Europe is facing the ripples that were caused by the events of wars going on outside its borders, as well as those caused by The Arab Spring uprising which have caused a floodgate of humanity to rush into its borders with no concrete solution as to how to stem the rush. From the BBC in Europe to CNN in America we’ve heard, from the endless articles from Vice News, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and the The Washington Post we’ve read: Europe under Siege.

Looking at the numbers, according to BBC statistics approximately 1,294,000 have crossed into Europe seeking asylum since the crisis began in 2014. 381,000 are Syrian refugees escaping a brutal four year civil war that has claimed thousands of lives and pulled regional powers into the conflict. 70,000 are from Afghanistan where NATO’s war on the Taliban has ranged on for over a decade with no end in sight, and the rest are from various nations such as Pakistan, Nigeria, Ukraine, Eritrea and others. So far the known number of deaths of those who have perished on the perilous journey is estimated at around 26,000 but officials are saying the numbers could be much higher. Many of those casualties on the road to Europe have died in the Mediterranean Sea, and in response the E.U has launched “Operation Triton” in an effort to better patrol the area, and stop smugglers from bringing further people in. Frontex the E.U border patrol agency which heads the operation have deployed three airplanes, six Offshore Patrol Vessels, 12 patrol boats, two helicopters, nine debriefing and six screening teams, and the executive director Fabrice Leggeri stated in 2015 that the operation is saving lives. “We have dramatically increased the deployment levels in the Central Mediterranean to support the Italian authorities in controlling its sea borders and in saving lives, too many of which have already been tragically lost this year.” For those who are already within the E.U borders processing and finding settlement has been a challenge for officials, and there has been a lot of backlash from some of the local population who are worried about the strain that the influx of such a mass will put on their lives and economy. Others are afraid of the “Islamisation” of Europe. And there are security concerns following the Paris bombings, and the New Year’s sexual assaults in Germany, bringing up the debate on whether taking in so many refugees endangers Europe’s security. In response to such fears Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel said in her speech to the Bundestag (Germany’s Parliament) “The strongest response to terrorists is to carry on living our lives and our values as we have until now – self-confident and free, considerate and engaged, and that Europeans will show our free life is stronger than any terror”

In all this the reader must take into account how, why and when this problem arose. Some may say that the western powers wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and their support of drone strikes throughout the Middle East have caused unimaginable destruction not only to land, economy and government, but also to ways of life and have deepened divisions amongst different groups of Muslims and political factions. This discontent, mixed in with the events known as “The Arab Spring Uprising” which according to The Guardian’s timeline by Garry Blight, Sheila Pulham and Paul Torpey, began on the 17th of December 2010, when a college graduate Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in Tunisia when the local police seized his vending stand of fruit and vegetables. This in turn spurred protests in neighboring Arab countries where the population especially students where very displeased with low job opportunities, poverty and rampant corruption by the ruling governments. The governments in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria reacted violently to the protests and spoiled blood, and that in turn lead to armed unrest. Tunisia settled down following the exile of their then President Zine-al-Abidine Ben Ali on the 14th of January 2011. Egypt experienced regime change as well. Hosni Mubarak resigned on the 11th of February 2011 amid protests, and turned power over to the Egyptian military. The situation in Egypt remains volatile. Libya and Syria are both in the middle of civil wars, and a new danger has arisen in the form of The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Since its break away from Al-Qaeda in April 2013, led by Abu Bakr al Baghdadi have seized large swaths of Iraq, Syria and some areas of Libya according to BBC reports. They are even threatening the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The reason why Europe has become the destination of choice for the migrants is that, Europe from the perspective of those looking in from the outside, is a land of opportunity and within reach. Europe is secure, has a rich vibrant economy despite the financial crisis that it is experiencing. Many migrants enter through Italy, Spain and Greece but choose to head further inland and in an attempt to be able to claim asylum in Germany, France, Sweden, Norway and England where they believe they will be welcomed and accommodated. But according to E.U officials this has created chaos and concern as the Schengen Agreement which allows free travel throughout the euro states, says that asylum seekers must lay claim to the first E.U member state that they arrive in. But as Greece and Italy become over inflated with migrants, officials have proposed a solution of distributing asylum seekers evenly, which has not gone down too well for many governments who claim that such a move is a violation of their sovereignty.

Corruption, poverty, politics and war is what has caused the migrant crisis by what can be surmised by these historic events which are taking place at the start of the twenty-first Century. Perhaps a solution lies in close cooperation between the Europeans and The Arab League that has remained rather idle in responding to an issue that heavily involves them, and even if the Syrian government is able to restore order to its country and ISIL is defeated, one thing that is certain, is that Europe will never be the same again.

The European crisis is a global crisis.
Credit: Pixabay.com
By Alexis Josue Moungara
The West African Black Rhinoceros Declared Extinct

By Ileana Marinescu

In 2011, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) declared that the West African Black Rhinoceros, one of the rarest of the black rhino subspecies Diceros bicornis longipes, officially extinct. Due to a rapid decline in the population of Black Rhinos by an estimated 97.6% since 1960, the rhino was placed on the IUCN Red List in 2008 as “critically endangered” subspecies. Across the African continent, numbers were sinking down to 2,410 in 1995 mainly because of extreme poaching. During the dry season of 2006, an extensive survey was done over much of the range of last known remaining habitat in northern Cameroon. No evidence of the Western Black Rhino was found at that time and since the 2006 survey, there were no reports to indicate the rhino the present’s in the area, therefore, this subspecies is considered extinct.

According to TRAFFIC, which is a joint program of World Wide Fund (WWF) and IUCN, right through most of the 20th century, the Black Rhino was the largest of the world’s rhino species which at one point was estimated around 850,000. By 1960, only an estimated 100,000 survived due to ceaseless hunting of the species and loss of their natural habitat in favor of the settlers. The poaching epidemic which started in the early 70s- virtually extinguished most of the rhinos in the wild. By 1993, only 2,475 Black Rhinos were recorded.

Since then, anti-poaching efforts and a successful conservation plan proposed by the WWF contributed to increasing the population of Black Rhinos to around 5,000.

Today poaching is a major threat to Black Rhinos. They are being killed mercilessly by poachers for the illegal trade of their horns. The IUCN reports that Rhino horn is mainly used in Chinese medicine as a supposed cure for a series of illnesses including cancer. The increase in the demand for rhino horn was caused by a new market handles for ceremonial daggers or Jambiyas worn in some Middle Eastern countries. This increase in demand on the black market coincided with the rise of poaching in some range areas. Other threats that can cause Black Rhino decline include habitat changes, competing of species and changes in local vegetation. However, the current numbers of the Black Rhinos as reported by IUCN is, “still 90% lower than three generations ago.”

Today, only three recognized ecotypes/subspecies of Black Rhinoceroses are found in the eastern and southern African countries. The fourth one, the Diceros bicornis longipes is officially extinct in Northern Cameroon: the Southern-central Black Rhino, South-western Black Rhino, and the Eastern Black Rhino.

In an effort to protect Black Rhinos from extinction, all international commercial trade of Black Rhino and their product was declared illegal (permitted only with exceptional licensed circumstances), by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora as early as 1977. Sadly to this day, the Black Rhino continues to be listed as “Critically Endangered” on the IUCN Red List.

Nevertheless, protecting the rhino population in their natural habitat proved to be an enormous challenge in most of the African states due to poverty, ineffective governmental policies, and minimal conservation funds. Together with CITES international trade bans, a number of states implemented domestic anti-trade measures and legislations in the 90s, in order to decrease illegal trade. An increase in rhino population growth was achieved after implementation of armed field protection of the rhinos, building safer fenced sanctuaries, and the proactive involvement of local communities.

The survival of the remaining three subspecies of the Black Rhino is being managed by several private and state organizations in a number of countries, increasing their long-term security. South Africa and Namibia are the two states with the largest rhino population today. Their success in the fight for the Black Rhino conservation are uplifting as well as encouraging. However, the struggle against illegal trade and current poaching crisis is still going on. There is no hope for the West African Black Rhino (D. b. longipes) anymore, therefore winning the battle for the survival of the remaining subspecies of Black Rhinos is a matter of life or death.

Infected Generation

By Irene Drivas

In February of 2016, President Barack Obama requested Congress to help combat the Zika virus by providing approximately $1.9 billion in emergency funding to build on our ongoing efforts. According to www.whitehouse.gov, “Zika is primarily spread to people through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito. It can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy.” However there has also been evidence that the Zika virus can be sexually transmitted by a man to his partners. There has yet to be any studies that prove that women can transmit the disease to her partners.

The Zika virus was discovered in 1947 originating in the Zika forest of Uganda. The symptoms known to this virus are a fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes. The illness typically lasts for several days to one week. Unfortunately there is no vaccine or medication to treat the Zika virus. The best way to medicate this virus would be to get plenty of rest, staying hydrated and if necessary taking acetaminophen to reduce the symptoms of pain or fever. Once the Zika virus has infected a person their system develops immunity to future occurrences.

If someone is pregnant while bitten by this mosquito it causes a birth defect which is called microcephaly. This birth defect causes baby’s heads to be smaller than usual and it incomplete brain development. Pregnant women throughout any trimester should strongly consider not traveling to any places that is affected by Zika virus. Women who aren’t pregnant but are trying to conceive shouldn’t get pregnant in an area prone to the Zika virus because there is a possibility of it being sexually transmitted.

On its website, the CDC states “In May of 2015 it was discovered in Brazil, many babies have been diagnosed with microcephaly”. Brazil had 20 times more cases in 2015 than normal. How did the Zika virus become such a huge problem in such little time? Well it wasn’t Americans concern because it never reached America, other than that this virus has been around for a long period of time.

Pope Francis suggested “Women in areas affected by the Zika virus could use artificial contraception and that avoiding pregnancy is not an absolute evil.” Although he does explain that there are strict restrictions to having abortions. Religious leaders said that the comments that Pope Francis stated under the circumstances doesn’t mean that it changes Catholic’s beliefs and doesn’t change what they’re teaching in churches. According to www.healthfinder.gov, the last time that any Pope was allowed to do this was Pope Paul VI. This took place in 1960, and the only reason why they were granted the artificial contraception was because a lot of nuns were getting raped in Belgian Congo.

Barack Obama has stated that they’re looking for a cure before this summer. However this disease is not considered a deadly disease. Although it is dangerous to pregnant women because of the birth defects of baby’s development, overall if you aren’t pregnant it is just a week of bed rest just like any other ordinary cold.
How to Be Your Own Tour Guide

By Carlos Ordonez

New York City prides itself on being one of the most active and interesting cities in the world. Every year millions of tourists from all over the world come to New York City in search of exciting things to do. Fortunately, there are many places one can visit at any time of the year. As a New Yorker, I specifically recommend four places that are relatively affordable and fun for people of all ages.

If you are a fan of art or even if you are just curious about it, you will love the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Located in Midtown Manhattan on West 53rd Street, the MoMA displays contemporary cultures from some of history’s most astonishing artists like Pablo Picasso, Van Gogh, Salvador Dali and Frida Kahlo among others. Full time students with a current ID pay only 14 dollars.

If you are up for a walk, the Brooklyn Bridge is a perfect choice. Being one of the most emblematic structures of New York, the Brooklyn Bridge offers an extraordinary view for those who dare to cross it. It is a perfect place to take a picture that serves a reminder that you once were in the greatest city in the world.

During the summer, an ideal place to spend time with your loved ones is Bryant Park. Here you can take advantage of the city’s outdoor movies. These movies are free for the public to watch and the schedule can be found through the park’s website. Additionally, Central Park also offers free movies and concerts throughout the summer for people to enjoy. As with Bryant Park, the schedule of all these activities can be found on Central Park’s website.

During the winter, one of the most exciting activities to do is to go ice skating. While there are three other rinks that offer reasonable prices in the city, the most affordable one is located in Central Park. Ice skating is a great opportunity to spend time with your family and to socialize with other New Yorkers.

New York has many great places for people to explore. I encourage everyone who wants to have a joyful time visit these places. I am sure they will have as much fun as I did.
The Subway Slashings

By Rachel Vella

Surely, a majority of the city’s population has heard about what has been happening at multiple local subway stations. For the past few months, there have been a lot of reported attacks of people being slashed while waiting for the subway or while riding it. Subway stations have become more dangerous, needless to say, and it’s important that people are more aware of their surroundings.

There have been many incidents of people being slashed, and although assailants have been arrested and charged for the attacks, there are still attacks and incidents occurring on the subway.

According to nbnewyork.com, a 28-year-old woman named Merci Christie, was charged on three counts including criminal possession of a weapon for slashing a woman in her late 20s and a man in his late 40s on a southbound A train in Brooklyn in late December.

CBS News reported on January 31st, there was an attack on a 27 year old man the Sunday prior in a Harlem Station. They also stated that a 29 year old woman was slashed while being on the number 3 train, and the attacker allegedly pulled out a knife when she bumped into him.

In early February, Stephan Brathwaite, age 37, started arguing with a 30-year-old man while waiting for their train at Junius Street station. Before stepping onto the train, Stephan threw hot coffee on the victim. After boarding the train, they walked towards each other, with Stephan stabbing the man in the chin with a knife, as reported by New York One News. Luckily the victim was not injured severely enough to go to hospital, but the attacker is facing assault and menacing charges.

Everyone should always be aware of their surroundings at all times, but no one should have to fear getting slashed on a subway at random while they’re on their commute to work or to school. These slashing attacks must come to an end as soon as possible so New York City can feel a little bit safer again.

The Future of Transportation

By Steve Zouvelos

Mayor De Blasio recently unveiled new information about a Brooklyn/Queens streetcar and its goal is to change the way certain New Yorker’s commute. The purpose of this streetcar line is to take passengers from Brooklyn to Queens which would be convenient for those going to work. What makes this idea so interesting is that passengers will have a better commute and will enjoy the view on the way to their destination. The streetcar passes through water fronts and the sky rise buildings of Manhattan. The official route starts from Sunset Park, travels through Fort Greene, Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Long Island City and then Astoria. It is projected to travel at an average of 11.3 miles per hour. As far as funding goes for the streetcar to become official, it will cost approximately 2.5 billion dollars. There have been donations given by individuals and corporations to start De Blasio’s Campaign.

Individuals who are a part of Forest City Ratner donated 73,000 dollars for this project and the Durst family have also given close to 74,000 dollars. One of the biggest contributors is Two Trees Construction Corporation which gave 100,000 dollars to fund the trolley. The cost to ride this will be the exact cost of the subway fare and if this goes as planned it would collect an estimated 3.7 billion dollars of new tax revenue. If this plan works citizens of New York will enjoy the commute and many residents will see this as a huge success. However others may disagree. Some feel it is great to use this form of transit because of the parking problems in some of the populated areas. This is a very big deal because it connects two boroughs however what if someone is in a different area and cannot get access to this transit system. Some individuals believe it will be a disappointment and feel the money should be used more efficiently to improve the subway and residents in the Brooklyn neighborhood’s might be affected by the streetcar’s loud sounds. De Blasio promises the citizens of these areas that the streetcar will not upset the community, it will only improve it

New York Fashion Week

By Anika Seoparson

As Fashion Month reaches its close, New York Fashion Week is reflected upon as a strong start to the Fall/Winter collections. From February 10, 2016 to February 18, 2016, many collections showcased brilliant designs following similar inspirations, aspects, and overall looks.

Light and luxurious fabrics were a force to be reckoned with on the runway. Silk was shown in conjunction with heavy coats and sweaters at shows in the likes of Concept Korea and Nicholas K. Cushnie et Ochs took a more adult-like angle on silk with its elegant selection of slip-inspired dresses. Their pairings of silk tops with structured skirts added some semblance of sophistication to the collection. BCBG Max Azria incorporated Lurex, a metallic yarn, on each of their models in homage to the late David Bowie. The creative director of the collection, Lubov Azria, attributes the utilization of Lurex as well as the collection’s overall inspiration to “the idea of performance”.

Fur was another irrefutably consistent feature in the Fall/Winter collections. Altuzarra’s whimsical show included shearling lined jackets in several looks. In Michael Kors’ collection, models donned full-fledged fur coats as well as tiny fur details on handbags in colors from lime green to classic tan, showing the versatility in its use. Son Jung Wan incorporated fur in her collections as well in a number of clever ways from the lapels of coats to the sleeves of tops.

With the rise of celebrity designers also came the rise of a new trend known as “athlesisure”. Kanye West’s Yeezy Season 3 and Rihanna’s Fenty x Puma Ready-to-Wear each offered high fashion takes on athletic apparel. Models in Rihanna’s collections sported all black and white ensembles including tracksuits, sweatsuits, and sports bras with slicked back white hair. Kanye West’s collection showcased a more high fashion profile than his prior collections, pairing athletic wear with fur, knitwear, and heeled boots. Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of Vogue Magazine, even showed high praise for the trend, saying of athlesisure, “I think the sports influence is continuing even more strongly than before.” Other collections in the likes of Lacoste and Tory Burch included similarly athletic looks as well.

Neutral colored clothing has become an increasingly big hit in fashion as well. Concept Korea’s collection of either black or white looks from head to toe with hints of burgundy and metallic materials produced a wearable flow of high fashion. Noon by Noor took a feminine take on nude tones, pairing white, beige, and black shades with vibrant embellishments and bomber jackets and breaking the continuity of single-toned looks with a few red, blue, and lavender pieces.

The more laidback feel of this New York Fashion Week provided a refreshing atmosphere for the oncoming month of shows. Each runway show throughout the week flowed magnificently in conjunction with one another.
SafeTrek – Personal Safety App Review

By Nicole Queirolo

Often we feel unsafe when walking home at night or we are walking around unfamiliar areas. SafeTrek is an app that creates a timeline of your locations and helps alert the authorities whenever you feel unsafe. A college student named Zach Winkler, who attended the University of Missouri, created the SafeTrek app in 2013 after college students began noticing many unsafe incidents that were happening on campus.

The app creates a sense of security for anyone that feels uncomfortable walking alone. Some students use this app without a problem. It guarantees security and instant alerts. One student named Brittany, said, “I’ve used the SafeTrek app more than once and haven’t had a problem with it since I’ve downloaded it. I feel safer knowing that I have this app on my phone since I get out of work late at night.”

The way the app works is quite simple. When first downloading and opening the SafeTrek app, it will ask you to turn on your location setting. Then it will show a short walkthrough of how the app works in four easy steps. The first step is to press and hold down on the safe button that will appear on the screen. The second step is to release the safe button. The third step is to enter your four-digit pin within 10 seconds. If the pin is not entered within those 10 seconds then the police and the SafeTrek call center will be notified with your name, location and type of emergency. The final step is to meet your 24/7 safety assistant. After doing so, it will ask for personal information such as your first and last name, phone number, and the personal four digit pin.

Another advantage to this personal safety app is that it has someone from the SafeTrek call center texting you to make sure you’re safe. However, no app should be a replacement for 911.

According to SafeTrek’s website, the app is available anywhere in the U.S. and is also available on both iOS and Android phones. If you are interested to try out the app, I recommend trying out the 7-day free trial. If you want to buy the app, it costs $2.99 a month or you can subscribe for a year for $29.99. If not satisfied with the app, it is possible to cancel the subscription. SafeTrek is slowly working on making the world a safer place for everyone.
Stay Connected with QCC Connect and More!

By Taylor Jacobs

In today’s day and age, convenience and speed takes precedence in pretty much all facets of our daily lives so much so that the devices we use are a reflection of that and have become an extension of ourselves. This is an epidemic worth embracing though given the many new advances in mobile applications; it proves to be a very helpful and informative source. There are three different applications available at students’ disposal: MyInfo (Cunyfirst), Mobile Learn (Blackboard), and QCC Connect. Each application has very specific purposes that serve to guide students in different ways throughout the semester.

The MyInfo app is a mobile option to the Cunyfirst website. This app also informs you of your class schedule as well but it actually notifies you ten minutes prior to it starting and it goes as far as to include the books needed for each class. Mobile Learn is similar to that of the previous app is the mobile friendly alternative to the desktop blackboard website and it sends notifications of any announcements from each class directly to your phone so you can stay updated on the go. For each of these any of the functions on the standard website versions are accessible on the respective applications as well. The newest application specific to Queensborough students is QCC Connect. It displays class schedules for the week and reflects holidays, possible change in room numbers for a given class, as well as changes in weekday schedules. Keeping up to date with events, news, academic, and transit information is all accessible in the application.

Despite the ease of access, coupled with the various features that the application offers, it has become apparent that most students just aren’t taking advantage of it. One of the possible causes for this, as far as the reviews in the App Store reveals, is that the application doesn’t seem very favorable among the students. One user Bobby Johns comments, “if you are looking for simplicity, you won’t find it here” and another user “Chapman93” says, “Has never worked correctly for the two years I tried using it.” Besides the few that find faults in the application, the vast majority of Queensborough students do not seem to know it even exists. When asked if the concept of the application is just not appealing enough Student Daniel Dona, like most of his peers replied, “I didn’t even know about it.” This just goes to show, students are not in the know with a lot of the tools offered to their benefit. Reviews whether good or bad are effective because they aid in consistently bettering the student experience overall so stay connected, informed, offer feedback, and utilize the Queensborough network.

SUICIDE & COUNSELING CENTERS IN COLLEGES

continued from cover page

29% had struggled with anxiety. About 88% of community colleges do not have a psychiatrist or other licensed prescriber on staff or contracted to provide services, according to the lab, and 57% do not provide suicide prevention resources.

As a college student may be sent to the hospital and take a medical leave from school, it can take a long time to reapply and get accepted to the school again; if you get accepted again. I made a survey on two questions and my results were that many people don’t go to the counseling center for help with their thoughts when they are under pressure and stressed.

There are many resources available for college students to get the help they may need. One such website is https://www.jedfoundation.org. The Campus Counseling Center’s website has a service called ULIFELINE. Suicide is a chain reaction and you can help at any point saving lives through suicide prevention initiatives and programs, another website that can help teach you on mental illness and suicide http://2livelonger.net

Ways to Help:
Start. Find a quiet, comfortable place to talk. Don’t promise to keep your discussions secret. Connect. Pay attention and avoid distractions. Ask: Use phrases that show you want to help. “It seems like you’re having a hard time. I’d like to hear about it.” “I wanted to check in, because you haven’t seemed yourself lately.”
Listen. Take in what’s being what the person says to make sure you understand fully. Ask questions, such as “When did you begin feeling like this?” “How can I best support you right now?” Don’t say “I know how you feel,” because you aren’t that person or experiencing their feelings.
Offer hope. Let the person know you care and that help is available. Before ending the conversation, have a next step you both agree on, like planning another time to talk or connecting with professional help.

Encourage the person to seek help: You may want to offer to accompany them to talk to a mental health clinician.

Help someone to stay safe: If they are in danger, stay with them and call for help such as local police 911, or Suicide Prevention Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to find out more information go to http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org, you can also text “start” to 741-741 to find out more information go to http://www.crisistextline.org.

Talk with a clinician or someone else you trust: This way you can share the responsibility with others, attend to your own need for support, and check out how you can continue to be of help.
Avocados like You’ve Never Seen
By Karima Meloni

DRAGON EGGS?! No they’re just avocados, but that’s what you might think when you see avocados. Many confuse avocados for vegetables but they are actually fruit; with amazing benefits. So let’s get the boring stuff out the way first. Historically it comes from a tree called Persea Americana, which only live in subtropical places like Florida, California and Mexico.

There are many benefits associated with eating and using avocados. For example, avocados help with blood pressure, cancer prevention, skin, diabetes, arthritis treatment, constipation, weight loss and better overall health, according to the Healthiest Food website. As you know avocados are everywhere, from your nachos to even your chocolate cookies. Victoria Graham from Queensborough recently said, “It would be great if they offered fresh guacamole and chips in the cafeteria during the summer.”

Avocados are slim towards the top and rounder towards the body, due to the huge pit inside. Many may not know but avocados vary, in size and appearance. According to The California Avocado there are eight different types of avocados Bacon, Fuertes, Gwen, Hass, Lamb Hass, Pinkerton, Reed, and Zatano. Also “The Hass variety accounts for approximately 95 percent of the total crop each year – which runs from spring to fall.” The California Avocado website states. The Hass avocado is what we mostly find in our local supermarket year round.

The biggest disappointment in when buying avocados is bringing them home and they are not ripe. The best way to find a ripe avocado is from the “color and the feel” Avocado Central states. A darker green is a sign that the avocado is ripe, due to the fact that the avocado isn’t ripe once picked from the tree. Another sure way to tell if an avocado is ripe is to give it a light squeeze, doing this with the palm of your hand helps indicate the texture of the inside. If you squeeze and the avocado feels too soft then the avocado can be over ripe and not good to eat. “Putting your avocado in the fridge is like saying you don’t want the full amazement the avocado has to bring” said by Katharine Romero a student at QCC. Having your avocado in the fridge stops the avocado from ripening, which gives the avocado a longer shelf life until its ready for use.

Some may find cutting an avocado to be a death defying experience, but it doesn’t have to be. The easiest way to cut an avocado is to have a very sharp knife. Slice the avocado around the pit, twist and pull around. Now you should have two halves of the avocado showing the beautiful green color and an enormous pit. To remove the pit chop down on it with your knife twist and it should come out easily. Now you’re ready to make a mask for your face or delicious entrees!

Netflix vs. Hulu
By Victoria Graham

Think about how many times you turn on your TV. If it is less than five or ten times a week, it goes to show that traditional broadcast TV is slowly dying. It’s 2016 and Netflix and Hulu are becoming essential elements in our media lives. Both companies offer ways to watch TV shows for free on their original networks while having advantages and disadvantages. Obviously you don’t have to choose just one, but if you want to know which will give you more bang for your buck keep reading.

The article, “Netflix vs. Hulu Plus: Who Best Fits your Video Streaming Needs?” relays the most popular questions about Netflix and Hulu. One of the most frequently asked questions has two parts, “How much and how soon?”

Netflix has more content. Hulu gets their content faster. Ask yourself, do you want access to television shows right after they air, or do you want a massive library of shows and films to choose from? Are you someone who wants to binge watch a whole season without commercials, or a person who likes to know right away when the action happens? Netflix and Hulu are similar on the surface, but specialize in different types of content. One difference is that Netflix offers many TV shows and movies. But Hulu is currently airing television shows the day after they air in most cases.

If you’re the kind of viewer who needs to keep up with the latest shows, then Hulu is the only choice. One drawback is Hulu’s streaming service provides access to recently aired episodes but the latest season is restricted to the past five episodes or so rather the whole season. Sometimes it’s not even in sequential order. That can be frustrating if you have you have just gained interest in a new series and want to start from the beginning.

If you’re the type of viewer who loves to binge watch or re-watch your favorite TV shows or movies. Your choice is simple and it’s Netflix. Compared to Hulu, Netflix provides a massive library of television shows that have already ended, as well as previous seasons of many currently running shows from a broad variety of networks. Lastly, the disadvantage of a TV show you’re watching one day might not be available the next.

The next challenge between Netflix and Hulu is the category known as “Original Content”, which is best for you. Netflix is the clear winner for original content. According to the website Cinemablend, in the article “The 10 Greatest Netflix Original Shows, Ranked” by Nick Venable, Netflix’s original content is amazing and you are able to watch Daredevil, Sense8, Between, Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, Bloodline, House of Cards and Orange is the New Black. By the end of the year, they’ve promised to deliver a full season of its original series every two weeks. There is no question that it is an impressive target.

Which is more budget friendly for your wallet? Both Netflix and Hulu work on a flat rate pricing model that lets you stream as much content as you like. Both offer their services for a base rate of $7.99 per month. Netflix offers more expensive tiers that allow you to stream in HD and on multiple devices, topping out at $11.99 a month. You can add in home delivery of rental DVDs for a little bit more. Hulu allows access free contents on their desktop computers. This typically includes currently airing shows and some archival material. However, if you have a cable TV account Hulu will restrict certain content, and require that you connect your cable provider account to Hulu in order to allow you to access that content. The newest update with Hulu now charges extra for their commercial free version!
LIKE WINE, IT GETS BETTER WITH TIME

By Katharine Romero

In this world, there are millions and millions of books to read. However, how many can really grasp and captivate you to the very last word? Better yet, how many can pique your interest? After all, not everyone is a huge fan of reading the newspaper, much less a novel.

But there is a novel that can change this perspective, John Grisham’s first novel, A Time to Kill, brings up a rather touchy subject, child rape. An African American girl of only 10 years of age, is remorselessly, viciously raped and beaten. Once the girl’s father, Carl Lee knows of the damage that’s been done, he decides to take matters into his own hands.

Now placed on trial, the life of Carl Lee is in the hands of the law, the people and his lawyer Jake Brigance. Grisham’s novel will keep you on edge, and pondering deep in thought, as it challenges you to question yourself, and question who and what is right or wrong. Grisham also gives you as reader, a unique and very real perspective of a lawyer, having been a lawyer himself. You can feel the pressures and the intensity from the novel, by defending a man who you decide is either a victim or a criminal. A Time to Kill, was first published in June 1989, and although Grisham’s novel was rejected by a good 28 publishers at first, it later became so popular and mass produced that a film was released by July 1996.

According to John Grisham’s official website, Grisham’s novel was first influenced when he witnessed the testimony of a 12-year-old girl who had been raped in 1964. John Grisham has written about 35 novels since A Time to Kill. Grisham once stated, “I seriously doubt I would ever have written the first story had I not been a lawyer. I never dreamed of being a writer. I wrote only after witnessing a trial.”

Although John Grisham’s, A Time to Kill, may have not been successful in the beginning, it’s almost baffling and incredible that a man who was once a lawyer, could produce such successful legal thrillers, and ultimately have a films influenced from his work. Needless to say, John Grisham’s words in itself are powerful and for his first novel, it’s a promising good read that like wine, it got better with time. So if you’re into having the hammer of justice prosper, you will not be disappointed by Grisham

The Great Age of Internet Piracy and Its Many Consequences

continued from cover page

As someone who enjoys the arts I can attest to them being like vapor. You can hold an Ipod and a DVD, but can’t physically touch a piece of music or a film. These things are corporeal, floating around us and filling the air, bound only by the physical format of a cartridge or disc. It’s understandable why someone would not think twice to miss out on royalties they would have gotten had those people gone to the movies. It takes thousands of people to make a movie, especially when the movie happens to be a blockbuster, and it takes millions to pay them for the work they do; no matter how you slice it, when the money isn’t coming in the people behind the movie making will most definitely start to lose interest. The same mindset, of course, applies to music and television programs.

As someone who enjoys the arts I can attest to them being like vapor. You can hold an Ipod and a DVD, but can’t physically touch a piece of music or a film. These things are corporeal, floating around us and filling the air, bound only by the physical format of a cartridge or disc. It’s understandable why someone would not think twice about acquiring something of no physical form for free, especially with how easy it is to attain it, but the people who create art are very much living and breathing things. By paying for a piece of music or a movie you aren’t defeating a system or a big corporate company, rather, you’re showing the creators that there is a genuinely vested interest creating something worth hundreds of man hours and extreme effort if the people doing the work can’t fully benefit from it. An example of how piracy can hurt even the most big budget of movies lies in none other than 2014’s The Expendables 3, which was stolen and leaked onto the internet several weeks before it was due out in theaters. This meant that anyone could simply go to a file-sharing website such as Thepiratebay and with a click download the film in its entirety without paying a cent. This also meant that, besides a small handful, the almost 70 million people downloading the movie would not be going to see it in the movie theatre. This caused not only the men and women working on the film to lose out on a large sum of money born from their labors, but the director and star studded cast to miss out on royalties they would have gotten had those people gone to the movies. It takes thousands of people to make a movie, especially when the movie happens to be a blockbuster, and it takes millions to pay them for the work they do; no matter how you slice it, when the money isn’t coming in the people behind the movie making will most definitely start to lose interest. The same mindset, of course, applies to music and television programs.

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A Melting Pot in Queens

By Fariha Bablu

Jackson Heights, a neighborhood in the northwestern part of Queens, is known for its wonderful measure of ethnic diversity with immigrants from Peru, Colombia, Mexico, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan with about 167 spoken languages. Frederick Wiseman’s latest documentary, *In Jackson Heights*, focuses on this particular location rather than an institution unlike in his previous works, mainly because of its various nationalities, cultures, opportunities, and viewpoints. Running three hours in length, Wiseman’s camera takes us to, in no particular order, a Muslim mosque, a Jewish community center, Gay Pride parade headquarters, city council chambers, a laundromat replete with street musicians, a local supermarket, an Indian beauty salon, a halal butcher shop, a florist shop, an elder center, a Catholic church, and a Hindu temple, among other places. Besides it’s wonderful diverse community, Wiseman doesn’t fail to show us the bitter side of the community, where big corporations are crushing down small businesses and the consequences certain groups are facing in that community because of their race or sexual orientation. Overall, Wiseman does a wonderful job exposing both the outer beauty and inner conflict of this wonderful community.

Similar to Wiseman’s other working method, he also uses the strictly observational mode with no voice-over or direct-to-camera interviews. With that being said, the observer will enjoy the vivid captured scenes of particular objects, group, or a particular conversation allowing the observer to feel part of this vibrant, endangered community. For some it might be a little confusing when Wiseman repeatedly switches scenes to a particular event, location or conversation between different groups of people. For example, one particular scene shows a Muslim school that teaches young children to read the Quran, then the next scene is a transsexual male who talks about an issue he had in a restaurant who refused to serve him properly because he is transsexual. Then we see a couple of old ladies in a cafe shop talking about their past, and again we see the same transsexual individual at a gay community event talking about his issue. We hear mostly conversations between people in different languages, mainly Spanish, however there is some music in the background too. For instance, we hear a Latin woman singing at an event which he fades away into the next scene of a night sky. In another scene we hear Indian music in an Indian beauty salon, which eventually fades away onto the next scene outside of a grocery shop. The film ends with a couple of elderly people singing. I thought the way he transitioned the music on to the next scene kind of fading it away smoothly was pretty unique. Overall, his choice of editing was very creative, it wasn’t in a particular order of certain groups of people or culture, but it was mixed, just like the community itself.

The fact it was a three-hour long movie, I thought it was going to be a little boring. However, after watching the film, I realized I was wrong. Wiseman captured some great moments. I enjoyed the scene when a group of people were studying for their citizenship exam and were asked why they want to be U.S citizens, one of the women kept on saying, “freedom of speech, freedom of religion.” This seemed funny because she kept on mentioning the concept of the Bill of Rights instead of answering the actual question. My favorite part is when a group of mostly Indian cabbies practice for their taxi exam. The way the teacher taught his students were hilarious, not only me, but the woman right next to me in the movie theater was dying from laughter. I also like Wiseman’s choice of editing where he show’s as footage from the day, then to night, then switches back to daylight events. Another highlight is the mayor’s birthday and City Council Member Daniel Dromm with a group of his elderly friends all join together at a restaurant to celebrate his birthday.

I am from Jackson Heights myself, so I was very excited to see this film. I think Wiseman did a great job capturing the culture, different groups of people, and obstacles the community faced as whole. I have lived in Jackson Heights for 15 years, and I have never come to realize that so much things are going on in my own community. Embarrassingly, I had no idea there was a little mall around 84th Street. Still, the fact I am from Jackson Heights, I enjoyed seeing the streets where I grew up and know. I would definitely recommend those who are from Jackson Heights to see this movie. Even if you’re not from Jackson Heights you should still go see it, because after seeing it I’m pretty sure you would be interested to visit this wonderful diverse community which Frederick Wiseman represents quite nicely.

Rio Problems in Brazil

By Tyrique Simon

What a horrible time for Brazil. In a couple of months Brazil is supposed to have the honor to host the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio. With the outbreak of the Zika Virus in Brazil, it has become a concern for athletes, world leaders and tourists, and rightfully so. This raises the question, will the Olympics be cancelled? The Zika virus is defined by the CDC as “a disease that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito.” The virus has no cure or vaccine at this time, with cases of the virus also being traced in other parts of Latin America. The danger of the Zika Virus is significant for pregnant women, as the disease is known to cause birth defects. As of May 2015, the virus has been a major threat in Brazil, with officials pleading with women not to have children until a cure or vaccine has been created. The was first confirmed by the New York Times in the article titles “Growing support Among Experts, For Zika Advice to Delay Pregnancy.” This has already become a deterrent for tourists to travel to Brazil, and with the Olympics coming in a couple of months, a time where people from all over the world comes together for an event, it leaves a lot of questions for Brazilians hoping to host the event. Brazil has spent a lot of money to make the Olympics happen this year, so much that many have questioned the ethics of spending money on the event like the Olympics and not on the community. As reported by the Huffington Post, Brazil has spent $993.3 million since August of last year. The money is put towards making the Olympic experience for travelers and athletes worth the price of admission, but at the same time utilizing that could go to the community in a time of desperate need. Brazil has had a long history of high crime rates and a poor economy. The money spent on this year’s Olympics doesn’t help create progress that Brazil needs.

With the Olympics only months away, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been working on trying to find a solution to the epidemic. One of the theories considered is that because there is no cure or vaccine as of now, that people in Brazil may become immune to it. Today, officials of Brazil and the WHO are trying to prepare athletes coming into Brazil come the summer, by continuing to find a solution and making advisory on how to deal with the mosquitoes. As reported by ESPN.go.com, athletes have already expressed their concern like U.S soccer goalkeeper Hope Solo who indicated that she would decline participating in he Rio Olympics. The Zika Virus, will be an ongoing conversation in the upcoming months, with more questions than answers. For the people and economy of Brazil, the Olympics and the Zika virus hang on questions being answered soon.
The New York Mets: 2016 is Our Year

By Lissett Young

With Baseball season approaching, New York Mets fans’ excitement grows as they await April 3 when they face the Kansas City Royals. The Mets 2-7 loss to the Kansas City Royals on October 27, taking home the World Series Champions title since 1986, has not prevented them from aiming on becoming the 2016 World Series Champions. To commemorate the former Mets team and their last Championship in 1986, they will wear the throw back uniforms every Sunday at home during the regular season, with a proper celebration on May 28 before their game. With the loss behind everyone and the upcoming season highly anticipated, Edwin Douglas Charles, whose nickname was “The Glider”, a retired third baseman who played for the New York Mets from 1967-1969, graciously gave us some insight on what it is like to be that close, and win. His contribution to the New York Mets World Series Championship in 1969 is inspiring.

When did you first discover your love for baseball?

Growing up, when I was a kid, baseball was the sport kids gravitated towards. [It was] very popular for all kids, and I started out playing in the sandlot with the neighborhood kids. I continued playing in high school, and in my senior year in high school I was drafted by the Boston Braves, now known as the Atlanta Braves, in 1952 and that was when my pro career started. From 1952-1962 was minor league until I got to the big leagues and was traded to Kansas City and that was an experience.

Can you tell us a little about the transitions from minor league to big league? You must have moved around a lot.

Everyone aspires to be a big leaguer. Every young athlete, everyone aspires for that but the thing was no one could express themselves freely, in movement. There was a lot of oppression of blacks in those days. It was hard for our kids to rise up to their potential, it was tough. There was always a chance of being dropped for any reason, and playing in the southern states, like Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, it was deeply embedded in the scheme of things. It was tough, it made you have to overlook a lot of things. It was pretty hard to do it, everyone telling you what to do, what not to do or you were kicked out or it meant loss of opportunities. In the down south, they’re tough down there.

In 1967 you were traded to the New York Mets, can you tell us a little bit about that transition?

It was a surprise that I was being traded because it was looked as if it was the downside to my career. I was 34. You need stability and everyone was saying, “you’re being traded to New York”, and I was fascinated because I was always fascinated by New York. It was an education moving. There was a lot of energy and I thrived off of their energy and they helped me grow and move up in those three years.

What were some of the difficulties you faced when transitioning? Was it hard for yourself or your family?

There are always difficulties and stressful situations on your family, especially with kids. You have to make sure they are in a comfortable situation. You need to help them get into the right state of mind and make sure they accept the transition. It is hard for family.

What helped you settle into New York? When did it start to feel like home?

I had relatives living here that I hadn’t met before, and when I got here they contacted me and they made me feel comfortable, like I’m home, and they taught me about New York. That was very nice. That definitely made it feel like home, made it easier.

There is a well known picture of you running to the pitcher’s mound after The Mets had won the 1969 World Series. Can you tell us what was running through your mind at that moment?

Well, that is something you dream about as a kid, and you can imagine what it’s like. The many prayers that I had sent up to the All Mighty [ran through my mind], who helped me become a major leaguer and Jackie Robinson who opened the door. I was just so happy, I couldn’t believe it. It’s really happening. I was so happy you can’t decide the feeling. I was on cloud 9. No, more like cloud 20.

What was retirement from baseball like?

I consider myself fortunate. The Mets management has taken a liking to me and offered me a position, and I worked for them as a scout and Minor League coach before I finally retired from Baseball. I started working with the juveniles in New York and I was based in the South Bronx. I enjoyed doing that. I was also a record promoter. An artist once gave me a gold record for his promotion. I really enjoyed doing that, too. I moved around and I’ve been fortunate. I’m trying to take it easy and enjoy my retirement now.

You have mentioned before that Jackie Robinson’s story played a role in your perseverance when faced with difficulties while establishing a name for yourself in the baseball community. Can you speak about any specific moment?

He made it possible for people of color to play against white people in a competition like that. It was never allowed between black and whites. People of color weren’t even humans, seen as another type of species. Baseball, the education system, across the board, you were being oppressed. He was the first real sign that maybe we might have some progress in taking down this segregation barrier. Then Jackie arrived in Daytona Beach in 1946 with the Montreal Warriors. He had been signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers. Montreal was a minor league team he played with. I was a 12 year old kid when he arrived. It was a very delicate situation and we didn’t know what was going to happen, if are they going to lock him up. Police showed up. We weren’t allowed to do that, coming in with his white teammates. It was a mess back in those days. I was a little 12 year old kid who couldn’t understand a lot of this stuff, but I prayed a lot hoping Jackie would make it. He was my role model and my hero. I never met Jackie until we both had stopped playing. It was around the early 70’s, I had an appointment with the small business administration and they told me Jackie is coming in. I’m a Sessions man, Sessions is my career, and I went. It’s a session, it’s a man. I’m doing that. I was almost 40. I’m a grown man. I was pushing to meet him. I was like that 12 year old kid who was so excited to meet him. He was very gracious, and I fell in love with him and I thanked him for his perseverance and for all the stuff he had to go through. The downside was hearing over the radio that he died of a heart attack. It tore me up and I admit, I cried like a little baby. Why so young? And all this stuff he had to go through and take to open up things for us. It hit me hard. Sometimes I have to watch myself when I talk about it.

The Mets world series win in 1986 must’ve brought back some memories. Can you recall any specific thoughts running through your mind at the time?

It was a good mood from there. I was being traded to the team in the Midwest and I had signed Neil Allen who was the Mets relief pitcher during the time and Neil Allen was traded to the St. Louis Cardinals for Keith Hernandez. So Keith Hernandez came over and he was a big important player, and that was my contribution to the Mets. I always tease them about it. I’ve had a wonderful relationship with the Mets and they have supported my efforts outside of the field throughout my life. They always give me souvenirs and I use it to help motivate the kids to study hard. I treated them like they were my own. I was there to help them.

What kind of impact do you think the Mets outstanding season in 2015 had on them, particularly winning the National League Championship?

We really need that. We had not won anything in few years, and the people were getting crazy, rooting for them to win and the whole season was so exciting and it reminded me of ‘69, I enjoyed it very much and of course, although they didn’t win this season, I pray for them and the fans. I love that team, and I hope they win it all this year.

Something a lot of fans a wonder about is the level of noise made in the stadium when everyone is cheering for them. What kind of pressure does that add to the player(s)?

No pressure. It is all about adrenaline and getting you to hype them up. It helps to get their adrenaline going, and it helps the player to the best of his ability and stuff like that. The fans cheering you on helps a lot and it helped us a lot in ’69 and the kids in ’86, it helps to have the fans, to have them rooting for us. It always helps the player, helps his play on the field, and knowing the fans are supportive. The cheering is like a prayer from the fans and they are extremely important, they play a big part in the team making it far. Without fans there would be no Major League Baseball. You always respect the fans and the fans respect the players, it’s a mutual relationship.

Many of us saw 42, the Jackie Robinson movie. How did you feel seeing your name at the end?

It was just amazing. [That movie] was a true depiction of the times and what we had to go through and it was a way for others to experience what was going on. So others can see what we had to go through. I didn’t know about my role in 42. The guy interviewed me and I thought it was about my time with the Mets. They invited me out to LA for the premier and I’m sitting in the theater, not knowing I was the little kid on the screen. After the movie, the young boy who played me in the movie came over and we were inseparable. They knew where I was sitting and they came over and introduced themselves. He was with his mother and he had a brother who looked like him and I thought they were twins. When I got back to New York, I sent him some Mets paraphernalia. At the after party, we sat there and talked for a while, and the fellow who played Jackie he came over and we traded autographs. All of them were really nice. I was not aware I was going to be in the movie.

Are there any words you would like to share with the readers at Communiqué?

Study hard, stay focused, make necessary sacrifices to reach [your] goals. You can’t be partying all night. Just go for it, don’t be afraid. Have confidence that you can reach it if you qualify yourself. You have to stay focused and have goals and stay with reality. Same for you Lissett, I wish you the best in everything you aspire to do and in life.
Is There Anything “Appropriate” About Cultural Appropriation?

A young, white woman wearing cornrow braids twisted into a bun. Credit: Commons.wikimedia.org

By Ajeé Roberson

If you’ve never heard the term “cultural appropriation,” chances are that you’ve been living under a rock for quite a while! Here in the 21st century, America is not where it was 100, or even 50 years ago in the fight towards racial equality. Today, racial segregation is illegal; minorities are afforded more opportunities and are assumed to have “equal rights.” Even so, the fact remains that we still have a long road ahead of us in our journey to level the playing field among all races and social classes in our country.

While I can acknowledge and appreciate the progress we’ve made as a country, minorities like African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans deal with an issue that white Americans simply cannot relate to. When certain aspects of minority culture like the types of food they eat, the music they listen to and create, and their styles of hair and dress are adopted by white Americans – this is considered “cultural appropriation.” In light of Black History month which just came to a close, I will focus mainly on the cultural appropriation that affects the black community.

So, one might inquire, “What’s so wrong about white people emulating black culture?” For one culture to pull or borrow from another could be viewed as a form of endearment. Why can that from another could be viewed as a form of endearment, or even “praise.” Why can that be so offensive? There are several reasons.

The main reason cultural appropriation is so offensive, specifically to the black community is because it’s always an instance where white people are praised and uplifted for the physical traits and cultural expression that black people are demeaned because of. Black and women originated hairstyles like cornrows and dreads for example, and white culture’s perception of those hairstyles has always been considered to be a negative one. They’ve been regarded as styles that lead “dumb” and “disheveled,” and many African-American men and women are even denied jobs because of hairstyles like these. The same can be said about box braids or even a natural Afro. Natural African-American hairstyles (among other things) have always been, and still are viewed as socially unacceptable in today’s American society.

Now, an example of the vast representation of cultural appropriation in the media is an instance where Kim Kardashian, or Kylie Jenner wears cornrows, dreads, and even “exotically colored hair” (more specifically Jenner) like green and blue. African-American women are normally regarded as “ghetto” or “low class” for wearing those very same hairstyles, most of which originated from their own culture.

The media glorifies white women for these traits and often shames black women for them. Another prevalent example from the media (more specifically the Kardashian-Jenner clan) is the way Kylie Jenner gets lip injections and is praised for the beauty associated with fuller lips, while countless black men and women have been ridiculed for that very same, natural trait for centuries. There are a lot of examples in the media where physical traits, styles and other cultural derivatives of minorities are portrayed as far more desirable on a white American canvas.

The central issue is that the beauty and identity of other, less represented cultures in America are often “stolen” from them. Of course only after they’ve been told it isn’t beautiful. But that same beauty is only considered “beautiful” if it’s on the “right person.” The influence of the media is what has made cultural appropriation more prevalent in our society today than ever been. This digital age makes it effortless to access information about cultures from all over the world, as well as try to broadcast these “trends” as your own. Due credit is almost never given to the original source of these trends, which is another reason that it leaves minorities feeling so slighted, and brings light to one more point.

You can’t embrace or showcase the aspects of black culture, or any minority culture that you find glamorous or desirable without the willingness to showcase the aspects of the culture that are “not so pretty.” Many minorities are reluctant to accept cultural appropriation as a show of endearment because, for example, white women in the media may want to wear faux dreads or Bantu knots, but won’t ever acknowledge the legitimacy of the Black Lives Matter movement or the issue of police brutality currently taking place in America (mainly in black communities.)

That sends a message that it’s only “cool” to be black when it comes to style, music and other aspects of the culture, but not cool to actually be black living in America. The ideology this sort of behavior projects is the assumed privilege to selfishly utilize “the good” with no genuine interest in what’s clearly “the bad.” If you don’t support uplifting a minority and defending their stance on social issues, it is completely insulting to then appropriate their culture.

All in all, the appropriation of minority cultures will continue to demeaning, especially as long as the issues affecting those cultures are continuously swept under the rug by the media and our government. But, it is possible that the more we all work towards a united front in achieving full equality among all races and class levels in this country, the more inclined minority cultures will continue be demeaning, especially as long as the issues affecting those cultures are continuously swept under the rug by the media and our government.

Oscars Academy Awards Color-free of Nominees?

By Angela Rodriguez

So apparently it has been okay to advertise the 2016 Oscars in a light that might shine so bright that it can cover up the fact that there are is no diversity within the nominees. The Oscars always have a small lack in diversity, but rather than improving, it is just getting worse. The lack of diversity in the Oscars has caused a great uproar within Hollywood and it’s no surprise that it is causing problems on social media. Now, for the second year in a row, the nominees for the Oscars have been absolutely all whites. There has always been a very small amount in the nominees who are non-white, but it has gotten to the point where the Academy Awards have no longer been choosing non-whites to be nominated in any category. There have been 1,668 nominees ever since the Oscars started, and only 6.4% of the nominations have gone to non-white actors. While the Academy Awards cover up their very unfair election of nominees by making it all seem flashy and fun, but there’s a whole mess going on under the table. While some were fusing over Leonardo DiCaprio always getting nominated and hopefully, finally getting his first Oscar, there are others focusing on the issue that there should be actors of different race having the chance to win an Oscar at all.

When everyone started finding out about this issue, the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite was created. This hashtag could easily take anyone to different posts online or any type of social media about people speaking up against this lack of diversity. This leads to the issue that happened with the film Straight outta Compton. Most of the cast members of this film are black, and the movie was based on their lives, yet the nominees chosen to represent this film were not the main characters. It was the white screenwriters. While Ice Cube, the producer of this film (who is also black and not invited to the ceremony) basically said it was no big deal, Will Smith on the other hand spoke out against and said it was very wrong. “Diversity is an American superpower,” Smith says, and his wife jumped on board with him on this Hollywood issue. They’re annoyed that the only thing the Academy has to say about this, is that many of the non-white actors didn’t make the cut. It makes it seem as if a requirement now is to be white.

With all the change going on in society, one would think that the nominee list in 2016 would be more colorful. Agree with Will Smith, diversity is power. But without it, we just look weak. The thought that the Academy Awards are discriminating against non-white actors should be the last issue this society has to deal with. This issue should be long gone yet here there are actors being denied the joy of winning an award on a film they worked very hard on.
What’s a Job Fair?

A Job Fair is an opportunity to meet with 50+ employers from business, non-profits, the healthcare industry and government coming to Queensborough in search of candidates to fill full-time, part-time, and internship openings. Don’t miss it! Dress in appropriate interview attire (no jeans or sneakers please).

Bring you college ID and several copies of your resumé to the Job Fair. We can help you improve your resumé. Contact the Office of Career Services in the Library Building, Room 429 during walk in hours for answers to your questions and resumé review on: Mondays 10am – 11:30am, and Tuesdays and Thursdays 2pm – 3:30pm.

Why You Should Attend Queensborough’s Job Fair

Queensborough’s Job Fair provides you with a unique opportunity to meet with employers without leaving campus. These employers can help you now and in the future, not only with the jobs they are offering but with their knowledge of the job market, industry, and careers. When it comes to interviewing, practice definitely makes perfect. You can use the Job Fair to practice your ability to introduce yourself to employers and speak about yourself. If you happen to be looking for a job, you may find one at the Job Fair but regardless don’t miss out on all the benefits the Job Fair has to offer. All Queensborough students and recent alumni are welcome!